

# HELPING KIDS AND PARENTS NAVIGATE BACK-TO-SCHOOL SEASON

As the school year begins, students face challenges like social pressures and academic stress. It's a crucial time for parents to talk to their children about avoiding risky behaviors.

Students are **less likely** to use alcohol and drugs when they feel connected to school and have positive role models.

Students who avoid substance use are **more likely** to attend school and perform better academically.

Source: CDC, NIH

## CONVERSATION STARTERS & TIPS

**Open the Conversation:** “With the start of the school year, I wanted to check in and talk about how you’re feeling about the start of classes and everything. I know there’s a lot to handle with schoolwork, friendships, and peer pressure.”

**Address Social Pressures:** “You’re going to be around a lot of different people this year, and sometimes that means facing pressure to do things you don’t want to. Do you feel ready to handle situations like that?”

**Talk About Handling Stress:** “Sometimes, when school gets tough, it’s easy to want to escape or cope in unhealthy ways. Let’s figure out ways to manage that stress together.”

**Emphasize Healthy Coping:** “When things get overwhelming, what’s your plan? I want you to feel confident about saying no to anything that might get in the way, such as substances.”

**Reinforce Trust and Support:** “If something comes up, we’ll figure it out together. I just want to make sure you’re supported and safe.”



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