

Red Ribbon Week

a national campaign to promote drug awareness and education



October 26 - October 30

Spirit Days



All OEN students are encouraged to participate in a week of dress up days to celebrate this year's theme: *"Be Happy. Be Brave. Be Drug Free."*



Please remember to follow the school dress code with regard to shoes and uniform bottoms (when possible).

Monday: I'm So Happy It's Red Ribbon Week

Wear your red uniform shirt, a red ribbon, a red mask, or any other red clothing/accessories to help kick off Red Ribbon Week

Tuesday: Color Me Drug Free

Wear any combination of bright, beautiful colors from top to bottom

Wednesday: Wake Up To a Healthy Lifestyle

It's pajama day (but no slippers, please)

Thursday: Be Brave, Be Drug Free

Dress like your favorite hero (superhero, movie character, police officer, firefighter, etc.)

Friday: Say Boo! to Drugs

Come to school in your Halloween costume

How Do I Talk To My Child About the Dangers of Drugs and Alcohol?

Ages 5 to 8

As children enter school and spend more time around their peers, they become more influenced by the media and world around them. They're open now to new ideas and messages but definitely need your help to make sense of all this information.

- **Let your child know how you feel about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.** Keep your discussions factual and focused on the present. Future consequences are too distant to have any meaning. Let them know, for instance, that illegal drugs and alcohol makes it harder to play ball, finish a puzzle, or do other things they enjoy, and that smoking causes bad breath.
- **Talk to your child about drug-related messages in the media.** Some TV shows, movies, music videos, and ads glamorize the use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs. Ask your child whether they make drugs seem cool and acceptable, or whether they also show their downside. Encourage your child to ask questions or share concerns about the things he's seeing and hearing.
- **Set clear family rules about drug use, and examine your own actions.** Tell children why you don't want them to take drugs, smoke, or drink. And always try to be a good role model. Your actions speak louder than words.
- **Get to know your child's friends and their parents.** Check in by phone or visit every once in a while to make sure that these families share the same values as you do about tobacco, alcohol, and drugs. (This is a good rule to follow when your child gets older as well.)

Ages 8 and Up

During the tween and preteen years, children may begin to assert their independence and question your authority, but they need your input and advice more than ever. In fact, when it comes to the issue of drug use, this is one of the most important times in a child's life. Beginning at age 8:

- **Help build your child's self-esteem.** Puberty can erode your child's self-confidence and cause him at times to feel insecure, doubtful, and vulnerable to peer pressure. During these years, give your child lots of positive reinforcement and praise him for both his efforts and his successes.
- **Give your child the power to make decisions that go against his peers.** Encourage your child to pick out the sneakers that he likes, for example, rather than the pair that many of his friends have. Or urge your daughter to hang out with true friends rather than with kids in the cool crowd.
- **Base drug and alcohol-related messages on facts, not fear.** Kids this age love to learn facts (even strange ones) about all kinds of things. You can take advantage of their passion for learning to reinforce your message about drugs and alcohol.
- **Keep your conversations in "present tense."** Tweens and preteens aren't concerned with future problems that might result from experimenting with tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs. On the other hand, they are concerned about their appearance. So if they believe that drug use will impair their looks or health, they might be likely to avoid these practices.
- **Help children separate reality from fantasy.** Watch TV and movies with your kids, and ask lots of questions to reinforce the distinction between what is real and make-believe. Remember to talk about advertising, too, as those messages are especially powerful.
- **Encourage healthy, creative activities.** Look for ways to get your child involved in sports, hobbies, school clubs, and other activities that reduce boredom and excess free time. Encourage positive friendships and interests, and look for activities that you and your child can do together.

Sources: Parents.com; Partnership for a Drug-Free America; The Nemours Foundation; & The American Academy of Pediatrics.

The information is designed for educational purposes only. It's not intended to be a substitute for informed medical advice or care.