

What to Say to Your Early Elementary School Aged Child About Drugs (5-8 years old)

5- to-8-year-olds are still tied to family and eager to please, but they're also beginning to explore their individuality.

Tips for Conversations with Your Early Elementary School Child

- Talk to your kids about the drug-related messages they receive through advertisements, the news media and entertainment sources. Ask your kids how they feel about the things they've heard — you'll learn a great deal about what they're thinking.
- Keep your discussions about substances focused on the present — long-term consequences are too distant to have any meaning. Talk about the differences between the medicinal uses and illegal uses of drugs, and how drugs can negatively impact the families and friends of people who use them.
- Set clear rules and explain the reasons for your rules. If you use tobacco or alcohol, be mindful of the message you are sending to your children.
- Work on problem solving: Help them find long-lasting solutions to homework trouble, a fight with a friend, or in dealing with a bully. Be sure to point out that quick fixes are not long-term solutions.
- Give your kids the power to escape from situations that make them feel bad. Make sure they know that they shouldn't stay in a place that makes them feel uncomfortable or bad about themselves. Also let them know that they don't need to stick with friends who don't support them.
- Get to know your child's friends — and their friends' parents. Check in once in a while to make sure they are giving their children the same kinds of messages you give your children.