

## ✓ Parent Checklist

### Does your teen...

- Have strong family support?
- Understand the limits you have set?
- Receive praise for staying free of alcohol and other drugs?
- Have high expectations for his or her future?
- Have a safe environment at home and school?
- Participate in a supportive, caring community?
- Work hard at school and enjoy activities such as sports, art, music, theater, or clubs?
- Learn about values through regular volunteer work, being in a community group?
- Have dinner with you and your family at least 4 times a week?
- Hang out with friends who act responsibly?
- Feel he or she can come to you with a serious problem?



See inside for tips on how to reach these goals.  
Congratulate yourself for what you're already doing well!



**7 WAYS**  
**TO PROTECT**  
**YOUR TEEN**  
**FROM**  
**ALCOHOL AND**  
**OTHER DRUGS**

## **WHAT EVERY PARENT NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT TEENS, ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS**

**Good kids; bad choices**

pg. 1

**Young people become addicted more quickly**

pg. 3

**Suburban teens are at risk, just like city teens**

pg. 5

**Alcohol's damaging effects on your teen's brain**

pg. 7

**Your kids' biggest protection: You!**

pg. 9

**Marijuana, some surprising findings**

pg. 11

**How to talk to your teen**

pg. 13

**Preventing prescription drug misuse**

pg. 15

**7 ways to protect your teen from alcohol  
and other drugs**

pg. 18



## GOOD KIDS; BAD CHOICES

**FACT:** Good kids can make bad decisions – their brains are still developing.

Recent scientific studies show that our children’s brains are still maturing, at least through their twenties. During the teen years, the area in the front of the brain continues to develop. This is the part of the brain used in decision making.

“The areas of the teen brain that are still developing are those that control impulses, planning, and anticipating consequences. So there is a reason teenagers often act impulsively and can fail to think through their decisions.”

– Dr. John Knight, Children’s Hospital Boston

**ACT** Provide guidelines. Remember that critical areas of the brain are still forming.



## Developing Functions in the Teen Brain

- + Planning
- + Judgment
- + Organization
- + Impulse control
- + Thinking through consequences
- + Understanding other people’s feelings

## FACT:

Parents have a powerful effect on their teens’ choices, but parents may not know the decisions youth are facing. In a nationwide survey, 27% of parents were not aware that their child had used alcohol.

“Many parents tend to think that drinking is an inevitable part of the teen years and this thinking is something we need to change. Once parents see what alcohol does to a teen brain, I think they will understand the dangers.”

– Dr. John Knight, Children’s Hospital Boston

## TO LEARN MORE:



- **The Teen Brain: It’s Just Not Grown Up Yet**, National Public Radio, March 1, 2010. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/storyphp?storyId=124119468>
- **A Parent’s Guide to the Teen Brain**, The Partnership for a Drug-Free America. [www.drugfree.org/teenbrain](http://www.drugfree.org/teenbrain)
- Visit the **Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse** to order free publications that can help you learn more about teen alcohol and other drug use. [www.maclearinghouse.com](http://www.maclearinghouse.com)





## YOUNG PEOPLE BECOME ADDICTED MORE QUICKLY

**FACT:** The younger kids are when they start drinking, the more likely they are to become addicted.

Studies show that a person who starts drinking before age 15 is four times more likely to become addicted than someone who delays drinking until age 21. That means that the longer you can postpone the age of first use, the safer your child is likely to be. While most youth are not drinking or using other drugs, some are.

“Some kids are binge drinking in 7th grade; smoking weed in 7th grade.”

– Substance Abuse Counselor

**ACT** Tell your kids that drinking when they're young can make them more likely to be dependent on alcohol later.

**FACT:** Trying drugs can have devastating effects.

“Many of the drugs adolescents experiment with are the most dangerous ones. Inhalants, for example, are among the most dangerous substances. When kids use inhalants, they can just drop to the ground or fall down stairs and break their necks or suffer skull fractures. Inhalants are found in common household products, like cleaners and spray cans, which are available in most homes.”

– Dr. John Knight, Children’s Hospital Boston

**3 eighth-graders suspended after drinking episode**

### Inhalants – A Deadly Experiment

- ▶ Teach kids to read household product, shop, and school supply labels and treat inhalants as poisons.
- ▶ Tell kids that inhalants can cause permanent brain damage or death when used to get high, even when used the first time.
- ▶ Supervise the use of household, shop and art products.

#### TO LEARN MORE:



– For more information about inhalants, call **617-624-5140** (TTY: **1-617-624-5186**) or visit the inhalant abuse prevention site for parents: [www.inhalantabusetraining.org](http://www.inhalantabusetraining.org) or visit [www.maclearinghouse.com](http://www.maclearinghouse.com)



## SUBURBAN TEENS ARE AT RISK, JUST LIKE CITY TEENS

### FACT:

Drugs are a problem for both urban and suburban youth. In Massachusetts, urban and suburban youth use drugs in about the same numbers.

“Many people believe drugs aren’t a problem in the suburbs, but I think drug use in the suburbs is possibly even greater than in the inner city. A lot of kids in the city see the devastating effects of drugs and decide, ‘That’s not going to happen to me.’ In the suburbs, kids have access to the three ingredients needed for drug use—money, cell phones, and transportation. The first thing we do in treatment is remove access to those three things so that the teenager doesn’t have the money to buy, the phone to arrange a purchase, or a car to go get it.”

– **Dr. John Knight, Children’s Hospital Boston**

### FACT:

You can tell your teen that staying away from alcohol and other drugs will help them to keep their freedom.

### ACT

Teach your teen that cell phones and cars are privileges that come with responsibilities. Set rules for their use and ask your teen to check in regularly.

“It’s not hard to get weed at school. I could get you some right now.”

– **Recent graduate of a suburban high school**

“My stepson is really having a problem with pot. It’s changed who he is. He’s a completely different kid now.”

– **Stepmother of a suburban junior**

#### 2009 ‘Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey’ of high school students

- + Used alcohol in the last month ..... 44%
- + Participated in binge drinking over the past month ..... 25%
- + Used marijuana in the last month ..... 27%
- + Had drugs offered, sold or given to them at school ..... 26%

### ACT

If your child takes Ritalin, Adderall, or another drug that could be abused, monitor its use. While it is helpful for your child, it could be harmful to another child. Don’t let kids take medicine to school. You or the school nurse should administer any medications.



## ALCOHOL'S DAMAGING EFFECTS ON YOUR TEEN'S BRAIN

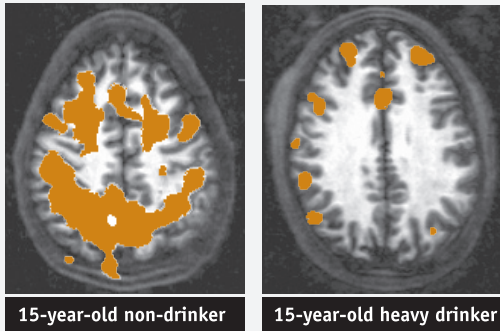
**FACT:** Alcohol can damage the developing teenage brain.

Teens who drink alcohol may not understand how dangerous it can be. Dr. Susan Tapert and colleagues at the University of California San Diego used MRIs to compare the brains of 15- and 16-year-olds who drank heavily with those of teens who had no history of alcohol abuse.

"The biggest difference we found between the alcohol-dependent and the non-abusing teens had to do with memory functions. Mostly, the alcohol-dependent youth did a poorer job at recalling new information... If students are drinking so heavily that it's affecting their brain functioning, they may not be able to get as much out of educational opportunities. This could significantly disrupt their future choices, chances of going to college, and ability to get a good job."

- Dr. Susan Tapert, University of California, San Diego

### Brain Activity Comparison



Explain that the colored areas represent brain activity and that the MRIs were taken when the teens were sober.

**FACT:** Serving alcohol to teenagers is dangerous and illegal.

**ACT** Don't serve alcohol to minors under 21. Remind your teen often that teens are not allowed to use alcohol.

"Many parents don't realize the power they have to influence their children."

- Dean of a large high school

"I have a file in my office full of newspaper clippings about kids who die—from car accidents, drownings, or just falling down the stairs—after drinking in homes where parents supplied alcohol or 'looked the other way' while they drank. It's often after graduation or prom. Some of these parents mistakenly thought their kids deserved to celebrate by drinking. I think the kids deserved to live. Parents need to help teens find ways to celebrate that don't include drinking."

- Dr. John Knight, Children's Hospital Boston

### TO LEARN MORE:



- **Choose to Keep Your Freedom and Don't Give Kids Alcohol**, brochures for youth and parents about the legal implications of serving alcohol to minors, developed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and collaborators. Available through the **Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse**, at 1-800-952-6637 (TTY 1-617-536-5872) or visit [www.maclearinghouse.com](http://www.maclearinghouse.com) to download or order at no charge.



## YOUR KIDS' BIGGEST PROTECTION: YOU!

### FACT:

Kids whose parents are supportive and set clear limits are less likely to use alcohol and other drugs.

Setting limits helps to keep kids safer. It's not too late to start.

"Teenagers don't want limits but they need them. They don't thrive without limits. It's the job of being a parent.... The pay off comes much farther down the road."

– Dr. John Knight, Children's Hospital Boston

### ACT

Get to know your teens' friends and their families. Encourage them to spend time with kids and families who have similar values and rules.

#### How to set limits:

- ▶ Share your values. Talk about what is important to you, and what is important to them.
- ▶ Clearly state the rules. Explain why you are setting them. Lay out what will happen if they break them and follow through.
- ▶ Keep discussing why alcohol and drugs are not allowed.
- ▶ Regularly catch your teen "being good" and reward him or her.

### FACT:

Frequent criticism can lower a teen's self-esteem and may increase the chance of alcohol and drug use. Constructive criticism should be balanced with support for positive decisions.

### ACT

When you have a conflict, try to work together to find a solution and don't let anger and bad feelings get in the way.

Common teen defenses	...and what you can say
▶ "That's not fair. You're the only parent who won't let me..."	▶ "I am sorry you feel that way, but that is the rule in this house."
▶ "I didn't know..."	▶ "You do now."
▶ "It was my first time..."	▶ "Bad things can happen the first time."
▶ "Don't you trust me?"	▶ "My trust meter is low right now. Here's what you can do to raise it."

"There are some things where there is no discussion. There are houses that Anna can't go to because they are totally unsupervised."

– Mother of a high school student

"Once he starts driving, always remember you have the ultimate power: the car keys."

– Father of a high school student

FOR IDEAS ON HOW TO SET FAMILY LIMITS, see:



– Family Matters, a downloadable step-by-step guide, at <http://familymatters.sph.unc.edu>



## MARIJUANA, SOME SURPRISING FINDINGS

### FACT:

Marijuana causes memory problems, decreased motivation, and increased risk of developing a serious mental illness.

“Marijuana absolutely affects motivation. A lot of the kids who aren’t graduating this year are the ones who are hooked on pot. Marijuana becomes the focus of what a kid does and who he is.”

– High School Substance Abuse Counselor

Parents who used marijuana may find it hard to set ground rules for their children, but a lot has changed over the last 10 to 20 years. Marijuana today is far more potent than it was even ten years ago, and new studies from around the world show marijuana use can lead to serious mental, emotional and social problems.

“The scientific evidence is now clear that marijuana use during teenage years increases the risk of mental illness later in life. If you smoke pot, you quadruple your chances of developing mental illness later on.”

– Dr. John Knight, Children’s Hospital Boston

### ACT

Explain that possession of a small amount of marijuana can get your child suspended from school or the sports team. Besides that, it’s punishable with a fine and community service.



### Marijuana use is known to:

- + be addictive
- + decrease motivation
- + be a factor in serious car accidents
- + impair short-term memory, perception and motor skills
- + trigger episodes of being out of touch with reality
- + increase the risk of serious mental illness
- + cause depression and anxiety in regular users
- + be associated with the use of hard drugs

### ACT

If you’ve used marijuana, you can decide if you want to keep the focus on your teen. (See ACT on page 14.) If you feel it’s better to tell the truth, you can say:

“We didn’t always know what we do now about the harmful effects of marijuana. I stopped because I realized how harmful it was and because it is illegal. It was a mistake and I shouldn’t have done it. My hope is that you don’t have to repeat my mistakes.”

### TO LEARN MORE:



- Visit [www.nida.nih.gov/MarijBroch/MarijparentsN.html](http://www.nida.nih.gov/MarijBroch/MarijparentsN.html) to read **Marijuana: Facts Parents Need to Know** in English or Spanish





## HOW TO TALK TO YOUR TEEN

**FACT:**

**No matter what you did in your past, you can help protect your teen in the present by talking to them about the risks of alcohol and other drugs.**

Parents are more powerful influences on their teens than they may think. In a nationwide survey of 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> graders, 50% of teens said that if they had a question about alcohol or drugs, they would first ask their mother or father. So in spite of how kids may act, they trust their parents and believe they are reliable sources of information.

When most of today's parents were kids, we knew only some of the risks associated with drinking. Now we know much more. In Massachusetts in 2009, 1 out of 4 teens said that in the past month they had been in a car with a driver who had been drinking. Many teens don't realize that you cannot sober up in just a few hours after a night of drinking.

.....  
"At every party you go to in high school when girls [and guys] drink, there's less respect."

– **Recent graduate of a suburban public high school**

.....  
"I worry that if I ask my kids not to drink, they will call me a hypocrite. The truth is, when I was young, I didn't think much about the risks of alcohol and drugs. And there were lots of risks. Now I know the risks are even greater."

– **Parent of teens**

### Teens who drink have higher rates of:

▶ Teens today face risks like AIDS and exposure to a wide range of prescription drugs that may not have been present when you were their age. When combined with alcohol, these drugs can be deadly.

▶ For a teen, drinking three beers is the same as an adult of the same weight drinking a six-pack!

▶ Teens who drink and cause harm are still held responsible. Drinking is not an excuse and does not change the consequences of a bad decision.

- + poor grades in school
- + fighting
- + riding with a drunk driver
- + carrying a weapon
- + attempting suicide
- + engaging in risky sexual behavior
- + being victims of sexual assault (females)
- + using other illegal drugs



**If your teen asks about your past, ask, "Why do you want to know?" If your teen insists, you can ask, "If I did, would you want to know?" Think about how your child would react. If you decide to tell them, avoid details and stress how you have changed. Ask them to think about how drugs affect family and friends. You can say:**

"When I was younger, we didn't know what we do now about how harmful alcohol can be. Today we are talking about you, because I am worried about you and your safety."

Advice adapted from: LifeSkills Training Parent Guide: A Guide for Raising Drug-free Youth. (2006), by Dr. Gilbert Botvin. National Health Promotion Associates, Inc.



## PREVENTING PRESCRIPTION DRUG MISUSE

**FACT:** Teens are more likely to abuse prescription drugs than they are to try street drugs.

Teens in greater numbers are misusing prescription drugs. Many teens believe that because these drugs are prescribed by a doctor, they are not harmful. This is not true. In Massachusetts and all over the United States, the abuse of painkillers such as OxyContin can, and does, lead to heroin addiction. And other prescription drugs, such as anxiety medications or sleeping aids, are highly addictive and especially dangerous when combined with alcohol. As a parent, you can help protect your teen by closely monitoring the prescription drugs in your home, and by being aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse.

“Youth may get dangerous information on the internet. It’s important to keep tabs on the sites that your teen is visiting.”

– Alcohol and other drug abuse prevention specialist

“We hear stories such as, ‘I went to the local party and did an OC (OxyContin) and then I went the next weekend and did an OC. And then before I knew it, I was doing two. And before you know it, an 80 mg is \$80 and I can’t afford that. So I switched to heroin.’”

– Criminal case manager for a juvenile drug court, North Shore

**FACT:**

Most of the prescription drugs abused by teens come from family medicine cabinets.

**ACT**

Protect your teen from prescription drug abuse:

- + Secure your medicines; lock them up or keep them away from your kids.
- + Keep your computer in an open area and monitor your teen’s internet use.
- + If medications must be taken during school hours, give them to the nurse.
- + Monitor your teen’s prescriptions for painkillers, ADHD medication or other controlled substances.
- + Talk to your teen about the dangers of prescription drug abuse.
- + Properly dispose of unused prescription drugs.

### To dispose of unused prescription drugs:

- ▶ Take out of their original containers.
- ▶ Mix with coffee grounds or kitty litter and place in a sealed container in the trash.
- ▶ Do not flush prescription drugs down the toilet unless the label instructs doing so.
- ▶ Some communities have “take back” programs for prescription drugs. Check your local newspaper for programs in your community.

### TO LEARN MORE:



- **OxyContin: The Facts.** Free youth-oriented flier on the consequences of OxyContin abuse. Call 1-800-952-6637 (TTY: 1-617-536-5872) or to order, visit [www.maclearringhouse.com](http://www.maclearringhouse.com)

- **Prescription Drug Abuse: Not in My House.** The Partnership for a Drug-Free America. [www.drugfree.org/NotInMyHouse](http://www.drugfree.org/NotInMyHouse)

**FACT:** Teens who suffer from depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders and untreated ADHD are at greater risk for abusing prescription drugs.

**ACT** Prevent prescription drug abuse by seeking help if you see any of these signs.

**Prescription drug abuse, what to look for:**

- + Drugs disappearing
- + Abrupt changes in teens' finances
- + Dramatic mood changes
- + Behavioral changes such as lower grades, changes in friends, sleep and appetite
- + Loss of concern about appearance, being dirty, poorly dressed
- + Physical signs such as fatigue, confusion, weight loss, constipation, restlessness, memory loss, slurred speech, dizziness, and sleeplessness

**Examples of signs of overdose:**

- + Shallow, slow breathing, clammy skin, seizures, convulsions, coma, blue lips or fingernails, slow pulse or heart rate, pinpoint pupils

If you see any of these or any other signs of overdose, call 911.



# 7 WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR TEEN FROM ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

1

## Be a Role Model

**FACT:** Teens imitate adults.

“My parents drank and used drugs in front of us... I love my mom and dad, but I don't want my kids to have the same childhood memories that I have...”  
– **Father of teens**

If you think you may have an alcohol or drug problem, find out. Many alcohol and other drug services are covered by the new insurance guidelines. Costs may also be shared by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health based on family income.

To get help, call the Massachusetts Substance Abuse Information and Education Helpline at 1-800-327-5050 (TTY: 1-617-536-5872), or visit [www.helpline-online.com](http://www.helpline-online.com).

**ACT**

## How to be a role model:

- ▶ If you drink, do so in moderation.
- ▶ Never drive after drinking.
- ▶ Do not use illegal drugs.
- ▶ Do not ask your child to bring you alcohol or light cigarettes.
- ▶ Be very careful with products that could be abused. Examples include solvents, gases, fuels, and anything in an aerosol can. Use them in a ventilated area according to directions. See [inhalantabusetraining.org](http://inhalantabusetraining.org) for more information.

## 2

### Be Clear About Your Expectations

**FACT:**

The most common reason young people give for not using alcohol and drugs is not wanting to harm their relationship with the adults in their lives.

As a parent, you do have a huge influence over what your teen does. Sometimes parents have a hard time figuring out exactly what to say. Set a clear “no use” policy for your family.

**ACT**

**You can say: “It is not okay for you to drink, use inhalants or do drugs because:”**

- ▶ It is against the law.
- ▶ You’re still growing and your brain is still developing. Alcohol and other substances can cause brain damage that may be permanent.
- ▶ If you start when you are young, you are much more likely to become addicted. I don’t want anything to get in the way of your dreams.
- ▶ Inhalants are extremely dangerous and can cause permanent brain damage or death, even the first time they are used.

**ACT**

**When your kids get older, be more explicit about the dangers of alcohol and other drugs:**

- ▶ Drinking affects your decision-making. You are more likely to make a bad decision and end up in the wrong place at the wrong time. Being in the wrong place at the wrong time is not necessarily a matter of luck.
- ▶ Teens who drink are more likely to drive drunk, or get in a car where the driver is drunk.
- ▶ Teens who drink are more likely to try other drugs.
- ▶ Prescription pills can be more dangerous and addictive than street drugs.
- ▶ Prescription drug abuse can lead to heroin addiction. Heroin is highly addictive in any way it is used.

“Keep talking about the dangers. Look for stories in the newspaper. If there is an alcohol-related car crash, put it in front of your child and say, ‘I hope this never happens to you.’ Look for stories on TV, or things that happen to their friends. If your kids are not complaining, ‘Oh, not this talk again!’ then you’re not doing it enough.”

– **Dr. John Knight, Children’s Hospital Boston**



### 3 Set Limits and Follow Through

**FACT:** Teens whose parents set clear rules and follow through with consequences are less likely to use alcohol and other drugs.

“I was wild. I did just about everything a kid shouldn’t do... I think a lot of why I was so wild is that I was starved for discipline. I wanted some order in my life—some security. Those were lonely times. I don’t want [my son] to ever think I don’t care about him or how he acts. That’s why I sit down with him and tell him why I have these rules, why I don’t want him to do certain things. He knows that if he makes a bad choice he needs to be prepared for the consequences.”

– **Father of a teen boy**

#### **ACT** → Establish rules.

- ▶ Discuss the rules in advance.
- ▶ Follow through with consequences. Uphold limits set in school or in the community. For example, if your child is suspended for violating a rule, investigate, and help him learn from the experience.
- ▶ Tighten the reins when rules are broken.
- ▶ Allow your teen to build trust. Reward good behavior. Praise him or her often for staying away from substances.

“When my son and his friends were caught drinking right before April vacation, I cancelled his trip with his team. It wrecked his spring break. It cost a lot of money. But he got the message.”

– **Mother of a high school senior**

**FACT:** Teens who are exposed to alcohol use in movies are more likely to drink.

#### **ACT** → Monitor what your teens watch.

- ▶ Talk to your teen about consequences that may or may not be shown in films or television programs. For example, after characters drink heavily in one scene, would they really feel fine in the next?
- ▶ Consider movie content by reading family-friendly reviews (e.g. [parentreviews.com](http://parentreviews.com)).

Think about why you don’t want your kids using alcohol or other drugs and explain your reasons to them. You might have worries about what will happen to your kids, either now or in the future. The bottom line is that you need to tell your kids that you don’t want them using alcohol or other drugs. Be clear about it.

You might need separate rules for alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. For example, your family rule for alcohol might be only a sip of wine at a religious service. Make sure to discuss your rules with your adolescent and ask if they have any questions. Give them a chance to talk about the rules, then enforce them.



## 4 Be Involved In Your Kid's Life

**FACT:** Teens are much less likely to use drugs when parents are involved in their lives.

"We have dinner together four nights a week. Everyone talks about their day—the good things, the bad things. The one rule is you're not allowed to criticize anyone else."

– **Mother of high school students**

"It's amazing what you can learn about what's going on in their lives by listening to them talk to their friends in the car."

– **Father of high school students**

### **ACT** → Ways to stay involved:

- ▶ Listen — even when your teen is talking about things that may not seem interesting to you. Don't judge.
- ▶ Be warm and responsive: Start conversations with an observation like "You seem happy" or "You seem stressed."
- ▶ Try to have dinner together at least 4 times a week.
- ▶ Get to know your teen's friends and their parents.
- ▶ When your kids want to go to someone's house, check to see if an adult will be home.
- ▶ Encourage your teens to call you if they ever feel uneasy or unsafe.

## 5 Help Your Teen Become Well-Rounded

**FACT:** Teens who participate in community service and extracurricular activities are less likely to be involved in drugs and alcohol.

"It's important for kids to see beyond themselves, to get a sense that they are responsible for helping other people. Whether they're baking pies for the homeless or doing holiday shopping for kids whose mothers have AIDS, it's about teaching them to be responsible and compassionate people."

– **Parent of teens in a youth group**

### **ACT** → Encourage your child to spend several hours a week on a combination of...

- + Community Service
- ... AND ...
- + Sports
- + Art, music, drama
- ... AND/OR ...
- + Clubs, etc.

For help finding opportunities for your teen talk to your child's school or call 2-1-1 or 1-877-211-6277 (TTY: 1-508-370-4890).

## 6 Encourage Your Teen to Try Hard in School

**FACT:** Teens who perform well in school are less likely to become involved with alcohol and drugs.

“We limit all screen time—Internet, TV, video games.”

– **Mother of teens**

“My son has a learning disability, so good grades are hard to get, even when he tries. I encourage every improvement, like, ‘You went from a C+ to a B- in English. Great!’”

– **Mother of high school student**

“...[Teens] that are not interested in school... more often turn to alternatives, one being drug use. I hear many people say ‘I got injured’ or ‘I didn’t make the sports team’ or ‘School is boring.’ And then they report they were heavily involved in drugs in junior high or high school.

– **Clinical supervisor at a suburban treatment center**

“Parents who stay connected to their teens’ lives can help them to find ways to do something well, even if they are not A students.”

– **Alcohol and other drug abuse prevention specialist**

**ACT** → Talk to teachers, guidance counselors, or social workers to find tutoring or other help for your teen.

## 7 Reach Out

**FACT:** Teens with support from adults in their lives are less likely to use alcohol and other drugs.

Sometimes the job of parenting a teen can be overwhelming. Supportive, caring adults in the community can make a big difference in your teens’ development.

“When our family had serious problems, the principal suggested a social worker. I didn’t even realize the school had social workers. I never thought we’d need one. They have helped enormously.”

– **Mother of a family in crisis**

**ACT** → **Seek and give ongoing support.**

- ▶ Spend time with close family members.
- ▶ Join activities in your community.
- ▶ Talk to parents in similar situations.
- ▶ Stay connected with neighbors and friends.

**People who can help guide your child or help you find community resources:**

- + Pediatrician or health care provider
- + Guidance counselor
- + Social worker
- + Teacher
- + Religious leader
- + Call 2-1-1 to be directed to local programs

→ If you have questions or need referrals to alcohol and other drug services, call the Massachusetts Substance Abuse Information and Education Helpline 1-800-327-5050 (TTY: 1-617-536-5872) or visit [www.helpline-online.com](http://www.helpline-online.com)

MENTORING RESOURCE: – Big Brothers Big Sisters of America [www.bbbsa.org](http://www.bbbsa.org)

## For additional information on prevention:

**Don't Give Kids Alcohol** and **Choose to Keep Your Freedom** pamphlet. To order call the Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse, 1-800-952-6637 (TTY: 1-617-536-5872) or visit [www.maclearinghouse.com](http://www.maclearinghouse.com)

**A Parent's Guide: Preventing Inhalant Abuse Among Children and Teens** packet. To order call 1-800-952-6637 (TTY: 1-617-536-5872) or visit [www.maclearinghouse.com](http://www.maclearinghouse.com)

**OxyContin: The Facts!** Free youth-oriented flier on the consequences of OxyContin abuse. Call 1-800-952-6637 (TTY: 1-617-536-5872) to order, or visit [www.maclearinghouse.com](http://www.maclearinghouse.com)

To learn more about new research into the teenage brain:  
**The Teen Brain: It's Just Not Grown Up Yet**, National Public Radio, March 1, 2010.  
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=124119468>

## For help if your child has a problem:

**Alcohol and Other Drugs: Is Your Teen Using?** To order call 1-800-952-6637 (TTY: 1-617-536-5872) or visit [www.maclearinghouse.com](http://www.maclearinghouse.com)

Massachusetts Substance Abuse Information and Education Helpline. Information and referrals to prevention and treatment programs. (Translators available) 1-800-327-5050 (7 days a week) (TTY: 1-617-536-5872) or visit [www.helpline-online.com](http://www.helpline-online.com)

Youth Central Intake and Care Coordination. Help with finding services for teens with substance abuse and medical or residential needs. 1-617-661-3991 or 1-866-705-2807 (TTY: 1-617-661-9051)

For additional copies of this booklet and other materials for other age groups call 1-800-952-6637 (TTY: 1-617-536-5872) or visit [www.maclearinghouse.com](http://www.maclearinghouse.com)

Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, Massachusetts Department of Public Health.  
Produced by GEOVISION [www.geovisiononline.com](http://www.geovisiononline.com)

Special thanks to Dr. John Knight, Director, Center for Adolescent Substance Abuse Research at Children's Hospital Boston

