



November 2025

POSITIVE INFLUENCE

News From The Grand Forks Substance Abuse Coalition



Communicating with Your Child When You Suspect Substance Use

Starting a conversation with your child about his or her drug use is not an easy thing to do, but it is an important step in helping your child. Below are some tips for having a successful conversation.

- Let your child know you are concerned** – Express your specific concerns and why you have these concerns. Let your child know you are disappointed in their behavior, but you don't think they are a bad person.
- Speak in a calm and relaxed voice** – This can prevent your child from shutting down or becoming reactive. It's hard to fight with – or storm off from – a calm person.
- Understand that your child may say hurtful things** – Don't take it personally. Actively listen to what they have to say and react thoughtfully. Continue to reinforce that drug use and alcohol use are serious, and you are concerned for their health and safety.
- Show love and be positive** – Give positive feedback where appropriate. Youths need to hear the "good stuff" just like the rest of us. If they are honest with you, praise their honesty.
- Consider granting immunity** – Some young people get caught in a web of lies and can't or don't know how to get out. You can sometimes help by offering a chance to clear the record. Tell your child that if they tell the truth, there will be no immediate consequences, but they will be expected to conduct themselves differently in the future.

Source: ParentsLead

Positive Partners

Haley Thorson and Kailee Dvorak are both registered nurses in alcohol and tobacco prevention programming at Grand Forks Public Health. They are UND College of Nursing classmates (2005) and have a combined 36 years of experience in public health prevention. They have had the opportunity to facilitate and participate in several key policy and advocacy initiatives both locally and statewide to address alcohol and tobacco use in Grand Forks and North Dakota.

They are passionate advocates for evidence-based strategies that reduce the harmful health effects of alcohol and tobacco, especially among young people. Their work focuses on advancing policy, systems and environmental (PSE) changes – approaches that strengthen community health by shaping social norms and fostering healthier lifestyles and behaviors.



*L to R: Kailee Dvorak,
Haley Thorson*

Free Webinar

The Pouch Problem: Protecting Kids From A New Nicotine Trend

Tuesday, December 2 • 5:00 PM CST via Zoom
Register at www.parentsagainstvaping.org