



THE DRUG PROOF HOME

A Step By Step Guide



Timothy Shoemaker is a veteran police officer, and nationally recognized trainer.

His powerful techniques have been protecting kids, and empowering parents for more than 15 years.

Learn more, by visiting [TimothyShoemaker.com!](http://TimothyShoemaker.com)



Foreword



Would you believe me if I told you that something as seemingly benign as a lighted doorway could stop drugs from entering your home? What if I told you that something as simple as an earlier curfew, or as routine as a family meal, could dramatically reduce your child's chances of becoming an addict? What if I proved to you that the everyday, seemingly inconsequential decisions that you make as a parent, dramatically influence the likelihood of substance abuse entering your child's life?

Some parents read that paragraph and are instantly inspired. Others cringe at the thought of their own gravity. That's nothing to be ashamed of. The stakes are high, and our job is a tough one. Life is busy and we don't always have time to think everything through. Teens can be manipulative and we don't always have the energy to uphold our ideals.

It's intimidating, but the good news is that you don't have to be perfect. You just have to be committed. I'm about to give you the tools you need to succeed, and the facts you need to back them up. We'll make those tough decisions a lot easier, and bring strength back into your debates.

These are empowering principles. What we're after isn't so much anti-drug, as it is pro-achievement. We're creating a family partnership, one that excels together, defeating threats and distractions along the way.

The Drug Proof Home is not a fortress, it is a sanctuary. It's a place where family members come to live, love and laugh together. We have rules. We have expectations. We have practices that not everyone understands. But because of that, we enjoy a relationship, and embrace a passion for achievement that few others are lucky enough to share.



Simply talking to your kids about drugs has been shown to reduce substance abuse by up to 50%.¹⁶

Foreword



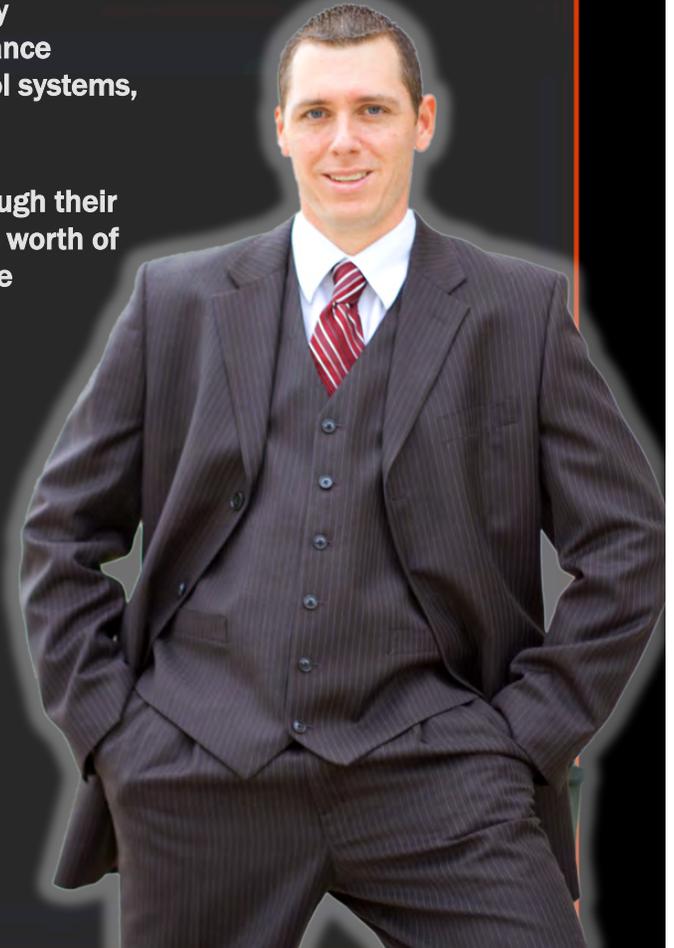
I've walked a very unique path in life. At once as father, teacher and protector, my distinctive role has placed me in constant contact with the many facets of substance abuse. I've worked on college campuses, taught in both public and private school systems, and served as a police officer in a busy suburb of New York City.

I've watched thousands of kids grow up, and mentored hundreds of families through their kid's teen and tween years. Through this exposure, I've witnessed many lifetimes worth of tragedy. Death, injury, heartache and loss; more than any other circumstance, I've found these misfortunes to be caused by drug abuse.

Fortunately, I've also been exposed to incredible triumph. Kids, families and communities, each rising up to declare their independence from the drug related failures that all too often compromise our happiness.

In this time, I've found one thing to be true above all others. The real struggle against substance abuse does not take place on our country's borders. The most important efforts are not borne by our teachers or police officers. In truth, our nation's future is being drafted inside our own homes, and the architects are parents like you.

I can help you defend your family. I can help you protect your kids. Together, we can insulate your home from the dangers of drug use. Your active involvement will quickly become the defining factor in the creation of a drug-free future for your child. As a husband, as a father, as a friend, I can offer you no greater gift.



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Foundations



Never underestimate the power of family. The struggle to prevent substance abuse can be fraught with conflict and complexity. At times, it may seem as though family members are pitted against one another. It's confusing. It's intimidating. It's frustrating. It's worth it.

Acquaintances may offer advice. Friends may offer support. But family members swear a binding and passionate resolution to help each other succeed. They help us reach the heights that we were meant to reach, and they aren't afraid to kick us in the butt if they have to.

Our family members see the strength within us, even when we can't find it for ourselves. They offer the wisdom of perspective, even when we seem to be blind. They offer the hand of guidance, even when we wish we could refuse. And they offer the gift of determination, when our own stores have run dry. Though we may not know it at the time, our family members are our truest and most faithful allies in life.

Families enjoy a pure and unbinding belief in one another. We are compassionate, tolerant and supportive in all ways, except those which could cause our failure. We are united. We succeed together and we fail together. Even when the heat of the moment seems to pull us apart, we walk as one. Today, tomorrow, always.

Foundations



I've delivered that preceding sentiment to thousands of people in live audience settings. Every time I do, I can read the mixed emotions felt by the parents in attendance. Some parents are literally rising out of their chairs with enthusiasm. Others sit back in disbelief, arms folded across their chest. Though coming from different perspectives, both of these groups have the same question on their mind, "What's this guy setting us up for?"

It's a natural question; an important one at that. But I'm not the one that can answer it. The real question is, "What are you setting yourself up for?" The truth is, what I'm offering can be invaluable to your family. It can build a strong partnership between you and your child. It can enhance trust and reduce suspicions. It can foster confidence and develop independence. It can instill strength, positivity and optimism. It can do all of this and more, but not if you're afraid.

Many of us fear the rejection of our children. We fear being seen as overbearing by other parents. We fear family conflict. We fear responsibility. We fear taking ownership of our kid's decisions and consequences. We fear being seen as we saw our own parents when we were teens. In one way shape or form, the skeptics amongst us invariably suffer from one of these common fears. In true life, though, the only fear we can afford to have, is that of failure.

You don't have to agree with everything in this book. Embrace your own style. Walk your own path. But whatever strategies you ultimately employ, remember this piece of advice: Refuse to Lose.

Ultimately, the most powerful parent is not the most savvy, strict, cool, or commando. **The most powerful parent, is the most committed parent.**



Substance abuse and Addiction is the leading preventable cause of death and disability in America.¹

Foundations



Remember when they were young? Back in the Diaper Days, our role was clear; *Protect them from their innocence, and empower them to succeed.*

Though maybe not easy, our job was at least simple. We put covers on the outlets, and gates on the stairways. We supervised them closely. Our efforts created a protective environment; one that would keep our kids safe from their own curiosities and impulses.

Now that they are teens, it's just different. Or is it?

Though their world is much bigger, and the threats more complicated, our role is unchanged. As parents, we protect our children until they can protect themselves. It's what we do. We don't make excuses or take shortcuts. We protect our kids.

The fact is, as our kids cross into the threshold of their teen years, their mortality rate suddenly skyrockets by some 200%. According to the United States Surgeon General, this ominous spike is due to substance abuse.² It's the number one threat to teenagers, and we need to protect them from it. Whatever it takes.

The good news is that you already know what you're in for. You've been down this road. The struggles you face now are very much like those that you faced a decade ago. Toddlers are a lot like teens. We actually have the science to prove it.³ well then, and they're not likely to understand well now. They cried and threw tantrums then, and they'll do the same this time around. Keep yourself sane by staying on mission: *Protect them from their innocence, and empower them to succeed.*

Not You!

28% of parents feel that there is little they can do to prevent teen drug use.¹⁵

Foundations



As an educator, I've taken great interest in the way we develop our kids. Sports and academics are clearly in the limelight of our efforts. Substance abuse, despite having proven eminently capable of undermining all other achievements, is relegated to the periphery. In national surveys, only 43% of high school parents consider substance abuse to be amongst the top three concerns for their kids future.⁴ It's a tragic mistake.

When it comes to substance abuse, our kid's teen years are without a shadow of a doubt the most formative and predictive of future behavior.⁵ Our missteps here, often play out years or even decades into the future. There's some very good news, though. If we keep them clean until they're twenty one, we nearly guarantee their lifelong success. The research proves it.

Ironically, success on the ball field or PSAT's has little correlation to substance abuse patterns. On the contrary, kids who abstain from drinking and drug use most often enjoy greater success in both sports and academics. The drug-free lifestyle, more than pushups or flashcards alone, is a reliable guarantor of success and longevity.

The idea isn't to overshadow all of our efforts with anti-drug messaging, but to overemphasize the internal and external assets known to protect kids from drugs. We want to mitigate the pro-drug influences of their world, minimize their exposure to risky environments and foster strong decision making skills.

We're not just raising kids who don't use drugs, we're building leaders. Free from social or chemical dependency, these are kids who are free to embrace their future with powerful focus. What's more, they understand their consequence, both within their family and society. They take pride in doing the right thing, and they influence others to do the same.



1 out of every 4 kids who first use alcohol, tobacco or other drugs prior to the age of 18 will ultimately develop a substance abuse disorder.⁵

Foundations



“The only thing worse than being blind, is having sight but no vision.” – Helen Keller

If you intend to set this as a goal for your family, vision will be your greatest strength. It will keep you grounded. It will push you forward. It will fill your sails -and yes- it will draw others to you. Blessed with vision, commitment and technique, you will almost certainly achieve your goals.

Don't be too disappointed to find that some key allies seem to be lacking from your support group. Children rarely see the ends pursued by our means. Your spouse may lack the commitment, or dismiss the concerns you have. Other parents in your peer group may have a different set of priorities for their own kids. None of that matters.

Leadership rarely comes without sacrifice and is never sustained without fortitude. When times are tough, when doubt is cast, when small failures steal your momentum, carry forward. Stay true to your vision. The fact is, no group accomplishment ever involves a fully proportionate amount of effort.

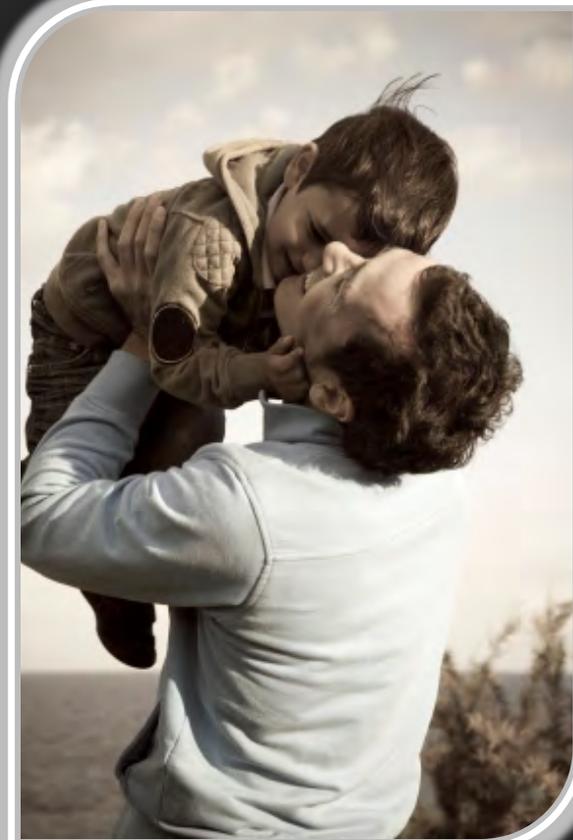
You may have to chart the course. You may have to care more. You may have to work harder. But in the end, that trophy will cross the finish line, and no one will feel more successful than you.

There are powerful, omnipresent forces, working in a direction contrary to that of a drug-free future for your children. They are good at what they do, and they actively recruit unwitting supporters within your network. Have the vision to protect your family from them, and the determination to do whatever it takes.



Teens whose parents do not “strongly disapprove” of underage drinking are 3.5 times more likely to have an alcohol abuse disorder.⁵

The Pain of Reflection



There was much more than motivation behind that first segment. I'm trying to protect you. Of all the suffering I've seen as a police officer, none can compare to that on display during a family intervention.

By the time it happens, every family member has endured months of torture. The past is tarnished, the future is gone and the present is unbearably painful. Though hope exists, it is most often overshadowed by the tremendous guilt felt by the parents.

As a parent, imagine the anguish of wondering, "Could I have prevented this?", or worse yet, "Could I have contributed to this?". Our kids depend on us –yes, even teenagers. The truth is, we depend upon them as well. Their success as people affirms our success as parents. It gives us meaning. It substantiates our purpose. All the work, all the sacrifice, all the love; their success makes it all worth it.

The flipside is failure, which evokes guilt and ruthless self-examination. Though I've heard many parents correctly assign blame to their own kids for having chosen drugs, I don't think I've ever met a parent who truly forgave themselves. It's the burden we bare. We certainly can't prevent every bad decision, but when things go wrong, it sure is assuring to know that we did everything we could to prevent it. Under the torturous scrutiny of hindsight, that small comfort is invaluable.

Over 60% of American teens say that their parents have never seriously discussed the dangers of illegal drugs with them.¹⁴

The Pain of Reflection



“We don’t see things the way they are, we see things the way we are.”

Though techniques are easy to change, perspective isn’t. How much of a choice did you have in crafting your own perspective? Not as much as you think. Every year in America many millions of dollars are spent in the promotion of a drug-tolerant society. Now, more than ever, their ulterior motives flood our news, politics and entertainment.

In a far less selfish circumstance, you were also subject to the assumptions of your own parents and older siblings. Like the hand-me-downs you wore in the 4th grade, many of your own attitudes and beliefs were simply given to you. You wear them today as relics from a time when you just accepted things as “the way they are.”

It’s time to change that.

There are people fighting for you and your kids. Millions are being spent on research that you can use. You have access to more knowledge, insight and proven techniques than any other generation of parents. Unfortunately, this stuff just isn’t common knowledge. The parent sitting next to you on the bleachers isn’t likely to know it. I’m about to give you the gift of a privileged perspective, but it comes with a burden.

We all have friends and relatives that consider themselves to be blessed with real-world perspective. Self-reliant and reaffirmed by their own personal experience, they have little need to challenge their own assumptions. Having a Drug Proof Home means that you have to be willing to part company from these Common Sense Practitioners. You may have to bite your lip, or even defend yourself from time to time. Stand tall. Show respect to those around you, but never doubt yourself for using research and proven techniques to lead your family.

45% of teens say that there is “no great risk” in having 5 or more alcoholic drinks in one sitting.¹⁵

The Pain of Reflection



**The Saga
Continues**

— or —

**The End of
an Error**

American High School Students

72.5% have
used alcohol.⁴

46.3% have
smoked
cigarettes.⁴

36.8% have
smoked
marijuana.⁴

14.8% have
abused
prescription
medicine.⁴

“We did it when we were young.” I’ve heard that defeatist mantra on so many occasions. The implication is that we all did these things, we all made it through ok, and our kids will do the same. None of these conclusions are true. The statistics below only scratch the surface of our nation’s drug problem. While many in our generation did do it when we were young, we now own the consequences for it. Our country, our communities, and our neighbors are suffering. It’s time to say, “We did it when we were young. We learned from it, and we’re not going to let our kids make the same mistakes.”

Drug use costs
U.S. taxpayers
\$484 billion
annually.⁷

We suffer 40
million drug
related injuries
per year⁸

We endure
nearly .5
million drug
related deaths
each year.⁹

A fatal DWI
occurs every
50 minutes in
America.¹⁰

43% of U.S.
adults have
alcoholism in
their family.

Living in a community that clearly disapproves of adolescent substance abuse has been shown to be a protective factor, even for teens who have individual risk factors of their own.³⁶

The Pain of Reflection



Teens are like wet cement, whatever makes an impression on them can be seen for decades. You've no doubt noticed that many of your high school and college buddies are essentially unchanged in adulthood. Nowhere is this circumstance more true than when it comes to substance abuse patterns.

The way we drink, recreate and entertain tends to become hardwired. Though some of us get to a point where we "leave those days in the past", a great many more do not. If we're not careful, we pass those tendencies onto our kids long before they have a choice in the matter.⁶

It can be hard to reflect upon own practices. For most of us, it's all we know. Our families did it this way, and we've surrounded ourselves with friends who do it this way. Or maybe our families were too uptight, and we don't want that for our own kids. It's also true that many of us have turned to substances like alcohol, nicotine or marijuana, as a medicine. They helped us cope when we were younger, and we're not sure who we would be without them.

There's even increasing evidence that these things hardwire themselves into our brains at levels far below addiction. Though non-clinical, our habits, routines and impulses each require a great degree of willpower to diffuse. Change is rarely easy.

We've made tremendous sacrifices for our kids. We've made incredible investments in their future. Still, the most important investment we can make may require a piece of us that we're not ready to part with.



Kids who have seen their parents drunk at least once are twice as likely to get drunk themselves prior to the age of 16.¹¹

Getting Serious



In nearly every study to date, parents remain the number one influential factor in creating their own children's substance abuse patterns.¹⁴ Your influence is partly embodied by behavior, and partly conveyed through the attitudes you express.

So take this opportunity to challenge yourself. What are you modeling? What are you molding? Don't look at it as an accusation. It's an opportunity. I can think of no more of an inspirational concept than that of a parent inspired by their child.

In order to create a superhero, you must be a superhero. The greatest leaders, are those who lead by example.

Teenagers have a habit of making parents feel that they are no longer their role models. It's a lie; an act. When you're not looking, they are - with big wide eyes, just like when they were younger. Teens talk a good game; they manipulate towards goals that they think are in their best interests. They push the envelope and they confront authority. It's their job.

Your job is to be a pillar. Be the lighthouse. Set a strong and steady example. You must always be in view, and remain eminently capable of leading them safely through the storm of adolescence.



Kids who engage in underage drinking are 18 times more likely to use marijuana.³⁷

Getting Serious



Every parent has reached a point where they've felt overwhelmed by life. I think I tend to feel that way at least once a day. It can be hard to sustain a consistent and effective defense against substance abuse. In "The Drug Proof Child", I talked about the importance of mentoring our kids from the diapers up. That's a long time. In this book we're focusing on the teen years. That's a long time too. Make sure your game plan is built for the long term approach.

As much as is possible, focus your efforts on positivity. Anytime we dwell on the "don't do this" aspect, we risk neglecting the skills that prevent our kids from "doing that". Rules are essential, but our kids need to be achievers. They need to have focus. They need to develop social flexibility. They need to understand consequences, and be able to reason logically. They need to embrace their own importance and recognize the benefits of being a positive example for others; even when in the minority.

Some of my other publications have discussed techniques for building these assets. This stuff is fun. It's rewarding. You can actually witness the development of your child's personal tool box. Aside from the absence of drug use, it's the clearest evidence that your making a difference. So, on those Thursday nights, when they've been hammering you for hours about the weekend sleepover, concert, or other issue in contention, remind yourself that your sacrifice IS paying off, and that you can see it.

A sad fact is that over 90% of those who enter drug treatment programs ultimately relapse. **Over 90%!**¹² Even for those who recover, addiction remains an incurable disease. While addiction rates are alarmingly high for teen/tween users, they are remarkably low for those who reach adulthood without using. Each and every drug-free day is a victory for you, your child and your family. Stay the course.

The top two reasons why kids say that they would NOT use drugs are: because their parents disapprove or because their parents would punish them.¹

Getting Serious



In 2007 the U.S. Surgeon General came out with a fascinating report on the impact of alcohol upon American teens. Even as a D.A.R.E. instructor, I was shocked. I immediately supplemented the report with statistics from the healthcare industry and criminal justice system. I obtained admission data from emergency rooms and drug treatment centers. I developed a presentation that I was sure would knock people's socks off. It was going to be a game-changer.

I delivered different versions of the presentation to adult and school-age audiences. It was an immediate failure. People's eyes glassed over. No, it wasn't my delivery. In truth, I found that our problem with alcohol is simply too great to appreciate numerically. When confronted with the astronomical numbers, our reasoning shuts down. It's like trying to conceptualize the dollar figure of our national debt. We see so many decimal points that we just shrug our shoulders and sigh. "Alright, it's bad," we say. Unfortunately, relinquishing yourself to a problem is much different than committing yourself to it.

In frustration one day, I skipped past all of the statistics and blew right through my fancy graphs. I ran over to a flip chart and wrote down the four drugs you see on the bottom right side of this page.

"Raise your hand," I said, "when I mention the drug that scares you the most." The audience ranked cocaine as the most ominous, followed by prescription meds, marijuana and then alcohol.

"Now," I continued, "please raise your hand when I mention the drug that has negatively impacted the most people in YOUR life." The order was reversed. The heads started to shake. The problem was brought into perspective. Alcohol is the number one threat.

Make no mistakes. The scariest drug is that which is most likely to harm you, your child or your family.

What's Worse?

Cocaine
Pharmaceuticals
Marijuana
Alcohol

Click Now!



Getting Serious



Each and every time I refer to drug use in this book, I'm including a direct reference to underage drinking. This is, hands down, the number one drug problem in America.

The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that underage drinking costs Americans \$52.8 billion annually.¹⁷ If those dollars don't make sense, consider the hard reality that alcohol use kills more kids than all other drugs combined.¹⁸

It's an endemic problem, one that goes far beyond keeping the car keys away from kids who have been drinking. Each year brings another maelstrom of in-home accidents, drownings, fires, assaults, missing persons, suicides, sexually transmitted diseases and teen pregnancies associated with underage drinking.¹⁹ That's just the beginning. Underage drinkers are up to 400% more likely to become an alcoholic before reaching the age of 25.²⁰ They are 180% more likely to use marijuana,²¹ and 8.5 times more likely to develop serious problems with other illicit drugs.²² Those who drank while underage are 9.5 times more likely to ultimately drive while drunk later in life.²³ The younger a person is when they first try alcohol, the more likely they are to ultimately injure themselves or someone else due to their alcohol use.²⁴ Teen alcohol abuse also impairs development of the hippocampus, and has been linked to cognitive impairment that persists long into adulthood.²⁵

Every generation of parents wants to make life better and more prosperous for their own children. Take this as an invitation to dispense with the "We did it when we were younger" mentality. It was a mistake then. It's a mistake now. Our kids deserve better, and we can help them achieve it.

Your first and most important fight, will be the prevention of underage of drinking. Make no excuses, and accept nothing less than the commitment of your family.



1/3rd of teens have seen one or both of their parents drunk. These kids are 3 times as likely to use marijuana and 3 times as likely to use cigarettes. ³⁷

The Myths That Divide Us



All teenagers drink at some point.

If they don't drink in high school, they'll go nuts in college.

Most parents don't think it's a big deal.



It's better they do it in my basement, than without any supervision at all.

A few years ago, my wife and I met a few friends at the movies. We were seeing a scary flick called "The Grudge". At one point in the movie, one of the main characters was about to open the wrong door and get sucked into the netherworld. The audience knew what was about to happen. Half of us pleaded out loud, "Don't do it!". It didn't work. He opened the door anyway, and it was a huge mistake! It wasn't his fault, he just didn't know what we knew.

That character did what came naturally to him. Unfortunately, he was wrong. This is not unlike the scenario now playing out in your neighborhood. No netherworlds, mind you, but there are some truly tragic mistakes being made.

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The Myths That Divide Us



In my years of serving on organizations, speaking to parents and mentoring families, I've come across a few widespread myths. Though clearly refuted by research, I've found that we sometimes just don't know better. We end up inadvertently embracing fallacies as fact. I've even seen some of these myths echoed by "talking-heads" on respectable television programs.

Unfortunately for us, these misconceptions don't only affect the families who've fallen victim to them. They affect everyone in the same social circle. They are contagious. They're perpetuated for many reasons. For some people, the arguments pass the sniff test, and that's the extent of their evaluation. For others, the myth justifies what they want to do or want to believe. In any case, the mistake inadvertently pits parent against parent, and robs our communities of the unity we need to protect our kids. That's not fair.

While the marijuana debate is quickly developing an impressive dossier of its own mythical claims, the most prevalent myths currently center around alcohol. The process of confirming or dispelling these popular beliefs is very rewarding. It's empowering. It gives you tremendous insight; information that not everyone has. I encourage you to spread that gift.

With each myth, I'll include some of the research that's been done on the subject. If you want more, just dive in. The research is out there. Develop your reputable sources, and expand your knowledge. When you do, spread the word. The greatest power that anyone could wish for themselves is the power of influence. In this case, it's the type of influence that saves lives. Wield it well.



The Myths That Divide Us



Myth #1

All kids experiment with drugs.

In 2009, 75.6% of America's 12th graders admitted to using alcohol at least once in their lifetime. 36.8% had used illicit drugs. As horrifying as these statistic are, pause to recognize that more than 60% of our kids never once touch pot, coke, or pills. 27.5% of high school seniors report that they abstain from alcohol completely, and 53.7% have never smoked a single cigarette in their entire lives.²⁶

Though these statistics aren't necessarily something for our country to be proud of, they do dispel the "everybody does it" myth. They also offer an optimistic outlook for the parent that is determined to help their own child be within the "never have done" group. If you're serious about this, you will make the difference for your child.

Parents are overwhelmingly opposed to underage drinking. 51% of teens say that their parents would punish them for drinking, another 39% say that their parents are clearly against underage drinking, but may not punish for it.²¹ The remaining 10% is nothing more than a conspicuous minority. A study published by the U.S. Department of Justice found that over 80% of adults support measures to decrease underage drinking, even when those measures restrict their own access to alcohol.³⁰ 76% of parents would hold other parents legally responsible for teen drinking occurring in their home.³²

Many adult drinkers also dramatically overestimate the proportion of adults who drink alcohol. 23% of the American population drinks 76% of the alcohol. 77% of adults either don't drink, or drink sparingly.³⁰

Myth #2

Most parents accept underage drinking.

WATCH IT NOW!

Click here to watch the amazing "I Believe" video on Teen Drinking. A riveting 3 minute piece that could change your teen's life.

The Myths That Divide Us



Myth #3

Countries with lower age limits have fewer problems.

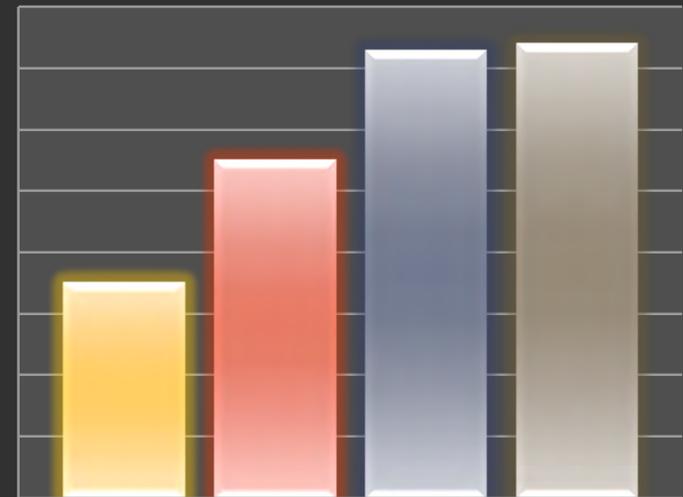
Despite our shortcomings, the U.S. has one of the lowest teen drinking rates in the world. Some people mistakenly believe that European countries have successfully “demystified” alcohol by having less restrictive policies and more open acceptance of alcohol in family activities. This couldn’t be further from the truth.

Not only do U.S. teens have lower rates of drinking than all other European countries, but they also demonstrate lower abusive drinking patterns and experience less teen intoxication.²⁸

Despite having far fewer children living in single or divorced-parent settings, and even after installing an aggressive educational campaign for kids, Britain continues to maintain a teen intoxication rate that is double ours in the U.S.²⁹

Repetitive research conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has found that up to 900 American lives are saved each year by the enforcement of a 21 year old minimum drinking age. Many more than this are saved from accidental trauma, assault and other common alcohol related deaths.²⁷

Teen Drinking Rates



■ U.S. ■ Spain ■ Netherlands ■ U.K.

Source: 2003 Monitoring the Future & European School Survey Project on Alcohol & Drugs

The Myths That Divide Us



Myth #4

Kid's who don't do it in high school, go NUTS in college.

Another popular misconception is that kids who are “sheltered” from drug use in high school, tend to go nuts once in college. The research shows exactly the opposite. Kids who do not drink or do drugs while in high school, exhibit dramatically lower rates of drug use, alcohol abuse and all associated consequences in college.²⁵

According to the Harvard School of Public Health's College Alcohol Study, college kids who report having gotten drunk at least once prior to the age of 19, are not only much more likely to drink at college, but also more likely to be classified as an alcoholic or abusive drinker while at college. Not surprisingly, they are also more likely to have driven drunk, accepted a ride from a driver that had been drinking and to have suffered an alcohol related injury.²³

Mom's are significantly more likely to attend parent oriented education. They are more likely to read child oriented literature, and much more likely to speak to their kids about life skills topics. Unfortunately, it's Dad who seems to have more influence.

Kids whose fathers are described as being “ok” with their consumption of alcohol while underage are some 250% more likely to engage in drinking behavior. In fact, they are 150% more likely to drink than those who don't even have a father living in their home. Though Mom's seem to be more involved, Dad's seem to wield more influence.²¹

Myth #5

Mom and Dad have equal influence.

More **FREE** Stuff!



The Myths That Divide Us



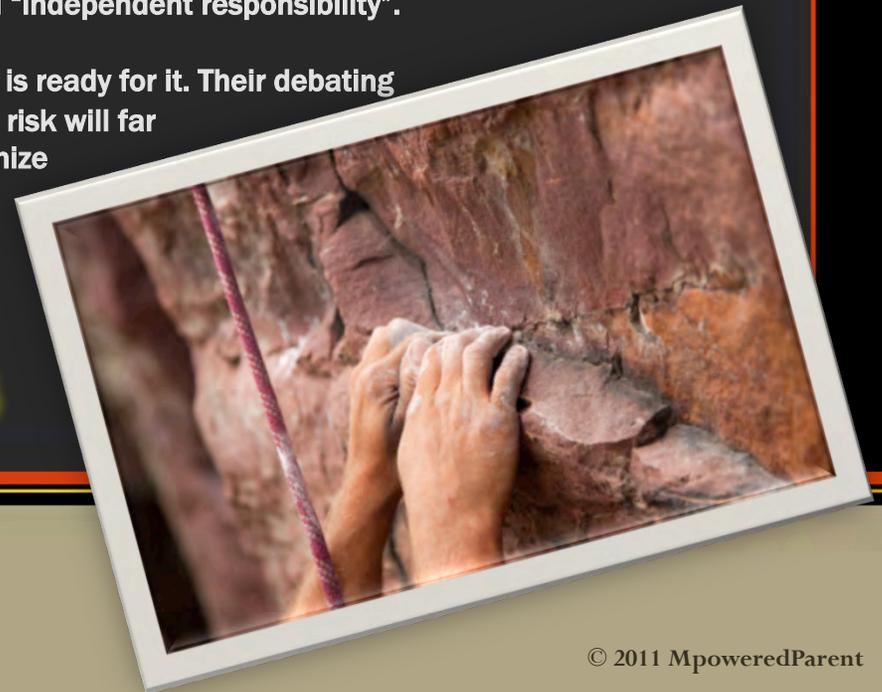
Perhaps the greatest, most destructive and demotivating myth that I've come across pertains to the "Do It While Your Young" outlook. The idea that our kids should cut loose now, before it's time to get serious, is a disastrous misunderstanding of human development. I consistently run into role models who believe that kids need to "Get it out of their system." Tragically, what's happening is the exact opposite. They're getting it into their system. ³¹

The shortest distance between your children and the success which awaits them is a straight line. Wavering off for a few years is not only inefficient, it's self-destructive. Abusive and addicting behavior is rarely left in the past. Like a hitchhiker, it's picked up along the way and carried to your eventual destination. To the contrary, discipline and sound decision making skills are things that we develop when young, and enjoy for the rest of our lives.

The greatest gift you can give your kids is not discretion, but clear and consistent guidance. Help them persevere in the face of temptation, curiosity, peer pressure, and stress. Teach them how to maintain focus and develop their inner strengths. There is a big difference between independence, and "independent responsibility".

Our kid's ego will seize independence long before their intellect is ready for it. Their debating skills will emerge long before their life skills. Their penchant for risk will far exceed that for reason. It's our job to know these things. Recognize the growing pains of adolescence, and hang on. Let them do the climbing, but be the rope that holds them securely to the mountain. Don't let go when your support is needed most.

Direction > Protection



The Parent Investigator



How much would you pay for the peace of mind in knowing that your child was drug free? If you could get it in a box, most of us would mortgage our house for it. The truth is, you can get it for free. In fact, this is one do-it-yourself project that you can accomplish far better than any paid professional.

First, you'll need to give yourself the chance to embrace a new perspective. Time and time again, I've mentored friends who initially balked at the content of the following pages. They were protective of their "trusting" relationship, and feared any techniques that could be viewed by their child as intrusive.

Unfortunately, trust alone will not deter, and certainly not detect drug use. In fact, more often than not, it will blind you to it.

We praise our kids. We support them. We talk to them. In addition to that, we must monitor them. That doesn't mean that we disrespect or oppress them. While our trust "expects" good decisions, our methods must "enable" them. Using these tools together, we can deter drug use, detect it's precursors and develop our relationships.

There is an anecdote for any uncomfortable feelings that these methods could impose. It's called partnership. We work on these things together. No apologies. No accusations. They are our routine. Absent any indicia of suspicion, they are simply our family's defense against a threatening environment. We articulate their purpose, and we praise the success that they bring; success which is verified daily. Through this process, parents are left not only knowing that their kids are drug free, but also confident that they would detect drug use at its earliest stages. That allows us to trust more, talk more freely, and at times grant more privileges. You are not the Gestapo, you are the Guardian. Be proud of it.

Drug-Proofing Your Home



Step 1

Lock It Up! All of it! Yes, Seriously!



This is the one step that everyone knows, but no one does. Whether speaking of huffing (the number one form of drug use for 12 year olds), prescription drug abuse (the fastest growing drug trend for teens), or alcohol abuse (the number one threat to teen futures),¹⁹ your own home is the most likely source for the products that could kill your kids.

Some kids pillage medicine bottles and trade the proceeds with friends at pharming parties. Others may borrow a pill or two, just to see how it feels. You can prevent that with a simple product like the RxDrugSAFE. It's an easy to use, easy to store medicine locker.

Many parents lock-up the chemicals around toddlers, but forget to do so around teens. Huffing is the most common form of drug use for pre-teens, and it can kill on the first try. Lock away those cleaning products, spray paints, canned air products and gas cans.

The evidence is clear. Most kids get their booze from their own home.¹⁵ Secure the hard liquor, especially the vodka. Buy beer for the occasion, and keep track of what you have. Kids are great at siphoning their supply. Unfortunately, it only takes a little booze, to create a lot of problems.

FREE!

Click here to download a free drug symptom chart.

Drug-Proofing Your Home



Step 2

Don't Let Them Lock It Up

Many teens bring their drug use home with them. The younger they are, the more likely they are to do so. While individual privacy is to be respected, it's not a good idea to allow for locked doors inside the home.

In-home drug use typically takes place in the bedroom or bathroom. These are areas where there is an increased expectation of privacy. Unfortunately, "private" also means "unsupervised", and this is where experimentation occurs.

For some families, the locked-door debate is a non-issue. For others, it is a major point of contention. In the case of the latter, you should feel even more inclined to push the issue. It is entirely possible for family members to respect each other's privacy without having to put a lock between one another. Instead, enact a "knock and announce" rule for all closed doors in the home.

Trust me. If you smell something strange, or if you hear a loud thud, or if you can't raise them by knocking at the door, you'll want to be able to get in there immediately. It's a lesson that many of our parent predecessors have learned the hard way.



Drug-Proofing Your Home



Step 3

Eat At Least Five Family Meals Together. Every Week!

Columbia University has been studying family meals for more than a decade. Their findings haven't uncovered anything extraordinary about our nutrition, grocery expenditures or cholesterol levels, but they have revealed something amazing about substance abuse patterns.

Teens who eat fewer than three family meals per week are more than three times more likely to have abused prescription drugs or marijuana. They are 150% more likely to have abused alcohol and 250% more likely to have used tobacco.³³

They are also more than twice as likely to report that at least half of their friends drink underage and more than three times as likely to report that at least half of their friends smoke marijuana.³³



Hungry for more? Teens who eat at least five family meals per week, enjoy better grades, score higher on achievement tests, show fewer behavioral problems, and report lower levels of family stress than those who share less family time.³³

Currently, about 59% of teens share at least five dinners with their family each week. Make time to be within this group.

Drug-Proofing Your Home



Step 4

Put The Clamp On That Curfew!

Much to the dismay of teens, and sometimes the surprise of parents, that pesky curfew has more significance than you think. In fact, your child's curfew has a stronger correlation to their drug use patterns than any other household rule.

Kids tend to build after-action partying into their everyday event schedules. Most of this goes unnoticed by parents. In fact, while only 14% of parents say that their teens go out on school nights, a full 46% of kids report doing so. It's not that they're sneaking out, they're padding the schedule. An extra 20 minutes in Freddy's basement is all it takes.³⁴ On average, 14% of teens report hanging out with kids who usually use drugs in the hours immediately after school. That jumps to nearly one third of the kids who come home after 8 pm on school nights, and 59% of those who come home after 10 pm.³⁴

The risk lies more in the discretionary activity, than it does in the location. In fact, teens who are hanging out at a known friend's house, as opposed to an unsupervised environment, are only 7% less likely to encounter substance abuse.³⁴

For mid-teens, 8 pm on weeknights and 10 pm on weekends should be the limits of your flexibility. For late teens, the bell should toll no later than midnight. Good things rarely happen after midnight.



FREE!

Click here to download a working pupilometer.

Drug-Proofing Your Home



Step 5

Hug Your Kids!

You dog lovers know exactly how good it feels to be greeted by that wagging tail at the door. It reminds us that we're loved. It shows us how important we are in someone else's life. It welcomes us back into the safe environment of our home. We all need that kind of comfort, especially our teens. Do whatever you have to do to greet them at the door. Whether it be a hug or a handshake, physically make contact with them. Especially after school or a night out.

While you're busy reinforcing your relationship, go ahead and make some observations. Are they sad? Are they sick? Could they have been bullied on the way home? Do they smell like cigarettes? Teens don't talk a whole lot – not to us anyway. Take this opportunity to explore the life they're living while they are not with you. You can glean a ton of information from a simple greeting.



Be alert for odors in their hair or breath. Are their eyes reddened or droopy? Have they just used perfume, hairspray or mouthwash? Are they steady on their feet? Are they slurring their words?

The trick is to do this every time. Even late at night and when you're busy with dinner. If you can't get to them, make sure that they come to you. It's an extra failsafe. Be wary of the kid who slinks past his parents after coming home from time amongst friends.

To download a pdf worksheet describing the Hug technique in detail, visit <http://www.mpoweredparent.com/diagnosing-drug-use>

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Drug-Proofing Your Home



Step 6

Get It In Writing!

As a policeman, I've heard some truly magnificent excuses. I once stopped a middle-aged man for going down a one-way surface street. When I told him why I had pulled him over, he said, "I know, I know Officer. But I was only going ONE way." Like motorists, teenagers are never lacking in their ability to quickly and craftily manufacture an excuse. Do everyone a favor by eliminating all ambiguity from your family's substance abuse policy.

Many of you will remember one of our former presidents trying to explain how he put a marijuana cigarette in his mouth, but didn't inhale. Eliminate the possibility of such ridiculousness, by drawing up a family contract. In that contract, spell out exactly what you believe. Enumerate the values that your family is pursuing. Describe exactly what you mean by alcohol use. Define your limits, and where there is zero tolerance, explain exactly what that means.

The contract must be signed by everyone in the home. So often, I encounter a situation where a teen addict has confessed their drug use to a sibling, yet the sibling kept it a secret. In other circumstances, it was the sibling who first witnessed the drug use, while the parents were away.

A contract will, at least in writing, put everyone on the same team. It's a good idea to place a copy of the contract in plain view somewhere, and to review it periodically. You can even set a time table, where compliance with the contract results in valued rewards being earned by you teen. Again, the sought after effect is one of enablement. Definitive clarity will go a long way towards minimizing errors.



To download a pdf worksheet for the family contract, visit <http://www.mpoweredparent.com/family-contract>

Drug-Proofing Your Home



Step 7

Clean Their Room!

You probably spent the past ten years trying to get your kid to independently clean their own room. Though crazy, I'm about to suggest that you take a more active role in this unpleasant chore. Bedrooms are the number one hiding place for narcotic paraphernalia. If they are into something, the evidence is likely lying right under your nose.



Here, your actions must speak louder than your words. Your kids have heard you say that you won't allow drugs in your home. Its important to back that up with action. If a random "search" sounds too intrusive to you, make sure that you at least conduct random "cleanings" of your child's bedroom and bathroom.

Some kids love this from the start. Others hate it. Regardless of their stance, all of them should at least appreciate the extra dusting you'll provide. I also suggest that you offer an incentive for each time that you successfully verify a truly "clean" room.

Keep this in mind. There is little point to this technique, unless you do it right. Make your intent known early on, and incorporate the measure as a matter of your family routine. Beyond that, keep the schedule of your cleanings as random as possible. If you announce your intents, are predictable, or make the mistake of having your child present during the cleaning, any evidence that was there is likely to disappear.

Drug-Proofing Your Home



I once patrolled a busy college campus. In the years that followed, I served as the first point of contact for many parents with troubled teens. I've seen literally hundreds of bedrooms searched. I learned two lessons very early on. The first lesson was to think like a kid. Examine areas that are easy to access, yet rarely accessed by anyone other than them. The second lesson was to look for evidence of evidence. You might not find a bag of marijuana, but ashes on the windowsill are equally telling.

Most contraband is hidden around the bed. Look inside pillow cases, under mattresses and along the ledge created by the bedframe. Don't just look inside drawers, look inside what's inside the drawers. Balled-up socks are a favorite place, as are the voids that exist underneath the drawer (Pull the drawer all the way out.) Look on the shelves, behind books, and on the top of any tall furniture.

Closets are big too. Check inside old shoes, ski boots, and winter hats. Pull out the pockets of those cargo pants that aren't worn any more. Inspect any gym bags, and what's inside them. I once searched an entire room, only to find the stash inside a fake deodorant can, which was inside a toiletry case, which was inside a gym bag. Think in terms of protective layers.

Be curious. An entire industry has sprung up around shoes, backpacks, beverage containers, books and markers that have false compartments inside. Also look for screws removed from air vents, holes cut into the underside of box springs and appliances with large battery compartments. No one knows their room like they do, and the best spot to hide things is often in plain sight.

How To Look



Drug-Proofing Your Home



Evidence of Evidence

If you focus your search on the drugs themselves, you'll very likely miss the forest for the trees. Instead, look for evidence that drugs have been in your home. Then follow trail.

Marijuana seeds don't burn well. Kids pick them out of their low-grade pot. Look for them to be wedged in the carpet, trash can, or in the cracks of bedside tables. Tobacco shavings are a dead giveaway that a cigar, cigarette or blunt has been hollowed out and replaced with that "wacky tobacky". Ashes are commonly found on windowsills, or stuck to the sides of a toilet bowl. Lighters, eye drops and body spray are almost always found amongst the belongings of marijuana users.



Prescription pain relievers and psycho-stimulants are commonly chopped for dosing or snorting. This makes razor marks on tabletops, and sometimes leaves pill powder behind. Rolled papers, bills, or cut pieces of straw often serve as snorting devices for heroine, cocaine or meth.

No beer? What about a bottle cap in the pants pocket, or a bottle opener on a key chain. While we're at it, what about that alcohol branded merchandise? You wouldn't ignore a t-shirt with a pot leaf on it, and you shouldn't ignore the alcohol line of clothing either. Kids who own those shirts, hats and other branded trinkets are 1.5 times more likely to become underage drinkers by age 16.³⁵ No news flash there, but unless you see the data, you might not plan a defense.

Become familiar with the paraphernalia and signs of use. Don't stop here! There's much more at MpoweredParent.com

Drug-Proofing Your Home



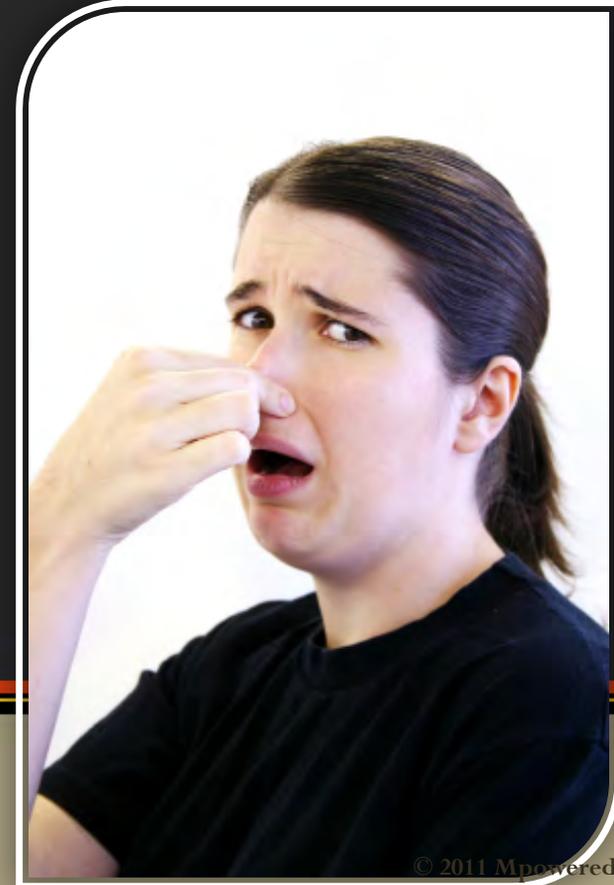
Keeping it Clean

I advise parents to do their teen's laundry, particularly on the weekends. You might not find the Vodka, but it's hard to miss those pants covered in vomit or urine. Resist the urge to ignore the smelly sheets or shirt in the hamper. Question it, when a kid who never does laundry, quickly tosses last night's outfit in to the machine.

A masking agent is something people use to conceal the presence of drugs, drug use, or the symptoms thereof. Breath mints, deodorants, perfumes and incense are commonly used to conceal odors. The presence of these things is a mere hint. The manner in which they are used provides more. If a kid burns incense everyday right after school, or every time a certain friend comes over, you'd better do some digging.

Cleaning products can also be a tip-off. If they are stored near the bed, you'll want to check the garbage for bags containing residue. If "canned-air" type products, glues or room deodorizers are found, take the time to dispel your suspicions of huffing.

Also examine what looks like chicken scratch on book-covers, small notes, backpacks and skateboards. Oftentimes, this doodling references pastimes or interests. If you don't understand a slang term or strange reference, ask. Most kids are happy to explain their world.



Drug-Proofing Your Home



Step 8

Design Your Doorway!

The front door is the pathway through which drugs, or drug use is most likely to enter your home. There are things that you can do to make this possibility less likely. To start, always lock your door. You're not just keeping burglars out, you're giving yourself an essential opportunity. A locked door slows people down.

Having to knock or use a key, effectively announces the entry of every person into your home. It's like a door chime in a convenience store. It draws your attention to them. That's important, because you'll be greeting your amazing kids each time they come in. If you didn't slow them down, they'd very likely scoot off into the bedroom before you got near.



The next thing you need is light; lots of it, and coming from different angles. Without it, the signs of drug use could be right in front of you, and you'd never see them. That's why police officers use big spotlights and shine those annoying flashlights right into your face. We need to clearly see your eyes, nostrils, lips, tongue and clothing –all of which can advertise recent drug use. In normal lighting conditions, shadows are cast over these important areas. You can't have that, especially at midnight, when you've just dragged yourself out of bed to greet your daughter at the door. Light it up well.

It's a great idea to have them store their backpacks and jackets right at the entryway. After pant's pockets, these items are the most likely carriers of contraband. Keep them in plain sight. Fortunately, this also happens to be a very convenient way of organizing school gear.

Drug-Proofing Your Home



Step 9

Black Hat Electronic Espionage

The technology now exists for you to easily restrict and monitor all of your child's electronic communications. I highly recommend blocking certain content from your home network. The internet is replete with "how-to" sites concerning drug use tutorials. There is a terrific amount of irresponsible propaganda out there, and it's looking for your kids. It's carefully crafted to engage their interest and exploit their weaknesses. Do what you can to block it. There is some great software out there. It's relatively inexpensive and generally easy to use.

The monitoring issue is a tougher call. Having walked with other parents who've wrestled with this decision, I've personally come to the conclusion that it is an indispensable tool. No matter who you are, or what kind of kids you have, you are guaranteed to be shocked by what they access online. Maybe more so by what they say. This isn't limited to drug use, but all sorts of hot button topics. Still, monitoring isn't well-stomached by everyone, and I fully support parents who decide not to do it.

Having worked with many families who successfully monitor their kid's online activity, I've found that open disclosure is the best policy. Tell them that you are doing it before hand. Explain to them what is acceptable and what isn't. Regularly review their activity with them -good and bad. Offer consistent guidance, rather than occasional reprimands. Continually remind them that if it's open to their 600 facebook friends, it will be open to you as well.



Drug-Proofing Your Home



Step 10

Join My Team at MpoweredParent.com!

Years ago, the new trends were Ecstasy, GHB, Rohypnol and Methamphetamine. Today, they are Mephedrone, Synthetic Marijuana, Salvia and Bath Salts. Because of the internet, new drug trends literally appear and go global in a matter of days. Our laws can't keep up with it. The news doesn't cover it. Your friends haven't heard about it. You need to be part of an early warning system.

Through my website and in future publications like this one, I will keep you up to date on the trends, findings, strategies and stories you need to protect your family. I will offer you the tips, tools and techniques you need to empower your efforts and engage those around you. Best of all, I will refuse to let you go. I'll keep you positive. I'll remind you why you are doing this. I'll give you the facts you need to support your passion, and the results you need to feel good about it.

Being drug-free is inspiring. It's powerfully positive. Our efforts develop assets that will propel our kids forward in every aspect of their lives, enriching our communities along the way. In joining me, you join a team that is loyal, uplifting and doggedly committed to success. Best of all, it's all free. You just need to click to make it happen.



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