

## Taking an Active Role

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Raising children is one of the most challenging roles that any man, woman or couple can ever experience in life. Much joy as well as significant heartache can come from being a parent. Being a parent requires **patience, nurturing, discipline, support and, most important, love and support.** As our children go through their developmental stages from infants, to toddlers, to teenagers, to young adults and adulthood, the challenges and rewards change.

As our kids get older and alcohol and drugs enter the picture, we are faced with a unique set of challenges that require our focused attention. We cannot simply sit back and hope that our kids will “get through it.” As parents, we need to take an active role in learning about alcohol and drugs and in helping our kids to do the same. **Clearly, we cannot sit back and just hope.**

**Parents Play a Key Role:** It is important for you to know that parents play a significant role in preventing and dealing with alcohol and drugs. Fostering healthy and responsible attitudes, talking openly and honestly, encouraging supportive relationships, fostering the development of positive interests and showing children that their opinions and decisions matter, are all ways to help prevent the use of alcohol and drugs.

**And, as parents we have far more influence than we think** and talking honestly about alcohol and drugs can have a real impact. In fact, research has shown that kids who have conversations with their parents and learn a lot about the dangers of alcohol and drug use are **50% less likely** to use alcohol and drugs than those who don't have such conversations.

**Age Matters--It's Never Too Young To Start:** You have more influence over your kids' attitudes and decisions about alcohol and drugs **before they start**, than you do afterwards. Start early! **It's never too early to begin the conversation.**

Do you suspect that your child is abusing alcohol or using drugs? Are you worried? Have you noticed some changes with your child? As a parent, it is normal to be concerned. Listen to your intuitive voice and read on!

**You are not alone!**

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### Key Question:

### Why do some people become addicted to alcohol and drugs and others do not?

Whether a person decides to use alcohol or drugs is a choice, influenced by their environment--peers, family, and availability. But, once a person uses alcohol or drugs, the risk of developing alcoholism or drug dependence is largely influenced by genetics. Alcoholism and drug dependence are not moral issues, are not a matter of choice or a lack of willpower. **Plain and simple, some people's bodies respond to the effects of alcohol and drugs differently.**

Within this section of the NCADD website, we offer valuable information about:

- [Frequently Asked Questions/Facts](#) – Basic Facts as well as responses to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- [Talking With Children](#) – Some general guidelines about talking with your kids about alcohol and drugs
- [Tips for Prevention](#) – Some specific suggestions about things that parents can do to help prevent alcohol and drug problems
- [What to Look For](#) – Signs and Symptoms? – as a parent what should I look for as signs of alcohol or drug problems
- [Family History and Genetics](#) – understanding the key role played by family history and genetics is very important in working with your kids
- [Help for Parents](#) – information about help and support for parents dealing with a child in trouble with alcohol and drugs
- [Stories from Parents](#)– parents sharing their experiences in the hope that they can help other parents.

[NCADD Affiliates](#) offer a range of services including help for individuals and family members. If you are concerned about your own alcohol or other drug use or that of someone you care about—a child or other relative, a friend or co-worker—**please make the contact**. You will be able to speak to someone who will listen, assess your needs and provide information about available services, costs and how to deal with another person's alcohol and/or drug use. **Help is just a call or visit away—Make the contact now!**

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