

Peer Pressure



Most people hear the term “peer pressure” and automatically think about the negatives associated with it. Peer pressure can be both positive and negative. Children want to fit in and feel accepted as most of us do. Having friends with similar interests is great and friends can inspire each other to achieve great things. The problem comes when people have to compromise what they know to be right or wrong, good or bad, in order to fit in.

What Can You Do to Minimize Peer Pressure Issues?

- ❖ As a parent, the most important thing you can give your child is good self-esteem. Remind your child of their value. It’s not only about what you SAY, but what you DO. You are your child’s first example of how they should expect to be treated. Your child will grow up to expect that anyone who claims to love them will treat them the same way their parents/guardians treated them, with respect and dignity. In addition, children who feel good about themselves and have a good sense of what is right and wrong, are less likely to become involved with friends who teeter that line.
- ❖ Encourage honest, open communication. Your kids need to know that they can come to you with any problem or concern without being yelled at or criticized when they do. You want your children to be able to come to you if they’re feeling worried, scared or unsure of something or if they are tempted or pressured to do something that might seem wrong or risky.
- ❖ If your child has a good sense of right and wrong, help him/her develop their ability to be assertive especially in avoiding dangerous or inappropriate activities. If something they’re being urged to do seems wrong, they should feel confident enough to say so. Encourage them to be leader rather than a follower.
- ❖ Know your children’s friends. Sometimes it’s obvious that a certain boy or girl may not be the “right” friend for your child, but other times it’s not. Observing your child and their friend’s interactions can tell you a lot about that friendship.
- ❖ Talk through scenarios or circumstances that might arise and could make your child uncomfortable and establish a plan on what to do if they feel scared or unsafe. Ex.: Being at a party where there are drugs/alcohol, finding themselves in a situation where they know no one, etc.