



# 10 Things Strong Fathers Can Do



## To Keep Their Children Away From Drugs and Alcohol

### 1. Consistently set rules and expectations for child's behavior.

When rules are set consistently and children know that they are *expected* to follow rules concerning their behavior, they are more likely to follow those rules. As well, when kids know that the rules are set for their safety and well-being, they find it easier to do the things that are expected of them.

### 2. Monitor what your child is watching on television.

By controlling the content of their TV watching, you are controlling what messages they are receiving about alcohol, drug use, and other risk taking behaviors. You are also setting expectations for positive, responsible viewing habits for the future.

### 3. Monitor your child's internet usage.

Understand the internet and its many uses, monitor the sites your child has access to, and what they are viewing. Set the expectation of what they should and should not access. Purchase filtering software if possible to screen out undesirable content but do not depend on it to do the monitoring for you.

### 4. Restrict the music your child is listening to and purchasing.

Let your child know that no matter how popular a performer or group may be that you will not tolerate lyrics condoning or promoting drug and alcohol use, violence, hate, or other negative messages. Listen to your child's music, seek to understand the messages being promoted and look for parental advisory labels on CDs.

### 5. Be aware of how well your child is doing in school.

Set the expectation for children to do their best in school. Communicate with school personnel such as teachers, counselors, and administrators. Monitor your child's homework, their grades, and their behavior at school on a regular basis. Let your child know that you are monitoring their efforts and be available to help when needed.

### 6. Communicate to your child that you oppose drug use.

Fathers that let their children know that they would be very upset if their child was to use drugs cut their child's risk of using drugs by two-thirds. Make sure you are sending this message regularly.

### 7. Eat dinner with your children (with the TV off).

Parents who spend time in conversation over dinner without the distraction of TV at least 6 to 7 times a week reduce the risk of their children taking drugs by over 50 percent. 47 percent of the children in these types of homes report an excellent relationship with their father.

### 8. Know where your children are at all times.

When there are not periods of time of an hour or more after school or on weekends when parents do not know where their child is and curfews are set, children are at half the risk of using drugs or alcohol.

### 9. Expect the truth about where your child is going.

Fathers should expect to be told where a child is going in the evening or on weekends and to be told the truth by the child. Children should be held accountable about where they are going, and with whom they are going.

### 10. Have chores for your child to do on a regular basis.

Set the expectation that your child will have certain responsibilities on an ongoing basis. The combination of responsibility and set daily or weekly activities helps children to find alternatives to risk-taking behaviors.

*Information derived from the National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse VI:Teens conducted by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University.*