



## ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

All children feel pain, sadness, and frustration at times. Some children use drugs or alcohol to feel better. Alcohol and drug abuse can cause long-term health, learning, and behavior challenges in children. Alcohol or drug use can also cause children to have trouble at school. Without help, children can develop addictions to alcohol and drugs.

### How will I know if my child is abusing alcohol or drugs?

You know your child best. Look for changes in your child's behavior that concern you. Here are some common signs of potential problems:

- Your child wants to be alone more than usual.
- Your child often has mood swings.
- Your child has trouble at school.
- Your child lost or gained an unusual amount of weight.
- Your child's group of friends changes quickly or in a strange way.
- Your child is more secretive than usual.

### What do I do if I think my child is abusing alcohol or drugs?

Talk with your child about your concerns. Talk to your child about the importance of not using drugs or alcohol. Explain to your child that they can talk with you about the pressures they feel. Tell them that they can talk with you about whether they have a desire to drink or use drugs. Listen to your child without judgment.

You can find more information about how to talk with your child at

<https://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking/parent-resources/why-you-should-talk-your-child>.

Talk to a counselor or behavioral health professional you trust for help. Form a plan with your child to seek help and treatment.

### How can my child's school help?

Your school may have services to help your child. Ask the counselor at your child's school about supports and programs. One type of program is called a Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment program. Schools with this program help you determine what kind of help your child needs.



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### Where can I go for help outside of school?

Ask your friends, family, and community to suggest behavioral health or mental health professionals who can help. If you have health insurance, ask your insurance company about help for your child.

Call or text the Georgia Council on Substance Abuse Warmline at 1-844-326-5400 or Georgia Crisis and Access Line at 1-800-715-4255.

You can find more information at the Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities <https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/bh-prevention/substance-abuse-prevention>.