

# Pointers For Parents

## Honesty: The Anti-Drug

(NAPS)—Picture this: you're driving your child home one afternoon and she turns to you and asks, "Mom, did you ever do drugs when you were a kid?" Or, you're helping your child with homework and he asks, "Dad, did you smoke pot when you were in high school?"

This is a question many parents hope to avoid. Unless the answer is an unequivocal "no," it may be difficult to know what to say.

**How honest should you be?** Behavioral scientist Tony Biglan, Ph.D., recommends an honest answer when a child asks about your past. Otherwise, you risk losing credibility with your kids. This doesn't mean you should recount every detail of your high school or college years. Rather, ask clarifying questions to make sure you understand exactly what your child is asking before you answer.

**What if your child thinks that since you admitted to using drugs and you've grown up just fine it is okay for her to do drugs, too?** The fact is, we all want what's best for our children. Today, we have more information about the negative consequences of drug use, and we understand the hazards of drugs better than we did when we were kids. We can also draw on real-life examples of friends who had trouble as a result of drug use, such as the family member who was an addict, the teen who used marijuana for years and lost interest in school, or the neighbor who caused a fatal car crash while high.

What if you are afraid of sounding like a hypocrite? "Do as I say, not as I do" has never been a good method of parenting. You should emphasize that this discussion is about your child's future, and not



about your past. Even if you made mistakes in the past, be clear you do not want your child to repeat them.

Most importantly, remember that when your child asks you about your past, he or she has just opened the door for an ongoing dialogue about drugs, alcohol, tobacco or other forces that could cause harm.

If you would like more tips on communication and parenting, visit [www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com), a web site designed to help parents learn how to talk to their children about staying clean, safe, and drug-free, which is part of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy's National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign. The site offers a brochure called "Parenting Skills: 21 Tips and Ideas to Help You Make a Difference," that can also be ordered by phone at 800-788-2800.

For additional information about the drugs, alcohol or tobacco, visit the following web sites: [www.drugfreeamerica.org/druginfo.html](http://www.drugfreeamerica.org/druginfo.html), [www.nida.nih.gov/Infobox/Infoboxindex.html](http://www.nida.nih.gov/Infobox/Infoboxindex.html) or [www.health.org](http://www.health.org).