

# How Can I Tell if My Child is Using Alcohol or Other Drugs?

**NCADA**  
the place to turn

## KNOW WHAT'S NORMAL

It's normal for children to sometimes be moody and rebellious, even fickle. But signs such as giving up sports, hobbies, or other interests, avoiding family, or being overly secretive...MAY BE SIGNS THAT YOUR CHILD IS ABUSING DRUGS. As you answer these questions, remember that one symptom may not necessarily signal a drug or alcohol problem. Pay attention to your child's *patterns* of behavior.

### Does your child seem to be changing?

#### Is he/she becoming more:

- Irritable
- Uncooperative
- Violent
- Depressed
- Negative

### Are you finding it more difficult to communicate with your child?

#### Does your child refuse to talk about:

- Alcohol and other drugs
- Activities with friends
- Negative effects of alcohol and other drugs

### Does your child show any of these physical symptoms:

- Increased sensitivity to smell, touch or taste
- Extra large or small pupils of the eyes
- Excessive giggling
- Disorientation
- Red eyes
- Excessive coughing
- Weight loss or gain
- Severe headaches

### Is he/she becoming less responsible about:

- Doing chores
- Coming home on time
- Personal cleanliness
- Money



### Has your child recently?

- Stolen money or property
- Dropped out of school
- Insisted the drugs or alcohol you found were not his or hers
- Come home with strange stains on his or her clothing
- Changed peer groups
- Lost interest in school, sports, and other activities
- Refused to go to school
- Talked about dropping out of school
- Started wearing long sleeves
- Come home smelling like alcohol or smoke
- Asked to consume alcohol in the house
- Hidden liquor, wine or beer containers in his/her bedroom

## BE ALERT

Changes may occur over varying periods of time, from a few months to well over a year. If you do not notice subtle changes, more obvious ones are likely to appear over time. If your child is becoming drug dependent, you may notice any one or a combination of signs; users are often unaware of their changing behavior and attitudes.

For help or information, call NCADA at 314.962.3456 or visit [ncada-stl.org](http://ncada-stl.org)

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