



RESOURCES FOR TALKING WITH CHILDREN & TEENS ABOUT DRUGS



Teen Substance Abuse in DC

In 2022, DC identified approximately 2,000 youth who were diagnosed with Substance Abuse Disorders (Mental Health America -Youth Data 2022) and 3,000 12–17-year-olds report using drugs (drugabusestatistics.org). These reports indicate that teens in Washington DC are 11.94% more like to have used drugs in the past month than the average American teenager.

Types and Symptoms of Substances Teens Consume



Cannabis

Marijuana, THC-psychoactive chemical in cannabis

Common/Street Names:

Weed, Loud, "Jay", Edibles, Kush, Gas, Za, OG

Symptoms:

Lethargy, Confusion, Impaired Coordination, Intense Anxiety, Increased Heart Rate & Vomiting.



Opioids

Percocet, Fentanyl, OxyContin

Common/Street Names:

"Perks", "Oxy", Pills, Heroin, Vicodin, Morphine, Xanax, Ecstasy, Molly ("Boot" or "Boot-up"), E-pills

Symptoms:

Shallow breathing, confusion, lessened alertness, and loss of consciousness.



Pseudoephedrine

Decongestants - i.e., Sudafed, cough syrup, etc.

Common/Street Names:


Lean- ("Purple Drank" and "Sizzurp," is a mixture of Codeine cough syrup, soda, and hard candy)

Symptoms:

Shallow breathing, confusion, and lessened alertness.

Tips for Talking to Your Teen About Drugs

Young people are at elevated risk for peer influence and pressure. Social media platforms can provide a pathway for young people to learn and gain access to drugs. Consider monitoring your teen's social media pages and familiarize yourself with slang and emojis used to discuss drugs. This [reference guide](#) can assist you with decoding and recognizing communication regarding drug use, purchases, and exposure.



When speaking to your teen about substance use and abuse, it is important to be honest regarding the facts and dangers of drugs. We recognize this is a hard and courageous conversation, however, it is one of the most important conversations you can have with your child. These [conversation starters for children and teens](#) and the tips below can help guide you through this necessary discussion:

- 1** Create a safe and non-judgmental space where teens can speak openly and ask questions regarding drugs. Teens also must feel safe to ask for support and help when they might have a substance use problem. Parents should consult with local substance treatment centers for guidance on how to move forward with treatment.
- 2** Be curious and invite your teen to share what they know about substance use, their beliefs about why people use, and what they have heard among their peers about drugs. This approach allows the teen to have some control of the discussion and may uncover misinformation to explore.
- 3** Remind your teen that although certain drugs are legal, they can also be dangerous and impact the developing brain of a young person differently than an adult. Many teens have received mixed messages regarding marijuana and prescriptions drugs, so it is important to discuss the positive uses of certain drugs and negative consequences because of inappropriate use.
- 4** Inform your teen about the safety and dangers around taking drugs like edibles and prescriptions pills. Often accepting drugs from peers or unknown sources puts them at greater risk of overdosing, injecting unknown drugs, and death.

DCPS Response to Students' Drug Use

In instances when there is an issue of substance use or drug possession of students in DCPS, the following actions will be taken:

- Any student under the influence of an illicit drug will be referred to the school nurse or administration of medication (AOM) designee for medical assessment and referred to a school-based mental health provider, pending nurse recommendation. Based on assessment, Naloxone, a safe lifesaving medication, may be administered and 911 will be called.
- The mental health provider will contact student's caregivers and identify substance abuse resources that could support students use and offer treatment.



Local Resources for Teen Substance Abuse

There are four prevention centers in DC for teen drug use:



WARDS 1 & 2 PREVENTION CENTER

Address: 1419 Columbia Road NW, Washington, DC, 20009

Phone Number: (202) 319-1238

Email: preventioncenter@layc-dc.org

Primary Contacts: Christopher "Chris" Charles, Director, chris@layc-dc.org;

Cory Myrtil (She, Her, Ella), Program Coordinator, cory@layc-dc.org



WARDS 3 & 4 PREVENTION CENTER

Address: 5335 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Suite 440, Washington, DC 20015

Phone Number: (202) 686-4856

Primary Contact: Nadine J. Parker, Director, nparker@nccpud.net

Hours: Monday to Friday, 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM



WARDS 5 & 6 PREVENTION CENTER

Address: 1022 Maryland Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20002

Phone Number: (202) 543-5796

Primary Contact: Charles Dark, Director, cdark@sashabruce.org

Hours: Monday to Friday, 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM



WARDS 7 & 8 PREVENTION CENTER

Address: 3939 Benning Road NE, Washington, DC 20019

Phone Number: (202) 388-3001

Contact: Rosalind M. Parker, Esq., Director

Steven Hazel, MSW, Coordinator, wards7and8pccoordinator1@verizon.net