

## **Keeping Watch Over Your Child**

The idea of "monitoring" your child may sound invasive, but it's actually a very simple idea that leads to great things: You know where your child is at all times (especially after school), you know his friends, and you know his plans and activities. By staying in the know about your child's daily schedule, you're taking an important step in keeping your child drug-free. Kids who are monitored are four times less likely to use drugs.

Because monitoring conflicts with your child's desire to be independent, he is likely to resist your attempts to find out the details of his daily whereabouts. Don't let this deter you from your goal. He may accept the idea more easily if you present it as a means of ensuring safety or interest in whom he is and what he likes to do, rather than as a means of control. You need to be prepared for your child's resistance — because the rewards of monitoring are proven.

The most important time of day to monitor is after school from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Kids are at the greatest risk for abusing drugs during these hours. Call your child's school to find out about adult-supervised activities he can take part in during these hours. Encourage him to get involved with youth groups, art or music programs, organized sports, community service, or academic clubs. Follow up with your child to make sure he is actually going to the program he has chosen.

Source: Drug Free America

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