

## Start Early, Stay Strong: Prevention Across a Student's Journey

Research shows that the earlier we start talking to kids about healthy choices, the better their outcomes. Substance misuse prevention isn't a one-time message—it's a long-term investment in a child's future.

### Prevention at Every Stage

#### Elementary School

- ✓ Builds a foundation of healthy habits.
- ✓ Teaches decision-making and coping skills.
- ✓ Helps children understand emotions and relationships.

#### Middle School

- ✓ Reinforces refusal skills and self-confidence.
- ✓ Addresses peer pressure and risky behaviors.
- ✓ Introduces facts about substances and their effects.

#### High School

- ✓ Encourages independent thinking and resilience.
- ✓ Supports stress management and mental health.
- ✓ Connects students with positive role models and real-life scenarios.

#### Vermont's Commitment

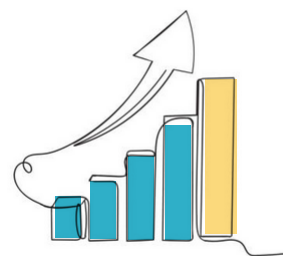
Vermont schools are committed to keeping kids safe and thriving. With support from families, educators, and communities, schools can create environments where prevention is part of everyday learning.

#### What You Can Do

Support prevention programs at your child's school.

Stay involved in conversations about health and choices.

Advocate for programs that start early and grow with kids.



#### It makes a difference

Programs that span multiple years are more effective than one-time presentations.

Early prevention supports better attendance, focus, and long-term success.

After-school programs and safe spaces keep children engaged outside of class.

Students in prevention programs are up to

**60%**

less likely to misuse substances.

nih.gov

Source: NIH. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2916744/>

Source: <https://www.michiganmodelforhealth.org/application/files/1815/5241/4952/ONeill-Clark-Jones2011-JOSH-MMH.pdf>