

Using Peer Preference to Your Advantage

1. Don't blame their friends. By blaming their friends, you place yourself in denial and allow your youngster to con and manipulate you. They are not their friend's victim. They choose who they hang out with.

Answer These

How many really close friends does your child have? _____

Their names are: _____

Have you spoken to each of their parents? _____

If yes, do you check and coordinate their leisure time with the other parents?

If no, get their phone numbers today. Use the list below.

Do you know if their friends drink and do drugs? _____

If not, why not? _____

1. Don't believe the extremely common variations of the "I can help them." theme. Your youngster might be telling you, "Oh, so and so is doing drugs but I am a good influence and good example for her." Or "I am the designated driver." Or "I tried pot once or twice but decided it was stupid and just ignore it when they pass the joint." What your child's good buddies are doing, your child is doing too. You need to know if they are making friends or making drinking buddies.

Answer These

Has your son or daughter "confessed" to experimenting with drugs and drinking but claim they learned their lesson? _____

Have they ever spoken of their friends doing drugs but indicated, either directly or indirectly, that they were not doing the same? _____

Have you ever found evidence of drugs and drinking but your son or daughter told you they were holding/hiding it for a friend? _____

If the answer is yes to any of these, the warning signs are screaming at you.

Only if your child changes friends and *then* describes the drug behavior of their *old friends* can you begin to think maybe they are sincere when they claim they are not doing them too.

3. If your child is in deep trouble--hanging out with the drug crowd and the heavy drinking crowd at school—it is because that is the group they are using as their reference group. However, you can help change their

reference group and that will be to your advantage. Usually this means moving to a different neighborhood, sending your child to a private school, sending them to Aunt Mary's in Amish country. One of the best ways to change who they identify with if they are dependent on mind-affecting chemicals is to get them into a recovery group like AA or NA. Then they begin to see themselves as a person in recovery and not a drug abusing-authority mocking "cool" person.

NOTE: *If your child is determined to find the drug and drinking crowd, they will, wherever they are, but at least you've given them a chance to find a new reference group.*

Answer These

Do you know or suspect that your child is hanging out with an identified drinking and/or drugging crowd? ____ To find out you can ask (check the ones you will use)

- ____ their friends parents
- ____ the school counselor
- ____ the school Dare officer or other law enforcement on campus
- ____ ask your son or daughter directly

If they are hanging out with an identified drinking and drug crowd, I will consider exposing them to a new crowd of friends by: _____

Get your child's friends addresses and numbers today so you can co-ordinate and work with other parents in your community.

Friend's name	Parent's name	Address	Phone number