

Orange County  
Department of Education



## PREVENTION: YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



Nowadays, it may seem like more and more students are experimenting with using drugs...especially when it happens on campus.

In reality, only a small percentage of students are using, but this small group of students can put school staff on high alert.

In this newsletter, we will discuss the ways school staff can motivate students to make healthy and positive choices...because educators can definitely **MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

## TOPICS

- Current Drug Trends
- Protective Factors
- Resources



Any time you see this icon, click it to launch a link to the corresponding resource.



03022023

Funded through the OC Health Care Agency -  
Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Team

---

# CURRENT DRUG TRENDS

---

According to the 2019-2021 California Healthy Kids Survey, the most relevant drug trends among Orange County students are alcohol, cannabis (marijuana), vaping, and the misuse of medications (which is linked with fentanyl). Follow the links below to access resources and information that can be shared with parents and families.



## ALCOHOL



Studies show that drinking early can lead to a number of short- and long-term problems.



## CANNABIS



Cannabis concentrates and edible marijuana products can deliver high levels of THC and impact brain development.



## VAPING



Disposable vapes with sweet flavors are exposing youth to toxic chemicals and high levels of nicotine.



## FENTANYL



Criminals are adding illicit fentanyl to street drugs and fake pills, causing poisoning deaths. In many cases, youth buy these fake pills through social media platforms.

## GUIDE TO OTHER DRUGS



# PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Protective factors are conditions that will help a child make more positive and healthier choices. Caring adults, like teachers, can make a huge difference in the life of their students by influencing just a few factors. One example is **school connectedness**. Click on the link above to learn more about protective factors.



THE HUMAN BRAIN IS NOT FULLY DEVELOPED UNTIL A PERSON IS 25 YEARS OLD.

## REPEAT, REPEAT, REPEAT

Let's take a technique from the advertising industry: **repetition**.

If students hear key messages repeated by a variety of trusted adults, it can reinforce and ingrain them in their minds.

We can remind students how using drugs or alcohol **changes mood and behavior**. We can point out how drugs and alcohol can prevent people from **achieving their goals**. Finally, we can emphasize that using early and often increase the chances of addiction.

Encourage students to find positive activities like sports and art to help reduce stress and other mental health issues. 

## HOW TO TALK TO STUDENTS

Talking with students about difficult topics like drugs and alcohol is not always easy. Experts say that sharing the scientific facts on brain development and the risks of alcohol and drugs are the way to go. By focusing on health, science, and personal choices, teens are more empowered and tend to be more receptive to this kind of discussion.

TALK ABOUT THEIR  
**DREAMS AND GOALS**

PRACTICING DEEP BREATHING IS A GREAT WAY TO HELP STUDENTS REDUCE STRESS.

# RESOURCES

Looking for additional information and resources?


Visit the websites on the right side of the page or contact us for assistance.


## CONTACT US

MIKE CHAVEZ  
PROJECT ASSISTANT  
MCHAVEZ@OCDE.US




## WEBSITES

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA): Mind Matters 

Drug Enforcement Administration: Get Smart About Drugs 

Stanford University: Tobacco Prevention Toolkit 

California Department of Public Health: UNDO 

Truth Initiative: The Truth About Smoking, Vaping, and Opioids 

Kick It California: Youth Vaping Alternative Program Education 