STEPS Proactive Parenting Assessment

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STEPS PROACTIVE PARENTING

Becoming Proactive

In today's world, it's not a question of whether your kids are at risk of substance abuse and addictions or not. Because they are, and it can happen in any family. The more important issues these days are how much risk they are facing, where it is coming from, and what you can do about it.

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This assessment questionnaire is a tool for you to find those answers, identify key areas to focus on as a parent, and learn how to protect your kids from addictions and help them lead a happier life.

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I. Assessing Risk Factors for Your Kids

What is their degree of risk in each of these areas?

Scale: 0 = none; 5 = medium; 10 = very high

Surrounding Risk Factors

1. Heredity (1 or more family members had or have addictions)
2. Trauma (divorce, death of someone close to them, abuse)
3. Medical or emotional issues (depression, anxiety, ADHD)
4. Lives are disrupted (family move, new school, breakup)
5. Friends (some use substances, questionable character)

Personal Risk Factors

1. Wants to fit in (low self-worth, self-conscious, feels left out)
2. Impressionable (prone to peer pressure, influenceable)
3. Just wants to have fun (can't handle delayed gratification)
4. Risk taker (doesn't evaluate consequences, thrill seeker)
5. Impulsive (emotional, may not think clearly under stress)

The presence of risk factors indicates higher odds of a problem occurring. Please note that the absence of these factors does not mean your kids are safe, because substance abuse can happen in any family.

- If there is a surrounding risk factor ranked 7 or higher or more than one ranked above a 5, you should take extra precautions because the odds of substance abuse will be significantly higher.
- If more than one of the personal risk factors ranked higher than 7, you should be especially vigilant in situations where that behavior may occur. If any of the factors are ranked higher than 5, you should talk to your kids about them and work with them to balance those behaviors.
- If there are both surrounding and personal risk factors, the risk of substance abuse may be high.

II. Recognizing Warning Signs for Your Kids

How prevalent are these warning signs in their behavior?

Scale: 0 = none; 5 = medium; 10 = very high

Early warning signs

1. Their demeanor changes for the worse
2. Habits change or grades worsen
3. They switch friends or isolate
4. Lying or disobedience increase
5. Pattern of suspicious activities

Escalating warning signs

1. Stronger signs of self-absorption and entitlement
2. Become more manipulative, dishonest, and willing to lie or steal
3. Hostility, especially when confronted, and a pattern of hurtful behavior
4. Spiritual vacancy as they shy away from God and talks about religion
5. Become irrational, irresponsible, illogical, and compulsive

Different than the risk factors in the previous exercise, the presence of warning signs definitely indicates that something is going on in the life of your son or daughter. It may or may not involve substance abuse, but there are some underlying emotional, personal, or spiritual issues that should be addressed.

- If there are early warning signs (especially items 1, 2, and 3), talk to your kids and try to understand what is going on in their life. In the early stages, show empathy, listen, and avoid lecturing or anger. Lying and disobedience should not be tolerated, but their presence in teenagers is not unusual. But if there is a pattern of suspicious activities, the odds are very high something significant is going on.
- The presence of escalating warning signs indicates that the issue is significant and increasing. It is now clear that they are on a negative trajectory. Note that none of these warning signs is specific evidence of substance abuse, but their presences clearly indicates there are problems to address.
- Across these early and escalating warning signs, an increasing pattern of behavior over a period of time clearly indicates that your son or daughter is moving in a negative direction. You can't ignore these signs and hope they will go away, and enabling or controlling your kids will not work either. You must now work with them to slow down and then turn around the downward spiral.

III. Confirming the Importance of Prevention

How important should a focus on addiction prevention be?

Scale: 0 = none; 5 = medium; 10 = very high

Level of parenting importance

1. How important is the goal of preventing addiction?
2. How dangerous is addiction for kids and teenagers today?
3. How important are parents in helping protect their kids from addiction?
4. Do you believe that parents can help their kids lead a happier life?
5. How committed are you to become the best parent you can be?

Did you rate the level of parenting importance relatively highly?

If so, the question becomes: what are you going to do about it?

The primary purpose of this section of the assessment is to help you confirm the importance of becoming proactive in your parenting in order to protect your kids against addictions and help them lead a happier life. Completing this assessment is simply the next step in that process.

The Journey

Proactive Parenting is an ongoing journey. Parents do not have to be perfect, but they can make the choice to be proactive.

Confirming the level of importance above was a start, and it should be followed by learning, planning, and following through on the priorities you determine for your family situation.

IV. Determining Areas of Focus for Your Family

What is the importance of these areas for your family?

Scale: 0 = none; 5 = medium; 10 = very high

Parenting areas focused on “integrated lifestyle”

1. Helping kids develop a healthy, resilient, and effective lifestyle.
2. Raising kids to be emotionally, personally, and spiritually balanced.

Parenting areas focused on “greater awareness”

3. Developing clear awareness of the risks of substance abuse.
4. Learning the warning signs of addiction and emotional issues.
5. Better understanding of why teenagers use drugs and alcohol.

Parenting areas focused on “positive connection”

6. Better understanding your kids and what they are going through.
7. Connecting with your kids with open two-way communication.
8. Understanding when counseling or other help may be needed.
9. Seeing how to help your kids develop a healthy, happy mindset.

Parenting areas focused on “life management”

10. Learning to better deal with negative issues and bad habits.
11. Identifying behaviors that can lead kids toward addiction.
12. Avoiding the common mistakes that many parents make.
13. Understanding the areas a great parent should focus on.

Parenting areas focused on “purpose and plan”

14. Helping kids find purpose and set goals for the future.
15. Building a plan to be the best parent you can be.

Actionable Plans

Frankly, all fifteen of the areas above are important, so it is fine if you rated many of them highly. But pay special attention to those you rated the highest, and you should put specific, actionable plans in place to focus more of your parenting energy in those areas.

How to Protect Your Kids From Addictions and Help Them Lead a Happier Life

All fifteen of the areas above are addressed in STEPS Proactive Parenting training, especially the course and products for "How to Protect Your Kids From Addictions and Help Them Lead a Happier Life."

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Take The Next STEPS

See information on the online course:
StepsProactiveParentingCourse.com

Visit the STEPS Proactive Parenting website: StepsProactiveParenting.com

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