

Grade 7-9

13-15 YEARS

Keys to prevention at this age

- Modeling healthy behaviors
- Emphasizing family values, expectations, and consequences

Young teens may say they don't need your guidance, but they are much more open to it than they'll ever let on. Make sure you talk to them about their choices of friends because alcohol and drug use in teens starts as a social behavior.

Key Influences in your 7-9th grader's world:

- Parent/Caregiver
- Adults in the community
- Teachers
- Peers and older youth
- Cliques
- TV and social media
- Popular culture

Substances in your 7-9th grader's world can include:

- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Prescription drugs
- Over-the-counter medication
- Inhalants
- Illicit drugs such as Marijuana



Research shows that kids are less likely to use tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs if their parents have established a pattern of setting clear rules and consequences for breaking those rules. Kids who are not regularly monitored by their parents are **FOUR times** more likely to use drugs.¹

Youth at this age are going through a transition and often have a shaky self-image. They aren't sure where they are headed, question whether they are growing and changing adequately, and often are in conflict with adults. This age group is beginning to deal with abstractions, thinking about the future, and understanding their actions have consequences.

Young people who experiment with alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs typically begin before finishing the 9th grade. A large portion of your prevention efforts during these years should be spent reinforcing your child's motivation to avoid alcohol and other drugs, and guiding them in their decisions of who to spend time with. Emphasize your family values and the importance of staying true to themselves and their values. It is also important to stress the immediate and unpleasant effects of alcohol and other drug use.



Parenting Tips

- ✓ Set clear rules and role model good behavior
- ✓ Spend time with your teen and take an interest in their life
- ✓ Help build their self-esteem and self-image
- ✓ Supervise and monitor your teen
- ✓ Assist them in avoiding peer pressure
- ✓ Discuss drugs and alcohol with your teen
- ✓ Participate in community prevention efforts

¹Metzler, Rusby and Biglan. (1999). Community builders for success: monitoring after-school activities. Oregon Research Institute.

Sources: U.S. Department of Education, Growing Up Drug-Free: A Parent's Guide to Prevention, 1998.; Solter, Aletha (2006). Raising Drug-Free Kids: 100 Tips for Parents. Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press.; The Partnership at drugfree.org.