



How can Family-Based Interventions Prevent Substance Use?

These interventions teach parents and caregivers to enhance their children's substance use preventive skills and practices. Content may address parent-child communication, rule setting, and monitoring, and interventions may include additional substance use prevention activities for youth. Interventions include individual or small group sessions, web-based modules, printed instruction manuals and workbooks, or a combination of these. They may be delivered by health professionals or trained providers in home, school, or community-based settings.

Why is This Important?

- Youth substance use is associated with increased risk for delinquency; academic underachievement; teen pregnancy; sexually transmitted infections; perpetration of, or experience with, violence; injuries; and mental health problems.
- Preventing or delaying substance use initiation among youth reduces later risk for substance use, substance use disorders, and overdose.
- In 2021, substance use was common among U.S. high school students and varied by substance. Approximately one third of students (30%) reported current use of alcohol or marijuana or prescription opioid misuse.
- In 2022, more than 3 million middle and high school students reported using a commercial tobacco product, and 11% of 8th graders reported lifetime use of marijuana.

Major Findings

The Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF) recommends family-based interventions to prevent substance use among youth. Interventions reduced initiation and use of various substances (see table). They also reduced sexual risk behaviors among youth and led to improvements in mental health symptoms and school-related outcomes.

Substance	Reduction in Initiation of Use	Reduction in Use
Cannabis	36.6% (4 studies)	39.0% (13 studies)
Prescription drug misuse	58.1% (3 studies)	91.4% (6 studies)
Alcohol	12.1% (7 studies)	33.8% (22 studies)
Tobacco	12.1% (7 studies)	40.8% (9 studies)
Illicit Substances	13.8% (4 studies)	76.7% (3 studies)

CPSTF finds that economic benefits exceed the cost of family-based interventions to prevent substance use among youth.

Learn More

Read the [complete summary of the systematic and economic review](#), access implementation resources, and find out more about substance use.

Established in 1996 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF) is an independent, nonfederal panel of public health and prevention experts whose members are appointed by the director of CDC. CPSTF provides information for a wide range of decision makers on programs, services, and other interventions aimed at improving population health. Although CDC provides administrative, scientific, and technical support for CPSTF, the recommendations developed are those of CPSTF and do not undergo review or approval by CDC. Find more information at www.thecommunityguide.org.