



**World Drug Day 2025:
Talking to your children about drugs isn't easy, but it matters more than ever**

Dear Parents

Many of us feel uncertain about how to approach difficult topics like drugs. Some worry about saying the wrong thing, while others may assume their children already “know better”, or that these conversations can wait. But the evidence is clear that we need to invest in prevention from an early age.

In 2024, the number of new drug abusers arrested under the age of 20 increased by 30 per cent, and the youngest abuser arrested was a 13-year-old. The 2023 National Drug Perception Survey also revealed a growing sense of permissiveness towards drugs among Singaporean youths.

Yet amid these challenges, there are encouraging signs. The same survey found that among youths who had conversations with their parents or guardians about the harms of drug abuse, 91.7 per cent said they felt deterred from trying drugs. That's a powerful signal that parent-child communication remains one of the most effective tools in prevention.

Start early, start small

When parents initiate open conversations about drug abuse, they send a clear message: “I care about your choices and your well-being.” Such conversations also help counter misinformation and pro-drug narratives that are prevalent online. Parents may not always have all the facts, but their credibility is rooted in their relationship with their children.

One of the most common hurdles is not knowing how or when to start. Conversations about choices, consequences, and peer influence can begin naturally during the primary school years, in small, low-pressure moments. Everyday moments like stories about drug abuse in the media provide opportunities to raise the topic.

What matters is a willingness to engage and listen with openness, which sets the foundation for a trusting relationship. Prevention is more than saying “no”. It's about helping our children understand why and equipping them with the tools to make informed decisions.

Building resilience together

26 June is the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, also known as “World Drug Day”. Around the world, we stand with individuals and communities to pledge our support for a drug-free society.

Preventing drug abuse is not the responsibility of parents alone. It takes coordinated action across schools, communities, and public agencies. The National Council Against Drug Abuse collaborates with a wide range of partners to equip youths and families with educational resources and tools, and we will continue to rally stakeholders to engage the community and support parents.

With trust built over time and the steady support from caring adults, young people can develop the clarity and confidence to walk away from drugs. In today’s world, the most powerful form of prevention may not come from a campaign or policy, but from starting a conversation. Let’s start one with our children right away!

Mr Tan Chong Huat

Chairman, National Council Against Drug Abuse