

HOW

Whatcom Families

harness the power of positive interactions to prevent youth drug and alcohol abuse

A shared commitment to healthy kids

Whatcom families care deeply about their kids and help them make healthy choices every day.

First, almost all parents have serious conversations about alcohol and other substances. They make sure the parties their kids attend are supervised. They set and observe strict rules about drugs and alcohol not being used.

Second, most Whatcom families have fun with their kids. They do activities everyone enjoys.

The combination of addressing substance abuse through rules and the positive ongoing interactions means that Whatcom parents exert a powerful influence on their kids' behavior.

inaccurate perceptions

Most parents tend to underestimate the influence they *actually* have on their kids. For example, only one in five parents believe what they say to their children has an impact on their decision to use alcohol or drugs. Yet, **four out of five children identify their parents as their biggest influence in making this decision.**

The bottom line: step up and assert yourself. Your kids are very likely listening to you more than you think.



Whatcom parents tend to overestimate the acceptance other adults have about alcohol. For example, most Whatcom parents prohibit the use of alcohol in their home while *mistakenly* believing that most other parents allow it.

Being strict about alcohol is not just normal; it's also good parenting. Your guidance helps your kids make healthy and safe decisions both today and in the distant future. Have a 'no use' rule and communicate it openly and firmly.





Whatcom families help their kids avoid using pot.

- 89% of Whatcom parents believe it would be wrong for their child to use marijuana.
- 85% of Whatcom parents have recently talked to their kids about the risks of using marijuana.
- Whatcom students who report having fun with their parents are more than 60% less likely to use pot.
- Whatcom high school students that participate in school clubs or activities are 3x times less likely to use pot.



Whatcom families help their kids avoid alcohol.

- 89% of teens said their parents were the largest influence on their decision whether or not to drink.
- Whatcom youth who have fun with their parents are 66% less likely to use alcohol.
- 86% of Whatcom parents have recently talked to their kids about the risks of using alcohol.
- 84% of Whatcom adults do not let youth drink alcohol in their homes.



Whatcom families help their kids avoid tobacco.

- Whatcom youth are 7x less likely to smoke if their parents think it is wrong to do so.
- Whatcom youth who have fun with their parents are over 65% less likely to smoke cigarettes.
- Whatcom youth are more than 70% less likely to vape (use e-cigarettes) if household rules don't allow it.
- Whatcom youth are 3x less likely to smoke cigarettes when they have a positive family environment.



Whatcom families help their kids avoid abusing prescription drugs.

- Whatcom youth are 4x less likely to abuse prescription drugs when they have parents who feel it would be very wrong to misuse them.
- Most Whatcom parents have recently talked to their kids about the risks of misusing prescription drugs.
- Whatcom youth are 6x less likely to abuse other people's prescriptions when they have parents who feel it would be very wrong to use them.
- Nearly all Whatcom parents believe it would be wrong for their child to misuse prescription drugs.



Whatcom families set clear boundaries to protect their kids.

- Nearly all Whatcom parents check to see if the parties their kids attend will have adult supervision.
- Whatcom youth who have fun with their parents are 60% less likely to use alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs.
- Nearly all Whatcom parents set a time for their children to be home.
- Most Whatcom parents have recently talked to their kids about the risks of using alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs.



Whatcom families protect their kids with community.

- Teens involved with healthy community activities report 23% less alcohol use.
- Whatcom youth who participate in sports, clubs, or similar activities are 50% less likely to smoke cigarettes.
- Teens involved with healthy community activities report 45% less marijuana use.
- Whatcom high school students that participate in school clubs are 3x less likely to use pot.