



Parent-Child Conversations on Drug Abuse: Prevention Starts at Home

Dear Parents

As parents, we all want the best for our children and hope to keep them safe from harm. Yet, when it comes to talking about drugs, many parents hesitate to bring up the topic of drugs, worried about saying the wrong thing or not knowing enough.

Parents do not need to have all the answers

You are not alone if you feel uncertain or even apprehensive about where to start; many parents share these concerns.

But the good news is that parents do not need to have all the answers. Just by being present and open, we can play a powerful role in guiding our children away from drugs.

Data from the National Drug Perception Survey 2025 shows that children who have open conversations with their parents about drugs are far less likely to experiment with them. Among the 62.8% of youths who had drug-related conversations with their parents, 94.2% of them said it deterred them from drug abuse. This shows that parents do not need to be experts, but simply need to be present and willing to engage with their children.

Everyday moments as conversation starters

Instead of making it a formal, sit-down conversation, parents can take everyday moments such as a news story or a scene in a show as an opportunity to highlight the harms of drugs. Here are some tips for making the most of teaching moments:

- When your child asks questions about celebrities or influencers, use their stories—especially if they relate to drug abuse—to reinforce the dangers and consequences.
- Discuss headlines about drug-related incidents and encourage your child to share their thoughts and feelings. This helps build critical thinking and empathy.
- Use school projects or assignments about health, science, or social issues as a springboard to talk about the risks and impact of drug use.
- If you encounter advertisements or public campaigns on drug prevention, ask your child what they understand and clarify any misconceptions.
- During family gatherings, open conversations about making good choices and peer pressure can naturally include discussions about drugs.
- If your child mentions something they've heard from friends, take the opportunity to correct misinformation and provide facts in a supportive way.
- Share age-appropriate stories, articles, or videos about drug harm, and invite your child to reflect on what they learned.

Making use of these everyday moments helps to keep the conversation ongoing and reinforces your role as a trusted guide.

World Drug Day

26 June is the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, also known as "World Drug Day". Starting this year, ASEAN countries will also observe ASEAN Drug Victims Remembrance Day alongside World Drug Day to remember those whose lives have been affected by drug abuse, and to renew our collective commitment to prevention of drug abuse. This World Drug Day, take that first step. Start the conversation at home.

Mr Tan Chong Huat
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