



# GUIDING GOOD CHOICES®

## Family Guide: Session 1



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## SESSION 1.

# Getting Started: How to Promote Health and Well-being During the Teen Years

## Objective

Parents will learn about Guiding Good Choices and the Social Development Strategy, a way to strengthen family bonds with your preteen and promote healthy behavior. You'll learn about teen substance use—the most common teen behavior problem—and ways to protect against it and other common concerns. You'll also learn how to hold a family meeting to plan family fun and strengthen family bonding.

## Contents

### WHAT YOU'LL LEARN:

- ▶ The format of GGC.
- ▶ The Social Development Strategy.
- ▶ The role of risk and protective factors in teen behavioral health.
- ▶ Risk and protective factors that can be affected by families.

### WHAT YOU'LL DO:

- ▶ Develop a clear vision for your child's future.
- ▶ Identify obstacles to achieving that future.
- ▶ Hold a family meeting to plan family fun and strengthen bonding.

### WORKSHEETS & INFORMATION:

- ▶ Wishes for My Child
- ▶ The Social Development Strategy
- ▶ Risk Factors for Behavioral Health Problems
- ▶ Family Meetings
- ▶ Family Meeting Agenda: Getting Started

### NOTES PAGE

## Online Resources

- ▶ [FACTS ABOUT UNDERAGE SUBSTANCE USE](#)
- ▶ [RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS](#)
- ▶ [FAMILY ACTIVITY IDEAS](#)

HOW TO PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING DURING THE TEEN YEARS

## WISHES FOR MY CHILD

Your wish for your child's future should be a guide that helps you "put the pieces of the puzzle together" as you go through day-to-day life with your child.

In the space below, jot down your hopes and dreams for your child.

Focus on the positive ("Be healthy," "Be a responsible citizen," etc.) instead of the negative ("Stay away from...", "Don't ever...").

### WHAT KIND OF ADULT WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR CHILD TO BECOME?

## THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

### Promoting Healthy Development

Five key factors help protect teens from risks that increase the chance of substance use and other problems, and make it more likely they will develop healthy behaviors. The Social Development Strategy (SDS) is about these factors and the things all parents can do to help keep their kids healthy.

#### 1. Healthy Beliefs and Clear Standards for Behavior

Healthy beliefs and clear guidelines help preteens make good choices in a complicated world. They are the “guardrails” that give them the support they need to make good decisions in risky situations. You’ll learn to clarify your own healthy beliefs and use them as the foundation for family guidelines for your preteen’s behavior in Session 2.

#### 2. Bonding

Healthy beliefs and clear standards are not enough! You can lay down the law, but nobody may listen. Who do our kids listen to? They listen to those who listen to them, those they respect, those they love. These are the people kids feel bonded to.

Bonding is the second key protective factor that builds healthy behavior. Bonding is warmth, attachment, and commitment. It’s the positive feeling of belonging to a family, school, or community.

Kids who are bonded to their family, for example, have strong family relationships, are committed to their family, and believe in their family’s values. When kids are bonded, they’ll think twice when making decisions that go against their family’s values and rules. So it’s critical that parents know how to build strong bonds with their kids. How do you do this?

#### 3-5. Opportunities, Skills, and Recognition

Opportunities, skills, and recognition strengthen bonds between parents and children and are the 3rd, 4th, and 5th protective factors. They are described on the following page.





*Opportunities* to be involved and contribute to the family in meaningful ways: Families that provide opportunities for children to contribute send a powerful message that children are important. Children feel they are a part of a group that needs them in order to function well.

*Skills* to be successful when involved in opportunities: If children are asked to help with laundry, they need to be taught how to do it. This increases the likelihood they will be successful and will result in their feeling good about their contribution. As their opportunities change their need for new skills will too!

*Recognition* for contributions to the family: Recognition for skillful performance and effort gives children the incentive to continue contributing. There are many ways to reinforce your child:

- ▶ Let your child hear you praise him/her in front of others
- ▶ Ask your child for input
- ▶ Take an interest in your child's activities
- ▶ Let your child know you enjoy the times you spend together

Constructive feedback when behavior falls short of parents' expectations increases the likelihood that children will develop and maintain strong family bonds.

### **Children's Individual Characteristics**

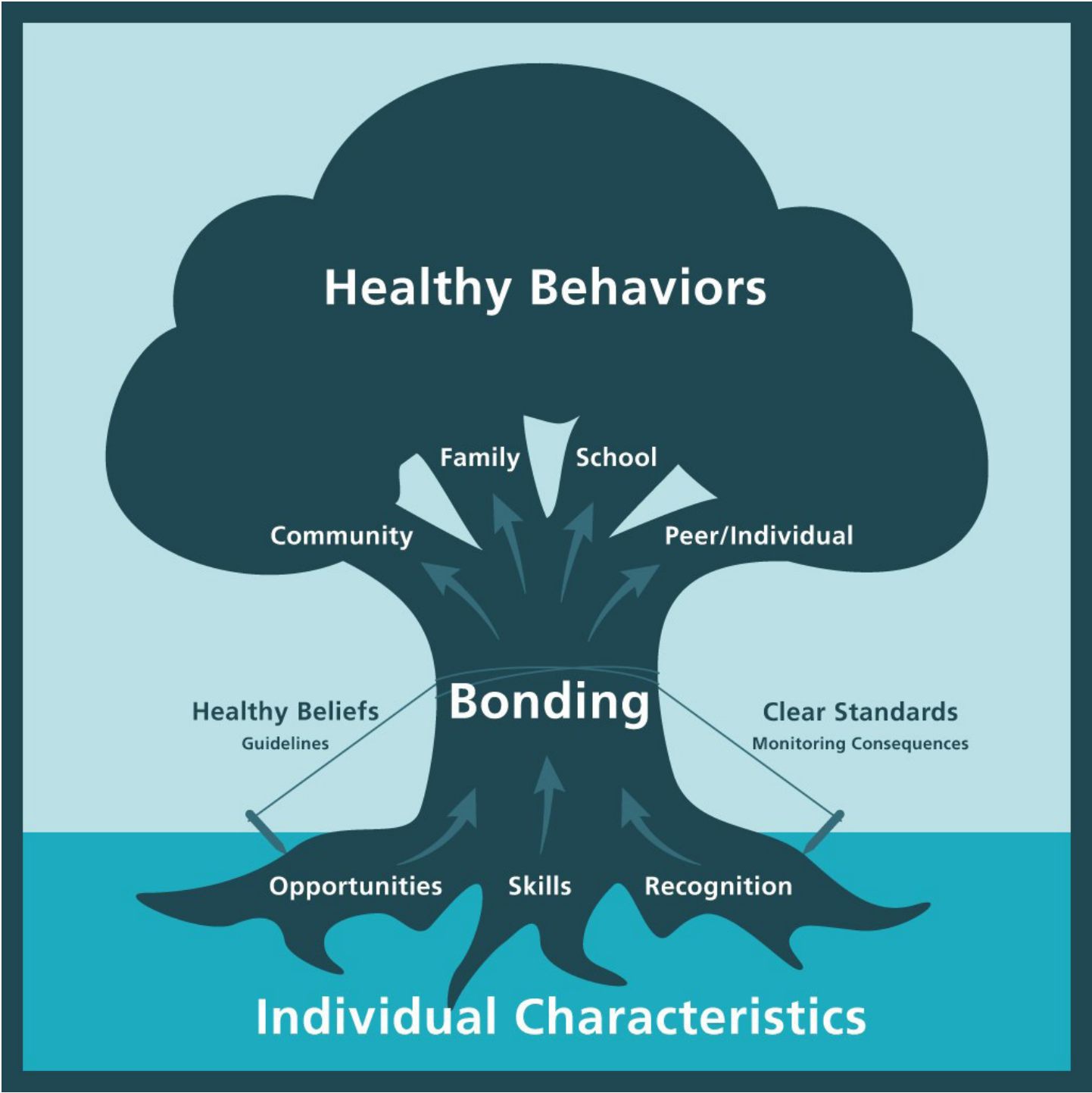
As a parent, you know that all children are different, even those in the same family! Certain individual characteristics can help protect against substance use and other problems:

Resilience: Children who bounce back from adversity or difficulty are better protected against exposure to risk.

Sociability: Children who are good-natured, friendly, and sociable are less likely to engage in problem behaviors.

Even if you recognize one of these qualities in your preteen, it's still important for you to create healthy beliefs and clear standards for your preteen's behavior, keep strong family bonds, and provide opportunities, skills, and recognition. GGC gives you with the tools and skills to do this.





**Social Development Strategy**

# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

*Bold denotes risk factors addressed specifically by GGC.*

	SUBSTANCE USE	DELINQUENCY	TEEN PREGNANCY	SCHOOL DROP-OUT	VIOLENCE	DEPRESSION & ANXIETY
<b>COMMUNITY RISK FACTORS</b>						
Availability of Drugs	✓				✓	
Availability of Firearms		✓			✓	
Laws and Norms Favorable toward Drug Use, Firearms, and Crime	✓	✓			✓	
Media Portrayals of Violence	✓				✓	
Transitions and Mobility	✓	✓		✓		✓
Low Neighborhood Attachment and Community Disorganization	✓	✓			✓	
Poverty/Extreme Economic Deprivation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>FAMILY RISK FACTORS</b>						
Family History of Problem Behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Family Management Problems</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Family Conflict</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in Problem Behavior</b>	✓	✓			✓	
<b>SCHOOL RISK FACTORS</b>						
Academic Failure Beginning in Late Elementary School	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lack of Commitment to School	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>PEER &amp; INDIVIDUAL RISK FACTORS</b>						
<b>Early and Persistent Antisocial Behavior</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Rebelliousness</b>	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Gang Involvement	✓	✓			✓	
<b>Friends Who Engage in the Problem Behavior</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Favorable Attitudes Toward Problem Behavior</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Constitutional Factors	✓	✓			✓	✓

## HOW TO PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING DURING THE TEEN YEARS

### FAMILY MEETINGS

**You will learn to use family meetings to strengthen family bonds and to prevent adolescent health and behavior problems.**

Family meetings provide:

- ▶ Regularly scheduled times when the entire family gets together
- ▶ A time when parents offer children an opportunity to be involved in the family, teach them skills they need to be successful, and recognize them for their contributions
- ▶ A time to discuss issues that are important to the family
- ▶ A basis for family bonding

We suggest that you hold family meetings each week following your GGC parent workshop.



At first, a family meeting may not sound like a great idea to your child. But there are ways you can encourage him or her to attend without forcing the issue. Here are some ideas:

- ▶ Give an incentive (such as a game or pizza afterward)
- ▶ Negotiate (“If you try this, I’ll try that”)
- ▶ Provide your child a role (for example, taking notes or handling refreshments)
- ▶ Ask your child to do it as a favor to you
- ▶ Say that you need your child there (explain that his or her contribution is vital to the family)
- ▶ Explain the benefits (better family support, better protection against drugs, more family fun, etc.)



## FAMILY MEETING AGENDA: GETTING STARTED

Use this meeting to plan a family fun activity. Focusing on fun and then carrying out your plan will create a positive foundation for future meetings.

### Family Meeting Agenda

1. EXPLAIN MEETING'S PURPOSE: TO PLAN FAMILY FUN AND PRACTICE HAVING A FAMILY MEETING.
2. PROVIDE MEETING AGREEMENTS.
3. DISCUSS FAMILY FUN.
4. GIVE TIME FOR OTHERS TO THINK OF FUN ACTIVITIES. ACCEPT ALL IDEAS.
5. CHOOSE AN ACTIVITY.
6. MAKE A PLAN.
7. REVIEW THE MEETING, AND SET A TIME FOR NEXT MEETING.

### Meeting Agreements for Family Meetings

1. GIVE EVERYONE A CHANCE TO TALK, AND MAKE SURE THAT ALL IDEAS FEEL WELCOMED.
2. DON'T INTERRUPT OTHERS.
3. IT'S OK TO SAY HOW YOU FEEL.
4. YOU DON'T HAVE TO TALK.
5. YOU DO HAVE TO LISTEN.
6. DON'T PUT ANYONE ELSE DOWN.
7. DON'T REPEAT WHAT OTHERS HAVE SHARED OUTSIDE THE MEETING.

