

**88,000** kids in Oklahoma will die prematurely from smoking.



**69%** of current smokers in Oklahoma smoked their **FIRST CIGARETTE BEFORE AGE 18**



**14%** of male high school students use **SMOKELESS TOBACCO**



**TIME**

**2**

**TALK**

EVERY 2 HOURS IN OKLAHOMA,



**A CHILD OR YOUTH UNDER 18** BECOMES ADDICTED TO TOBACCO.

IN OKLAHOMA,  
**4,200**  
YOUTH UNDER 18 BECOME *new* **SMOKERS**  
EVERY YEAR

**TEENS & TOBACCO**  
*in* **OKLAHOMA**



**15.1%** of Oklahoma high school students **SMOKE CIGARETTES**

**Make time to talk to your kids about the dangers of tobacco.**  
See reverse side for tips.

**TOBACCO STOPS WITH ME.**

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Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline  
**1 800 QUIT NOW**  
1-800-784-9669 [OKhelpline.com](http://OKhelpline.com)



# EIGHT TIPS FOR TALKING WITH CHILDREN OR YOUTH ABOUT TOBACCO

Parenting is one of the most gratifying jobs out there. It's also one of the toughest, especially when it comes to having discussions about important issues like tobacco use.

Consider this: Each day in the United States, more than 3,500 youths smoke their first cigarette, with nearly 1,000 of them becoming daily smokers.<sup>1</sup> Young people are sensitive to nicotine. The younger they are when they begin using tobacco, the more likely they are to become addicted to nicotine, and the more heavily addicted they will become.<sup>2</sup> Roughly one-third of youth smokers will die prematurely from smoking-caused diseases.<sup>3</sup>

As a parent, you play an important and influential role in the effort to prevent youth from using tobacco. Studies show parental actions, attitudes and opinions strongly influence children's smoking behaviors.<sup>4</sup>

So make time to talk to your kids about the threat of using tobacco today. With your guidance, maybe they won't start. The following tips can help you get the conversation started.

## SHARE THE FACTS.

Knowledge is power – give youth the facts about tobacco so that they can make good choices.

## TALK EARLY AND OFTEN.

Tobacco use can start as early as middle school – today, more than 600,000 middle school students smoke cigarettes<sup>5</sup> – so it's never too early to begin the conversation about tobacco's dangers. Help your children understand that you expect them to stay safe by avoiding tobacco use.

## USE EVERYDAY OPPORTUNITIES TO TALK AND LISTEN.

There are plenty of other opportunities every day to bring up the topic of tobacco use and its risks. The next time you see someone smoking in public, take a moment to discuss how it harms the body. Tell your child, "Tobacco is highly addictive and toxic to your body. It can harm your lungs, heart and other body parts."

## BE HONEST, DIRECT, AND OPEN.

Create an environment where both you and your children can talk openly about tobacco use. If friends or relatives have died from tobacco-related illnesses, explain to your kids how tobacco caused their death. Make sure they fully understand the risks of tobacco use.

## MAKE IT A TWO-WAY CONVERSATION.

Talk with, not at, your child. Listen carefully and actively to what your child says and encourage them to ask questions and share their feelings and concerns.

## SET A GOOD EXAMPLE.

Children of parents who smoke are more likely to smoke in the future and their chances of becoming heavy smokers at a young age increase.<sup>6</sup> If you smoke, don't use tobacco in your children's presence and don't leave it where they can easily get it. If you are ready to quit smoking, call 1-800-QUIT NOW or talk with your doctor about quitting.

## SET CLEAR RULES.

Children should be given clear and consistent rules on not using tobacco as they grow up. Learn more about setting rules from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

## HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN TO SAY "NO."

Adolescents and young adults are uniquely vulnerable to tobacco industry pressure.<sup>7</sup> As a parent, you can help your children learn to overcome these influences. Help them create a plan for how to say "no."

## REFERENCES:

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