



## HELP WITH PEER PRESSURE

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No matter where children grow up or who their friends are, nearly all of them are confronted at some time or another by friends with bad ideas---ways of testing limits, getting in trouble, and doing things they'll regret later. It's not so hard saying, "No thanks, I have to go now" to a stranger. But it's a lot tougher when a child's friend---especially one whose approval means a lot to him or her---tries to get them to do something they know is wrong.

Even "good kids" occasionally pester their friends into skipping a class or lying about why they were out together so late. But if friends or acquaintances entice your children to try tobacco, alcohol or drugs, the consequences can be more serious. The best way to prepare children to succeed in these encounters is to "role play", or practice similar scenarios in advance. With the right words at the tip of their tongue, children can assert their independence while making it clear that they're rejecting their friends' choices and not the friends themselves.

Here is a potential role-playing scenario for you to try with your daughter. (You can turn the scenario around for your boys, or come up with other scenarios that fit the same pattern...anything to get your children to practice their own resistance skills.)

Take the role of a boy she likes and try to persuade her to share a six-pack of beer with you. What can she say? "You're such a jerk!" is alienating. "I don't know..." leaves the door open and sounds like she could be coaxed. The middle ground, in which she's firm but friendly, works best. Help her rehearse key phrases that give reasons for why she simply won't have a beer, such as:

- o "My parents would kill me if they found out, and they always find out!"
- o "No, I'm not into that stuff."
- o "I tried it once, and I hate the taste."
- o "My parents trust me to not drink, and I don't want to break that trust."

Or she could state the consequences of drinking:

- ?? "I tried it once and ended up vomiting on everything!"
- ?? "Drinking would make me feel out of control, and I hate that."

She'll need to be prepared for protests. She can meet them with the "broken record" technique, in which she repeats her reason for not drinking over and over until attempts at persuading her cease. Or she can make it clear that the discussion about beer is over by changing the subject: "Did you watch the basketball game last night?" or "Hey, do you know if that concert's sold out?" If all else fails, she should leave the scene, saying, "I've got to go."

(Source: [www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com))