

Substance Use and Abuse Education Information

Rule 6A-1.094122, F.A.C. is to establish procedures for school districts to plan and document delivery of required instruction related to substance use and abuse prevention education for grades K-12 students. School districts must annually provide instruction to students in grades K-12 related to youth substance use and abuse health education.

What are drugs?

- A drug is a substance that changes the way your body works.
- Medicines are drugs that are helpful and safe when taken correctly and given by a doctor or trusted adult.
- Some substances like alcohol and tobacco are only legal for adults. It is illegal for kids to use these drugs.

How do drugs affect the body?

- Drugs change the way you feel and act. People on drugs may say things they don't mean and do things they wouldn't normally do.
- Using too much of a drug or using it in the wrong way is considered Substance Abuse. Abusing illegal substances can permanently damage your heart, lungs, and brain.

What is addiction?

Addiction is a sickness of the brain, a disease (but not the kind you catch like a cold). Like any sickness, people need treatment to get better.

- Drugs can be addictive, which means that a person's body and mind need more and more just to feel OK.
- It becomes hard for a person who is addicted to stop taking the drug.
- Addiction is damaging to the body and causes problems in relationships with family and friends.

What Do Children Need?

- To know who they can be attached to, who they can trust, and who cares about them.
- Adults to whom they can look for a sense of security and safety.
- Children old enough to understand that a parent struggles with addiction and may ask you questions. They need simple but honest answers.
- The reminder that addiction is a grown-up problem and that only grown-ups can figure out how make it better; children's only job should be to "just be a kid."
- To feel seen and heard, and to have a voice. Children need grown-ups to say things such as, "Tell me what you're thinking/feeling." "I see that you're feeling ____." "I'm listening to you." "You can ask me for help." "I'm proud of you for ____." "What was the best/worst part of your day?"
- A sense of being acknowledged when they have questions, and to get age-appropriate answers.
- Reminders that no matter how bad things get, there are reasons to stay hopeful and optimistic. For instance, adults might say, "We can always hope that things will get better." "Lots of people get better from addiction."