



Empowering Parents To Raise Their Children To Be Substance-Free

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



Click here to print a PDF of this article so you can start a conversation with your child

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

Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.

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Prevention Action Alliance  
6171 Huntley Road, Suite G  
Columbus, Ohio 43229  
PH: (614) 540-9985  
FX: (614) 540-9990

## Know! What's Hidden in Plain Sight – Part I

*This Know! Tip reveals some of the tools and tactics teens may use to hide drug use. If you suspect your child is using drugs, you should contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357).*

Would you know if your child was experimenting with or using drugs? Would you be able to spot the clues? **Hidden in Plain Sight** is an awareness program for parents and other adults that helps uncover signs of trouble.

In a presentation sponsored by the Westerville Division of Police and Drug-Free Delaware, Officer Ben Boruchowitz of the Powell Police Department in central Ohio shared that it is common for parents to think:

*“My child would never be involved in something like drugs.”*

*“I would know if my child was using drugs.”*

*“I check my child’s phones and tablets. There’s nothing on there to be concerned about.”*

*“My child is a star student, top athlete, etc.; they know better than to risk their future.”*

The truth is, however, kids are drinking, smoking, and using drugs – not other people’s kids – our kids. Substance abuse does not discriminate, and no child is without risk, regardless of their social status, grades, or athleticism; whether they are known as good kids or risk-takers, every child is at risk.

Officer Boruchowitz said electronics are the number one culprit assisting young people in the buying and selling of drugs. Snapchat, a popular social media app among youth, is often used to exchange messages regarding drug use. If you’re not familiar, Snapchat allows the user to send and receive messages, pictures, and videos that self-destruct after being viewed, making it ideal for teens who want to keep secrets. As one can imagine, this app is bad news for a number of reasons, including sexting and the difficulty that comes with monitoring images and videos that disappear. Officer Boruchowitz suggests reconsidering allowing your child to use this app. Not sure your child even has Snapchat? If your child has a phone, you should search for it yourself but beware of hidden storage apps your child may have on their phone.

Officer Boruchowitz warns parents that those apps, which may appear as a calculator or game app, serve as a hiding spot for drug-related information, including contacts and meeting places, or sexting-related pictures and videos. One secret storage app brags, “We’re constantly improving the interface and adding new features, helping you keep your media safe from prying eyes!”



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Prying eyes is exactly what Officer Boruchowitz recommends. When it comes to keeping up with apps and changing technology he says, "Kids will always be one step ahead. Still, check your kids' phones often and monitor their social media. It is your right as a parent."

Phones are not the only electronics that are assisting youth in drug use. According to Ofc. Boruchowitz, the Apple iPod Touch has become a favorite accomplice. This electronic can be bought for as little as \$20 to \$30 online and once connected to Wi-Fi, can operate as an iPhone capable of sending and receiving phone calls, accessing instant messaging, and downloading all apps – without a parent even being aware.

One way to combat this is for parents to download a network scanner app. **Fing**, for example, is a free scanner app that works to, "detect intruders and instantly discover all devices connected to any Wi-Fi network in your home."

These are just a few of the tips shared in the *Hidden in Plain Sight* presentation. Additional resources and further information will be coming your way in the Know! Tip to follow.

**Source:** *Hidden in Plain Sight*. Presented by Officer Ben Boruchowitz of the Powell Police Department - 47 Hall Street, Powell, OH 43065 - Sept. 2017. Contact at [bboruchowitz@cityofpowell.us](mailto:bboruchowitz@cityofpowell.us)

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