Drug Education Begins at Home

Drug use is part of everyday life. Sometimes we forget that cough syrup, pain pills, alcohol and tobacco are drugs. Children learn about drugs in school, from other kids and on television, but what we do in our own homes is the beginning of drug education.

You are your children's most important teacher. Children learn by watching you and others and copy what they see. The attitudes and beliefs you have around drugs, including alcohol, will shape how your children think and feel about those things too.



Drug education tips:

- Promote positive self-esteem and positive coping. Connect with your child and help them to build a strong social support network as these are important factors for preventing harmful use of drugs and delaying the use of them.
- Start talking with your children early about drugs and alcohol; what they are, what they do to a body, how they are harmful for children to consume. Never refer to medication as "candy".
- Give them clear and consistent messages about what's expected of them. Children need rules and limits. For example, tell them that they are not allowed to drink alcohol even though an adult may. Let them know that it's harmful for a child's body to drink any alcohol.
- Answer your children's questions honestly, simply and directly. For example, let them know that sometimes adults use medication for medical purposes.
- Think about your decisions surrounding alcohol and drug use and what they model to your children. For example, try not to drink over the recommended drinking guidelines when you are with your children. Modelling responsible, social drinking is setting a positive example if they choose to use later on.

For recommended drinking guidelines, more information and resources visit the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health at camb.ca

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