

More than one in five parents believe they have little influence in preventing teens from using illicit substances

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A new report indicates that more than one in five parents of teens aged 12 to 17 (22.3 percent) think what they say has little influence on whether or not their child uses illicit substances, tobacco, or alcohol. This report by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) also shows one in ten parents said they did not talk to their teens about the dangers of using tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs even though 67.6 percent of these parents who had not spoken to their children thought they would influence whether their child uses drugs if they spoke to them.

In fact national surveys of teens ages 12 to 17 show that teens who believe their parents would strongly disapprove of their [substance use](#) were less likely to use substances than other. For example, current marijuana use was less prevalent among youth who believed their parents would strongly disapprove of their trying [marijuana](#) once or twice than among youth who did not perceive this level of disapproval (5.0 percent vs. 31.5 percent).

"Surveys of teens repeatedly show that parents can make an enormous difference in influencing their children's perceptions of tobacco, alcohol, or [illicit drug use](#)," said SAMHSA Administrator Pamela S. Hyde. "Although most parents are talking with their teens about the risks of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, far too many are missing the vital opportunity these conversations provide in influencing their children's health and well-being. Parents need to initiate age-appropriate conversations about these issues with their children at all stages of their development in order to help ensure that their children make the right decisions."

Parents can draw upon a number of resources to help them talk with their children about substance

use. One resource is SAMHSA's "Navigating the Teen Years: A Parent's Handbook for Raising Healthy Teens," available at store.samhsa.gov/product/Navigating_Healthy_Teens/PHD1127.

"Talk. They Hear You." is SAMHSA's new national media campaign encouraging parents with ideas and resources to promote conversations with children ages nine and older about the dangers of underage drinking. The campaign features a series of TV, radio, and print public service announcements in English and Spanish showing parents how to seize the moment to talk with their children about alcohol. Information about the campaign is available at: www.underagedrinking.samhsa.gov.

The SAMHSA report, "1 in 5 Parents Think What They Say Has Little Impact on Their Child's Substance Use," is available at www.samhsa.gov/data/2K13/Spotlight/Spot081-Parents.pdf. It is based on the findings of SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health—an annual nationwide survey of 67,500 Americans aged 12 or older.

Provided by SAMHSA

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