
I N S I G H T S

FOR FAMILIES

□

Helping children deal with peer pressure

□

❖ **INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES** is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Adapted by Judy McDaniel, communications consultant, from an article published on Chet Day's Health and Beyond website, www.chetday.com.

Standing up to peer pressure is one of the greatest challenges that children face. Too often children are unable to stand up to the challenge and are led into participating in risky and sometimes illegal activities.

- ❖ Help your children deal with peer pressures by doing the following:
- ❖ Strengthen bonds with your children. They will be more likely to respect your views and values and better able to resist peer pressure if they have a good relationship with you and feel you are a source of support. This bond needs to be nurtured long before your children's teenage years.
- ❖ Promote your children's self-esteem. Children who are confident and have positive self-worth are more likely to pursue friendships with children who are good role models. Boost your children's self-esteem by involving them in activities that capitalize on their strengths and interests and praise them for things they do well.
- ❖ Set a good example. Your children are keen observers of what you do. If they see that you are constantly striving to keep up with others, they will likely do the same with their peers.
- ❖ Talk with your children about peer pressure. Let them know that you understand how hard it can be to do things that make them stand out. Help them understand that someone who is pressuring them to do something that may be harmful is not much of a friend.
- ❖ Avoid overreacting when talking about peer issues. You don't want to discourage your children from talking with you about important issues.
- ❖ Choose your battles tactfully. Make your stand on high-risk peer behavior. Battling your children constantly over minor issues may drive them toward peers who are similarly alienated from their parents.
- ❖ Help your children develop good decision-making skills. Encourage them to think through the possible consequences of a decision, including whether it may cause harm to themselves or others.
- ❖ Help your children develop responses to peers. Suggest responses that are short and simple and that they can say comfortably.
- ❖ Get to know your children's friends, and create a network of parents. Spend some time with them and assess whether they are positive influences.
- ❖ Don't hesitate to set limits for your children. Your willingness to say no sets a good example and may help give your children the courage to say no when faced with a potentially harmful situation.