

# DRUG USE PREVENTION: RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Many factors influence a child's likelihood to use illegal substances or develop a substance abuse disorder. Effective drug prevention focuses on reducing the risk factors and strengthening the protective factors that are most closely related to substance abuse.



## RISK FACTORS

Circumstances or events that increase the likelihood of a child's use and abuse of drugs.

- Low grades or failure in school
- Victim of bullying or cyberbullying
- Low self esteem
- Permissive parenting
- Parent or older sibling drug/alcohol use
- Living in a community with a high tolerance for smoking, drinking, or drug use among youth
- Belief that there is little risk in using a drug



## PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Characteristics that can reduce a child's risk for substance abuse or addiction.

- Strong bond with a parent or caregiver
- High self esteem
- Parent or caregiver who talks regularly with their child about drugs
- Active in school, athletic, or community activities
- Spending time around positive role models
- Living in a community that offers youth activities where drugs and alcohol are not tolerated
- Belief that using drugs may be harmful or risky

**Parents/caregivers are the most important role models in children's lives.**



Source: Growing Up Drug Free: A Parent's Guide to Prevention from the U.S. Dept. of Education and U.S. Dept. of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration.

