Family Day
Parent Toolkit: Teen Edition
Conversation Starters, Facts, Family Fun Ideas and more!
# Table of Contents

## Countdown to ... Being an Engaged Parent

1. **Family Day STAR Pledge** ......................................................... 13

2. **Sets of Conversation Starters** .................................................. 12

3. **Ways to Show Your Teen You Care** ............................................. 11

4. **Ways Your Teen Can Give Back to the Community** ......................... 10

5. **Facts About Substance Use in Schools** ......................................... 9

6. **Fun Things to Do With Your Teen** ............................................... 8

7. **Facts About Digital Peer Pressure** .............................................. 7

8. **Tips for Talking to Your Teen About Smoking, Drinking, and Drugs** ..................................................... 6

9. **Social Networking Sites You Should Know About** .......................... 2-5

10. **Warning Signs of Teen Substance Use** ....................................... 1

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10 Warning Signs of Teen Substance Use

1. Alcohol, smoke or other chemical odors on your child’s or their friends’ breath or clothing
2. Obvious intoxication, dizziness or bizarre behavior
3. Changes in dress and grooming
4. Changes in choice of friends
5. Frequent arguments, sudden mood changes and unexplained violent actions
6. Changes in eating and sleeping patterns
7. Sudden weight gain or loss
8. Loss of interest in usual activities or hobbies
9. School problems such as declining or failing grades, poor attendance and recent discipline problems
10. Trauma or frequent injuries

From Centeronaddiction.org
9 Social Networking Sites You Should Know About

Facebook (www.facebook.com) is an online social media site that lets users connect to other users as near as next door and as far away as the other side of the world. Facebook users can create personal profiles that display information like their birthday, phone number, address, photos of themselves and friends, favorite book, movies, musicians, and any kind of personal comments. Users can make their profile “public” (visible to all other Facebook users), or “private” (visible only to users they approve as “Facebook friends”). A public profile leaves a teen vulnerable. They can talk to people they do not know outside of the Internet, their posts are available for all to see, and they can easily become a cyberbullying victim. Teens can post photos of themselves or others drinking, smoking or using other drugs. Friends or classmates can then write comments on the photos promoting this type of behavior. You may want to create a profile and add your child as a “Facebook Friend”. This allows you to monitor their activity and keep them safe.

YouTube (www.youtube.com) is an online social media site where users post videos they’ve made and watch videos of others. YouTube users can easily find a variety of videos, from lessons in baking chocolate cakes to lessons in rolling marijuana joints; from episodes of a television show to home videos of teens drinking and popping pills. Anyone with a video camera, including those on most cell phones, can show videos he or she has recorded, including some that glamorize alcohol and drug use. Individuals can post videos of how to grow potent marijuana in your closet, feign symptoms for getting stimulants from a physician, sell drugs, and make crystal meth in your kitchen.

Some videos are spoofs, but they’re not labeled as such. Spoofs or not, children watching them can get the idea that drugs are fun and everyone is doing them. No personal account or profile is needed to use YouTube, but users may create one if they wish.
Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)) is an online social media site that offers users an abbreviated way to stay in touch with others. Twitter users can write comments limited to 140 characters known as “tweets”. Tweets are published in a user’s brief identifying profile and visible to other users. Twitter features tweets by actors, rock stars, politicians, and other celebrities about their day-to-day lives. Teens tend to tweet about their hobbies/activities, favorite celebrities, TV shows, and movies. They also tweet to connect with friends. However, some users write about how high they got on drugs or alcohol and what fun it was. Anyone can register with Twitter to post his or her own comments and see those of others.

Instagram ([www.instagram.com](http://www.instagram.com)) is an online social media site concentrating on photos. Users can take pictures with their cell phones and post them for others to see and comment on. Instagram is commonly used to view pictures that celebrities post to keep attention on their activities and antics. Anyone can get an Instagram account, and many teens do so to follow celebrities, display their own pictures, and see those of their friends. Pictures of teens and celebrities often glamorize illegal drug use, popping pills, and excessive drinking. Though Instagram says users must be at least thirteen, no proof of age is necessary.

Snapchat ([https://www.snapchat.com/](https://www.snapchat.com/)) is a messaging app that lets users post pictures and videos for a short amount of time before they are deleted. Teens can post silly and embarrassing photos without the risk of them ending up all over the Internet. While most teens use snapchat for good, clean fun, it doesn’t mean you still shouldn’t be concerned. We’re led to believe Snapchats go away forever, but this is actually false. Anything sent online never fully disappears. Unaffiliated third-party services, such as Snapsaved, allow users to save their Snapchatted pictures. Also, the person receiving the snapchat can always take a screenshot of the photo and share it on other social media sites. It makes risky activities like sexting seem safe. Teens might be encouraged to share photos with inappropriate content that could end up on the computer screen of their principal, basketball coach, or guidance counselor.
Vine ([https://vine.co/](https://vine.co/)) is a social media app that lets users post and watch looping six-second video clips. The videos are often humorous and require a lot of creativity being that they are only a few seconds long. Teens can create and share personal videos of themselves and/or their friends and families. Although this seems harmless, be wary of the fact that videos containing nudity, drugs and alcohol, and many other unsuitable images are readily available. The videos that teens post, the accounts they follow, and the comments they make on other videos are all public. If you allow your child to use Vine you might want to change their settings so only their followers will see their videos. You can also make sure that anyone who wants to follow them has to be approved first.

Tumblr ([https://www.tumblr.com/](https://www.tumblr.com/)) is an online social media site that is made up of a streaming scrapbook of text, photos, and/or videos and audio clips. Teens have the option to create and follow short blogs called “tumbleblogs”. Anyone can see these if they are made public. While most teens enjoy using this site because they can share funny images with friends, you should know that images containing pornography, violence, drug use can be easily searched. The initial profile a member creates is public, but members who want full privacy have to create a second profile, which they're able to password-protect. “Reblogging” on Tumblr is very much like re-tweeting on Twitter. If a teen posts an inappropriate photo, it can be “reblogged” and end up on someone else’s page.

Whisper ([https://whisper.sh/](https://whisper.sh/)) is a social app created for those who are age 17 and older. It allows users to post “confessions” or things they would like to say anonymously. Users type a confession, add a background image, and share it with other Whisper users. Having this freedom to say whatever you want without any consequences encourages many to make confessions that contain strong language, drug and alcohol references, and content that is sexual. It is also a perfect opportunity for a teen to make fun of a fellow classmate or vent about their school or friends and family. Whispers have often gone public. Entertainment news sites, such as BuzzFeed, include “whispers” in their articles.
Tinder ([https://www.gotinder.com/](https://www.gotinder.com/)) is a photo and messaging dating app for browsing photos of prospective matches within a certain-mile radius of a user's location. Users swipe right if they are attracted to a match, and they swipe left when they aren’t interested. If a person whose photo you "liked" swipes "like" on your photo as well then the app allows you to send each other a private message. Teens could potentially meet someone who could take advantage of them. People that they don’t know in their area will have access to their photo. It’s important to talk to your child about your rules when it comes to dating. You should also discuss the dangers involved when meeting someone in person after connecting online.

From *How to Raise a Drug-Free Kid: The Straight Dope for Parents*
Adapted from Common Sense Media: “Snapchat and 7 More Iffy Messaging Apps Teens Love” and “15 Apps and Websites Kids Are Heading to After Facebook”
8 Tips for Talking to Your Teen About Smoking, Drinking, and Drugs

1. Early on, establish an open dialogue on a variety of topics with your children.

2. Make your expectations about substance use clear to your children.

3. Make talking with your children about substance use a natural part of your continuing discussion with them, rather than just a onetime event.

4. When discussing alcohol and other drugs, be honest and focus on the facts appropriate to your child’s developmental stage.

5. Tell your child that we know a lot more today about the dangers of smoking, drinking, and drug use for teens than we did years ago.

6. Use news, TV shows, videos on the internet, or real-life occurrences as teaching opportunities.

7. If your child asks about your history of substance use, don’t lie, but first focus your response on your child and why he or she is asking.

8. Teach your child that being a good friend means getting help for a friend who abuses substances.

From How to Raise a Drug-Free Kid: The Straight Dope for Parents
7 Facts About Digital Peer Pressure

1. 75% of teens say that seeing pictures on social networking sites of kids partying with alcohol or marijuana encourages other teens to want to party like that.

2. Nearly 1/2 of teens ages 12 to 17 (4%) have seen pictures on Facebook or another social networking site of kids getting drunk or passed out or using other drugs.

3. 47% of teens who have seen pictures on social networking sites of kids getting drunk or passed out or using other drugs say teens in pictures seem to be having a good time.

4. 62% of teens say that seeing pictures of teens using marijuana on social networking sites encourages other teens to want to use marijuana.

5. 63% of teens say that seeing pictures of teens drinking on social networking sites encourages other teens to want to drink.

6. Compared to teens who have never seen pictures on Facebook or another social networking site of kids getting drunk, passed out, or using drugs, teens who have seen such pictures are 4 times likelier to have used marijuana, more than 3 times likelier to have used alcohol, and almost three times likelier to have used tobacco.

7. Compared to teens who have never seen pictures on Facebook or another social networking site of kids getting drunk, passed out, or using drugs, teens who have seen such pictures are 3 times likelier to have close friends who currently use marijuana and more than twice as likely to have close friends who drink alcohol regularly, like most weekends.

Source: The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse’s National Survey on American Attitudes on Substance Abuse XVII: Teens
6 Fun Things to Do With Your Teen

1. Catch a movie with your teen. They might insist you take them to a theater none of their friends will be at, but go along with it. Check out all of the different movie genres and after the movie talk about which type of film you would like to see together next time.

2. Take a car ride with your teen. There is beauty in every city or town. Make sure your child gets to see it up close and personal. Find quirky places to visit. The people, the food, the scenery, and the fun will create shared, lifelong memories.

3. Make a family photo album with your teen. You're bound to have a drawer or box full of old photos somewhere in the house. Dig them out and sit down with your teen and put together a family album. They will have so much fun going down memory lane with you.

4. Play card games with your teen. Teach your teen how to play cards and they'll thank you for it later. They might end up passing their tricks and tips onto their friends, even if they pretend to be uninterested at the time!

5. Teach your teen to drive. You might dread this activity, but they are going to love it! Even if you’re able to send your teen to driver’s education, it’s still a good idea to get on the road with them. If you’re worried about using streets, find a huge parking lot such as at a local high school. When you are a passenger with your teen, you’ll get an idea of what kind of decision maker they might be on the road.

6. Let your teen choose an activity. The whole point is to spend meaningful time with your teen. Let them decide what they would like to do as long as it’s within reason. You may learn something you never knew about your teen or possibly even yourself. Give your teen control and go with the flow!
5 Facts About Substance Use in Schools

1. 86% of high school students say classmates smoke, drink or use other drugs during the school day.

2. 52% of high school students say there is a place where students go to smoke, drink and use other drugs during school.

3. 36% of high school students say it is easy for students to smoke, drink and use other drugs during the school day without getting caught.

4. 44%, almost half of high school students, know of a student who sells illegal drugs at their school.

5. 60% of high school students have said they attend a drug-infected school.

From National Survey on American Attitudes on Substance Abuse XVII: Teens
4 Ways Your Teen Can Give Back to the Community

1. Your teen has probably outgrown most of their toys and some video games at this point in their lives. Instead of storing them in a closet, ask your teen to help you put them in cardboard boxes and donate them to kids in need, a local shelter or your local Goodwill.

2. Volunteer with your teen at a soup kitchen. Not only will your teen learn how to be handy around the kitchen, but they will also get to meet other people in their community and see how others live.

3. Clean up a park or beach with your teen. This will teach your teen to appreciate nature and will show them how important it is not to litter.

4. If you have an elderly or disabled person living in your neighborhood ask your teen to help you carry in their groceries, mow their lawn, rake their leaves or shovel their snow. They could also make crafts or bake treats for them.
3 Ways to Show Your Teen You Care

1. Laugh with your teen. Laughing together allows your teen to feel comfortable talking with you about anything. Watch a funny movie or share a laugh while enjoying a meal together. A simple laugh with your teen will lead to a lifetime of great memories.

2. Tell your teen you love them. Those 3 simple words will mean so much to your teen. They might not respond or they may roll their eyes, but deep down they really appreciate hearing you say it. Tell them often and every chance you get, even during those difficult teen temper tantrums.

3. Communicate frequently with your teen. Good communication is important when it comes to maintaining a healthy relationship with your teen. Talking with your teenager and listening to what they have to say helps you form a solid foundation for your relationship. Make it your goal to have open and honest daily conversations that allow your teen to feel loved and respected.
2 Sets of Conversation Starters

About Substance Use

If you were at a party with kids who were smoking, drinking or using drugs, what would you do?

Do you know why someone your age is more likely to get addicted to cigarettes, alcohol, or other drugs?

Besides family members, who do you feel most comfortable talking to about cigarettes, alcohol, and other drugs? Why?

How often do you hear kids talking about cigarettes, alcohol, and other drugs at school?

What would you do if you saw an adult family member or friend drunk or high?

What would you do if you saw a friend taking prescription pills that are not prescribed to them?

Do you know any friends or kids at school that might have a substance use problem and need help?

What do the kids at your school do at parties?

Do you know what binge drinking is?

Why do you think marijuana (in most states) and various other drugs are illegal?

For Fun

What’s a skill you wish you had? Why?

If you could go back in time and live in any other era, what time period would you choose? Why?

What would you like to do when you graduate?

Who is your best friend?

Who is your favorite singer or musical group?

What is one activity you’ve never done before that you would really like to try?

What possession do you cherish the most?

What is your favorite activity to do with friends?

What is something that made you laugh this week?

What is something that upset you or made you angry this week?

Is there a movie out right now that you’re looking forward to seeing?

Why do you think family traditions are important?
1 Family Day STAR Pledge

As a parent of a teen, I pledge to:

S- Spend time with my kids
T- Talk to them about their friends, interests and the dangers of nicotine, alcohol, and other drugs
A- Answer their questions and listen to what they say
R- Recognize that I have the power to help keep my kids substance-free

Keep this pledge handy so that it reminds you how important it is to keep the lines of communication open with your kids. Parental Engagement Makes a Difference!