

Talk early and often about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Even when it gets tough.



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Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

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Start Talking!

Building a Drug-Free Future



Getting to Know! the Lawnmower Parent



By this point, we're likely all familiar with the term *Helicopter Parenting*, where parents keep an overly watchful eye on their child's every move and then swoop in to save the day at the first sign of trouble. But have you heard of *Lawnmower Parenting*?

While the helicopter parent hovers and worries, the lawnmower parent takes it even further, stepping in to clear their child's path of potential obstacles and challenges. This prevents their child from having to experience any feelings of pain, sadness, discomfort or disappointment.

If any of these scenarios sound familiar, you have likely come across a Lawnmower Parent. (Keep in mind these examples refer to middle and high school parents.)

- A parent panics when they realize their child forgot his math homework on the kitchen table, so they run it right over to the school in time for class.
- A student misses a day of school from illness, but instead of the student following up with you, the parent reaches out to the school to collect her makeup work.
- A student is feeling really anxious about having to make a presentation in your class, so the parent contacts you to push for an alternate arrangement.



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Empowering Parents To Raise Their Children To Be Substance-Free



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While it's normal and natural for parents to want to protect their children, this type of parenting can have long-lasting, harmful effects.

When a parent constantly intervenes in a child's life in this manner:

- It sends the message that, "my parents – not me – are the only ones equipped to make decisions and handle challenges in my life."
- It creates youth who increasingly feel "entitled" and expect things to always go their way with minimal effort on their part.
- Most dangerously, this type of parenting shelters children from experiencing and dealing with any type of adversity. It's only a matter of time before something goes wrong and it's out of the parent's control. And when that happens, the child has no positive coping skills to deal with their situation, and may act out aggressively, negatively internalize what they're feeling, or possibly turn to substances in an attempt to get a handle on their emotions.

Another name being given to this style of parenting, which may paint an even clearer picture is "Curling Parents." Think back to the Olympic sport where the players slide a stone down the ice toward a target, but then rush just ahead of it to smooth and attempt to direct its path to success. Call it curling, bulldozing, snowplowing or lawn mowing—it all means the same thing, and it's truly a disservice to our children. In order for students to develop into happy, healthy and successful adults, they must be taught, encouraged, and guided to begin to think, speak, and make decisions for themselves. They need to be allowed to learn from their mistakes and to be taught to process and handle adversity appropriately and positively. If it comes time that they have done their part advocating for themselves and a situation remains unresolved, then mom or dad can step in to assist.

Source: [Karen Fancher: Pittsburg Moms Blog - The Rise of the Lawnmower Parent. June 25, 2016.](#) [Ramy Mahmoud The Dallas Morning News: Arizona Daily Sun - Guest Column: The dangers of lawnmower parenting and preventing failure. August 30, 2017.](#) [Murphy Moroney. PopSugar.com: Worried You're a Lawnmower Parent? Follow These Steps to Nip It in the Bud. September 13, 2018.](#) [WeAreTeachers.com: Life & Wellbeing - Lawnmower Parents Are the New Helicopter Parents & We Are Not Here for It. August 30, 2018.](#)