



Parent Guidelines for Drug Prevention at Home

Parents play a pivotal role in safeguarding their children from potential risks and reducing the likelihood of substance abuse. Creating awareness at home from an early age is one of the most effective ways to protect children from substance abuse. This begins with nurturing strong moral values, positive life principles, and a secure parent–child relationship built on love, trust, respect, and open communication. Effective parental involvement can be understood through three key dimensions: **prevention, early identification and intervention, and support for treatment and rehabilitation.**



Parents play a key preventive role through communication, supervision, emotional support, and age-appropriate guidance.

Age-Wise Guidance for Parents

Ages 0–5: Build Safe Early Beliefs

- Use daily situations to teach children that harmful substances can damage health.
- Help children understand that medicines must be taken only under adult/doctor supervision.
- Teach them not to touch household chemicals, tobacco products, or unknown substances.
- Encourage simple choices to build self-confidence and decision-making.

Ages 6–10: Reinforce Safety and Positive Choices



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- Regularly remind children that harmful substances affect health, brain development, and safety.
- Appreciate and praise children when they refuse unsafe or negative behaviours.
- Use real-life situations and stories to discuss healthy decisions.
- Reassure them that they can always approach parents for help.

Ages 11–14: Strengthen Communication and Peer Awareness

- Discuss hobbies, goals, interests, and healthy ways to manage stress.
- Guide children in choosing positive peer groups and friendships.
- Talk openly about media influences, online content, and risky behaviours.
- Teach them how to find reliable information from trusted sources.
- Practise simple refusal skills through role-play conversations.

Ages 15–18: Focus on Responsibility and Future Goals

- Help adolescents understand how substance use can affect college admissions, careers, and life goals.
- Involve them in setting family expectations and consequences.
- Spend one-to-one time to strengthen trust and openness.
- Discuss the health, legal, and social consequences of substance abuse.
- Stay informed about emerging harmful trends and guide them proactively.





Refusal Skills Parents Should Teach

Parents are encouraged to help children practise these responses:

- Say “No” firmly and confidently
- Change the topic or ignore the suggestion
- Leave unsafe places immediately
- Avoid risky people and situations
- Suggest healthy alternative activities
- Stay with positive friends who have clear goals
- Use humour when appropriate to deflect peer pressure

Refusal skills that should teach to children:



Our Shared Responsibility

Strong family bonds, open communication, supervision, and emotional support remain the strongest protective factors in preventing substance abuse among children and adolescents.

Together, parents and school can build a safe, informed, and drug-free future for every child.



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Reference

Ministry of Interior, UAE. *Parents' Guide to Drug Prevention.*

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