



**For more information contact the
Shelby County Drug Free Coalition
205-663-6301
shelbycountydrugfreecoalition.org**

Substance Abuse Signs and Symptoms

School and Community Behavior

- ◆ Sudden or gradual drop in grades and achievement levels (reason unclear)
- ◆ Skipping classes, entire days or class tardiness
- ◆ Disrespect/defiance towards teachers, rules and regulations
- ◆ Present in classroom, but inattentive
- ◆ Frequent fights, suspensions, expulsions
- ◆ Shoplifting
- ◆ Delinquent behavior
- ◆ Difficulty studying or working a job
- ◆ Denies knowledge of or ownership of paraphernalia
- ◆ Possession of alcohol or drugs at school
- ◆ Suspicion of being under the influence at school

Changes in Physical or Psychological Condition

- ◆ Easily upset (emotional state changes rapidly)
- ◆ Weight changes (drastic loss or gain)
- ◆ Burns on hands or clothing; Self-mutilation
- ◆ Changes in speech pattern (slurred speech)
- ◆ Withdrawal from peers and others
- ◆ Very defensive attitude
- ◆ Stumbling, confusion, disorientation
- ◆ Mood and/or personality changes
- ◆ Obsession and preoccupation with chemicals
- ◆ Denial, minimizing, blaming, rationalizing
- ◆ Attention span shorter
- ◆ Blackouts
- ◆ Wearing clothes with drug symbols
- ◆ Unreasonable anger and resentment

Family and Community Behavior

- ◆ Changes in attitude toward rules, parents, brothers, sisters
- ◆ Isolating (staying in room, etc.)
- ◆ Breaking curfew, sneaking out, becoming secretive (excuses for late hours)
- ◆ Lying (blaming others for irresponsible behavior, actions)
- ◆ Violence (physical and verbal)
- ◆ Erratic sleeping/eating habits (too much, too little)
- ◆ Vagueness about company kept and where time was spent
- ◆ Strange telephone calls (parties hang up or refuse to be identified); Strange E-mail
- ◆ DUI's, unusual car accidents, extreme wear and tear on car
- ◆ Unreasonable resentments
- ◆ Suspicion of money or alcohol missing from parents or siblings
- ◆ Stealing and/or selling possessions for money (hocking clothing, CD's, gifts, etc.)
- ◆ Manipulating parents; Playing one against the other
- ◆ Seems to have money, but no job; Has job, but always needs more money
- ◆ Value conflict: lying, stealing, etc; Stops going to church/temple, family functions, meals, etc.

Friends and Peer Group

- ◆ Changes in peer group with little interest in old friends
- ◆ Peers with drug user reputation
- ◆ Parents don't know friends; Can't get names
- ◆ Begins to associate with an older crowd

Hidden Agendas

Adolescents are very creative when hiding illegal substances or paraphernalia. The following is a list of very common hiding places.

Bedroom, In...

- ◆ 35mm film canister
- ◆ Pockets of clothing in closets/drawers
- ◆ Wall and ceiling light fixtures
- ◆ Air conditioner/heating vents
- ◆ Light switches
- ◆ Electrical sockets
- ◆ CD cases and cassette tapes
- ◆ Curtains
- ◆ Trophies
- ◆ Bed posts
- ◆ Furniture upholstery
- ◆ Knife handles
- ◆ Closets (taped to wall above the door)
- ◆ Baseboards (behind, underneath)
- ◆ TV sets

Vehicles, In...

- ◆ Dome lights
- ◆ Under the spare tire
- ◆ Air conditioner vents
- ◆ Headrest (in or under it)
- ◆ Ashtray (in, under or behind it)

On Their Person, In...

- ◆ Lipstick tubes
- ◆ Mouth
- ◆ Wallet (behind photos)
- ◆ Lining of clothes
- ◆ Pants
- ◆ Tampon cases
- ◆ Super glue containers
- ◆ Purse lining

Technology and Your Child

- ◆ Require that computers remain in a common area of your home rather than in a bedroom.
- ◆ Review your child's profile on social networking sites. Also visit other students' sites in the school to learn more about what is being posted.
- ◆ Listen to music on your child's mp3 players for references to drugs, alcohol and violence.
- ◆ Negotiate rules for cell phone use and text messaging. Let your child know that you will check their text messages.
- ◆ Watch television shows that your teen is interested in and use teachable moments to discuss important issues such as drug and alcohol use that are on the shows.

Know the Lingo to Warn of Parent Monitoring

POS Parent Over Shoulder

PIR Parent in Room

P911 Parent Alert

PAW Parents are Watching

PAL Parents are Listening