



## Prevention Strategies for Parents—Part 2

Last month we began our journey to learn ten prevention strategies for preventing your teens' harmful use of drugs, sexuality and violence, when we covered the first prevention strategy—"Be a positive role model and teacher of values." This month we will explore strategy #2—"Educate your teens about the risks of drugs, sexuality, and violence." Teens get a lot of information about drugs, sexuality and violence from other teens, the Internet, television and movies. Unfortunately, much of this "street" information is inaccurate, one-sided or glamorized. To help balance this information bias, teens need to receive accurate and thorough information from reliable sources. Many schools have programs to help inform teens about the real dangers involved with substance abuse, sexual behavior and violence. If your teen's school has such a program, find out exactly what the program is teaching and how you can use this information to reinforce your conversations with your teen. Rather than having one long talk, it can be more effective to have short, frequent discussions about these topics with your teen. This creates an open line of communication that can be extremely valuable as your teen meets challenging situations. As you engage your teen in these talks, keep the following points in mind:

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Continue your experience as an "active" parent by reviewing what you learn in the class in your accompanying parent guide. Each guide contains additional information, activities, and worksheets to help you practice what you learn.

Visit [ACFCcares.com](https://www.acfc.org/activeparenting) for more information and to start your Active Parenting journey today.

- **Be prepared.**  
To be convincing, you need more than emotion, you need facts. Know the harmful effects of drugs that your teen may view as harmless, such as nicotine, alcohol and marijuana. Know the risks involved in sexual activity and the facts about violence in your community. Look for any available materials that you can use in discussions with your teen.
- **Don't get hooked into an argument.**  
If you become overbearing or disrespectful during a discussion, you give your teen a reason to tune out or rebel. Avoid getting drawn into an argument if you enter territory in which you and your teen disagree. Don't despair if your teen doesn't seem receptive to your information. Even teens who initially resist the facts may consider them later. Explain to them that you are coming from a position of love and concern for their wellbeing.
- **Invite your teen's input.**  
Ask for their view on the topic and express interest in hearing what information they can share. Keep the tone friendly. This is a discussion, not a lecture, so you shouldn't be the only one talking. Encourage your teen to speak openly by speaking openly yourself. If you decide that more information is needed about the topic, ask your teen for help in researching and gathering more information.
- **Come from caring, not authority.**  
You will influence your teen more by talking in terms of caring about their wellbeing than by dictating and demanding obedience. You can always say, "Do you have any idea how much I love you?" or "I care about your health and safety more than you can imagine."

To learn more about effective parenting skills, visit the Active Parenting Online Video Library. These helpful videos are offered free of charge by the ACFC in partnership with Active Parenting. Guidance and help are available for parents of children of all ages. To access the Online Video Library, go to the [ACFC website](https://www.acfc.org), click on the Active Parenting tab, and follow the instructions on how to view the videos.