



## WHEN DO I TALK TO MY CHILDREN ABOUT DRUGS?

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One day while I was waiting to pick up my car after having some adjustments made, a young father who I had been talking to, asked me “when should he talk to his children about drugs?”

Naturally, what you decide to say to your children about drugs will depend on their age. One thing for sure though, is you don’t want your children to reach those often turbulent adolescent years uninformed and ignorant about the potential dangers of drug use. You want to be able to communicate reliable information as soon as possible – and not only about drugs!

From the preschool age onwards, I recommend to parents that they –

1. Talk to their children about healthy living and reinforce it by the way they live
2. Help their children take responsibility for the decisions they make and the consequences (as long as they won’t be harmed by it)
3. Steer them away from dangerous substances that exist in their current world such as poisons and bleaches, and point out that the medicine doctors give to people to help them get better may cause others to get sick, and
4. Find “teachable moments” or learning opportunities that will guide and expand their child’s understanding as they get older

Finally, don’t be intimidated by the fact you don’t know everything. Keep your answers as simple as possible and research what you don’t know.