

A child's first eight years critical for substance abuse prevention

March 9 2016

Principles of Substance Abuse Prevention for **Early Childhood** A Research-Based Guide



Principles of Substance Abuse Prevention for Early Childhood. Credit: National Institute on Drug Abuse

An [online guide](#) about interventions in early childhood that can help prevent drug use and other unhealthy behaviors was launched today by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the National Institutes of Health. The guide offers research-based principles that affect a child's self-control and overall mental health, starting during pregnancy through the eighth year of life. It recognizes that while substance use generally begins during the teen years, it has known biological, psychological, social, and environmental roots that begin even before birth.

"Thanks to more than three decades of research into what makes a young child able to cope with life's inevitable stresses, we now have unique opportunities to intervene very early in life to prevent substance use disorders," said NIDA Director Nora D. Volkow, M.D. "We now know that early intervention can set the stage for more positive self-regulation as children prepare for their school years."

Principles of Substance Abuse Prevention for Early Childhood addresses the major influences on a child's early development such as lack of school readiness skills, insecure attachment issues, and signs of uncontrolled aggression in childhood behaviors. Special attention is given to a child's most vulnerable periods during sensitive transitions, such as a parents' divorce, moving to a new home, or starting school. There is strong evidence that a stable home environment, adequate nutrition, physical and cognitive stimulation, and supportive parenting can lead to good developmental outcomes.

Two supplemental sections for policymakers and practitioners go into greater detail on how [early childhood](#) interventions are designed and how to select the right strategies for a community's specific needs. "This guide is important reading for anyone who has an influence over a child's life, from [early development](#) through the transition to elementary school," added Volkow.

[Principles of Substance Abuse Prevention for Early Childhood](#) is the fourth in a series of evidence-based principles produced by NIDA, including: Principles of Drug Addiction Treatment; Principles of Adolescent Substance Use Disorder Treatment; and Principles of Drug Abuse Treatment for Criminal Justice Populations. The guide concludes with a list of selected resources with information on research-based early childhood drug use prevention programs.

Read NIDA Director Dr. Nora Volkow blog post [here](#).

Provided by National Institutes of Health

Citation: A child's first eight years critical for substance abuse prevention (2016, March 9) retrieved 28 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-03-child-years-critical-substance-abuse.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.