

# What if You Suspect Your Child is Abusing Drugs and Alcohol?

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It's never easy to talk to your child if you suspect he or she is abusing drugs or alcohol, but it's something you have to do.

## **Acknowledge the Problem**

Let your child know that you suspect a problem, and be sure to have the conversation with you are all calm and have plenty of time. This isn't easy—your feelings and your child's feelings may range from anger to guilt to sadness, but by staying involved, you can help your child make positive choices.

## **Be Specific About Your Concerns**

Be specific about the things you've observed that have caused concern. For example, you've found paraphernalia, missing pills, or empty bottles. Perhaps his/her appearance indicates a problem. Tell your child that you're concerned and that this behavior is dangerous.

## **Try to Remain Calm and Connect with Your Child**

Be firm but loving in your tone, and have the discussion without getting angry or accusatory. Try not to make the discussion an inquisition. Instead, try to connect and find out why your child is making these choices.

## **Be Prepared. Practice What You'll Say**

Be prepared for your child to deny using drugs, and expect that he or she may get angry. Know what you're going to say ahead of time so that you can be prepared for this response and be prepared to remain calm and firm.

## **Act Now**

After your talk, you'll have a better idea of where to go next. You could decide to set new rules and consequences and observe your child more closely, or the situation could require a professional intervention and medical treatment. You won't know until your child has been professionally evaluated to determine if there is a problem.

Source: *Parents. The Anti-Drug.* [www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com)