Talk to your kids about prescription pills—opioids is never easy, but it is necessary. If you talk to your kids about opioids, you can reduce your risk of use by up to 50%.

Ask and listen, and resist the urge to lecture. Draw your kids into a conversation. Be casual and encouraging, asking them to list their concerns, their own. Consider starting with, “Tell me, what do you think of our decision?” Kids who feel like their point of view is valued may be more willing to participate.

Use active listening. Let your child know your reaction to what they say. For example, saying, “I’m happy you’re sharing your thoughts.”

Be empathetic and supportive. The human brain doesn’t fully develop until age 25. And, this helps to explain a lot about why your child or teen can be picky. Let your child know you understand and that you care about them.

Ask your doctor to review the medications your child is taking. Get more facts at Don’tLiveDenial.org/toolkit

Talk to your children about having an “adequate pain.” They may be asking about the effective pain relievers that are not theirs. Help your child create a plan for what they would do if they thought their dose of something was too high.

Be prepared to discuss any family history of substance abuse. Substance use disorders often have a genetic component. Exposure to substances in the womb is also a major risk factor. Honest conversations about unhealthy substance use, addiction, and family risk factors can help promote a child’s foundation they need to make the decision on what to do substitute substances.

Just because it was prescribed, doesn’t mean it’s not harmful. Remind your child that it’s considered safe to take someone else’s prescription medication, even if the drug was prescribed to someone else’s child. Have the talk with your kids today.

Parents and caregivers have a very important role to play in preventing the introduction of childhood prescription opioids.

Don’t Live Denial

Brionales, Behavior and Mental Health Services Administration, Health Resources and Services Administration, Health and Human Services

Both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that parents have a conversation about opioid use with their child, even before they begin using prescription pain relievers. The conversations should start before children start school, and continue throughout adolescence. This may help to prevent drug misuse. The conversations can begin before children start school, and continue throughout adolescence. This may help to prevent drug misuse.