



Behavioral Signs of Drug Use

- Attitude/personality change with no other identifiable cause.
- Changes in friends and hang outs. Doesn't want to talk about "new" friends.
- Change in activities or hobbies.
- Drop in grades at school; skips school or is late for school.
- Change in habits at home; loss of interest in family and family activities.
- Difficulty in paying attention; forgetfulness.
- Lack of motivation, energy, self-esteem, "I don't care" attitude.
- Sudden oversensitivity, tantrums or resentful behavior.
- Moodiness, irritability or nervousness.
- Silliness or giddiness.
- Paranoia.
- Excessive need for privacy; unreachable.
- Secretive or suspicious behavior.
- Chronic dishonesty.
- Unexplained need for money, stealing money or items.
- Change in personal grooming habits.
- Possession of drug paraphernalia.

What to do if you find your child uses drugs

(Editor's Note: October is Red Ribbon Month. The ribbon is worn as a symbol of drug awareness and a commitment to fight the war on drugs.)

By Deborah Wheeler
437 AW Drug Demand Reduction Program

If you find your child using drugs, how do you react? What can you do as a parent? What are your Red Ribbon parental responsibilities in this situation?

This is one of the most fearful situations for parents. Drugs and alcohol are readily available at many schools and other community sites.

This does not mean that every student is using them. You, as a parent, should be ready if you discover that your child is using illegal substances.

When you find that this is the case, be prepared to talk and to really listen if your child is ready to talk. Be aware that

lecturing might not work. Find out when the situation began and what substances are being used.

How is your child obtaining them? Is he or she paying for them or is somebody giving them to him or her? Is your child being pressured by someone?

If you find out that your child is getting the alcohol or other substances at school, you will need to talk to the school authorities.

If you do not see that the school is taking any actions talk to the police. Be ready to act quickly on this. Find professional help—such as a drug counselor or a psychologist.

Talking to your priest, pastor or rabbi might be helpful. If the drug use is heavy, you might have to take your child to a center that specializes in drug rehabilitation.

In all plans you make with

your child, be clear and consistent about consequences.

Is there a history of alcohol or other drug use in your family?

Are you or others in the home using alcohol or any other substances? If this is the case, recognize the major influence this behavior has on your child. Consider professional help. Remember that you bear the responsibility for your minor child.

Get your community organized. Organize the parents at school. Have your child involved in healthy activities such as sports, art, theater and helping people in your community.

Know his or her friends and their parents. Parents can collaborate in setting the rules for parties and outings. Remember, open communication with your child is key.

For information or to seek help, call 963-6849.