



***Keeping Your Children Safe:
A Parent's Guide to Preventing
Youth Tobacco Use***

User's Manual

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Prepared for
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Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch
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Introduction

Tobacco is the leading preventable killer in the United States and around the globe. Tobacco initiation and addiction frequently occur in childhood, even before youth can legally purchase tobacco products. The tobacco industry knows that today's children and teenagers are tomorrow's loyal customers; therefore, this is one of the age groups the industry keeps in mind as they develop their advertising and the design of their new product lines.

Any parent or teacher will tell you that children are like sponges: they soak up the actions and attitudes of the people around them. What children observe informs their own values and beliefs later in life. A person's childhood plays a large role in influencing adult tobacco use. Children and youth can initiate tobacco use long before the age of 18, or they can develop a knowledge base that will protect them from the dangers of cigarettes and other forms of tobacco. It is important that parents themselves understand the dangers of tobacco use and the ways in which they can protect their children from being exposed to these dangers. Parents are the first line of defense in making sure their kids are protected.

As the presenter of this *Keeping Your Children Safe* presentation, you are helping to give parents the tools to protect their children from tobacco use. This manual will help support and guide you in your role as presenter.

The manual is organized in four parts: (1) Preparing for the Presentation; (2) Presentation Tips; (3) Presentation Script; and (4) Presentation Evaluation and Follow-Up. The first section provides some guidance on how to prepare for giving the presentation. The second section lists some tips to increase the effectiveness of your presentation. The third section includes the presenter's script that accompanies the presentation. The fourth section provides suggestions on what to do after the presentation is over. Additional resources are located in the appendix.

Preparing for the Presentation

Before you give the *Keeping Your Children Safe* presentation, you may want to go through the slideshow a few times, following along with the script listed in the presenter's manual beginning on page 4. The slides themselves do not have a lot of text, which means it is important to be familiar with the script so that you can help the audience understand the presentation. It may be helpful to memorize the script, but that is not required. Feel free to tailor the script depending on your audience. The introduction, examples and discussion prompts are great places to try some tailoring.

There are several slides in the presentation that ask the audience to provide answers to questions. It might be helpful to have a place to jot these answers down for everyone to see, like a whiteboard.

The slides include some suggestions of possible handouts for your audience. For instance, you may want to include a list of places the audience can find additional information. You may also want to include things like tips for parents and caregivers to use when talking to their kids about not trying tobacco products. The appendix includes a list of possible resources to add to your handouts.

Presentation Tips

There are a few things you can do to make your presentation stand out. The following are some tips for an effective presentation:

- Make the presentation fun and interactive. Be sure to carve out time for participation and questions.
- Keep the presentation simple and crisp. Don't race through the slides. Adding some short pauses can offer your audience time to think about what they just heard. If you are bringing handouts, pass them out at the end of the presentation so that your audience isn't distracted.
- Arrive a few minutes early to give yourself time to set up the slideshow and familiarize yourself with the site layout. Make sure to set up so that everyone in your audience will be able to see and hear you clearly.
- At the end of the presentation, give your audience a call to action or a takeaway message. The best presentations leave audience members thinking about everything they just heard and interested in doing more. Also, make sure to provide a way for your audience to obtain additional information. This could be as simple as providing your contact information or a website address that people can visit to learn more.
- We suggest building in enough time at the end of your presentation to allow for a few questions. A list of frequently asked questions is included in the appendix.

Presentation Script

This section includes a sample script that accompanies the presentation. Please familiarize yourself with it. Feel free to tailor the script depending on your audience. The introduction, examples and discussion prompts are great places to try some tailoring.

The script is organized by slide. Notes that are meant for you, the presenter, are in *[brackets]* and should not be read aloud. The term “**[Click]**” means go forward to the next animation on the slide and also should not be read aloud. Be sure to **[Click]** when you are ready to move on with your current slide so it can advance.

Slide 1

Hello. I'm ____ from _____. Thanks so much for your time.

At ____, we believe that children are the world's most precious gift and they should be treasured. As parents, your role is to be their protectors and educators. Like a mama or papa bear, you protect and guide your cubs through the wild. Our desire is to help equip you to be the best BEAR [Bravely Erasing Adolescent Risks] possible.

Slide 2

As many parents know, children can sometimes exhibit difficult behavior, especially as they enter the teen years. But did you know that the world around children and teens actually encourages this behavior? This presentation explores some of these bad influences that our children today face and the steps you as a mama or papa BEAR can take to erase some of these risks.

Slide 3

Let's take a second and think about nature. Most animals have a strong instinct to protect their young. Mammals, in particular, are often fierce defenders of their children. This does not just apply to wild animals; even loving companion animals like dogs can become defensive or angry if they feel there is a threat to their puppies. The mama bear is a great example of a protective animal parent. She becomes one of the most ferocious creatures on earth if she perceives her cub is in danger!

As a parent, you also feel very protective of your “cub.” You may not stand up and roar or charge toward a threat to your child but that doesn't mean you're not a fierce defender, too!

[This is a good slide for encouraging audience participation. Maybe have the parents share stories about when they've seen a parent animal trying to protect their young.]

Slide 4

What are some obvious dangers to their young that most mammals respond to? *[This is a good time to elicit participation. Maybe have parents give examples of dangers. One example is that monkeys are afraid of snakes so they would protect their young from them.]* Two obvious dangers are predators and fire and smoke.

Slide 5

There are obvious dangers to our children, too. Just like other mammals, we try to keep our children safe from predators like kidnappers, child molesters and drug dealers. We protect them from fire and smoke. We also guard them against being hurt in a car accident. We teach our children how to respond to these obvious dangers and install safety equipment like car seats and smoke detectors to provide additional protection.

Slide 6

Unfortunately, not all dangers to our children are as obvious as predators and fire. What are some dangers to kids that are harder to see and protect against? These dangers are usually hard to see, touch, feel or even be aware of. The hidden dangers may not even seem harmful at all until you get a closer look at them—just like a wolf in sheep's clothing. *[Elicit participation here. Examples of hidden dangers include extreme cold, storms, carbon monoxide poisoning, choking hazards, etc. List dangers on the whiteboard.]*

Slide 7

Some hidden dangers are behaviors that are okay for adults, but not for kids. Some examples might be firearms, alcohol and smoking. Why would these activities be dangerous to children? *[Discuss.]* What are some ways that parents can protect their kids from these hidden dangers? *[Discuss.]*

[This slide could be good for eliciting participation.]

Slide 8

However, hidden dangers do not look like other types of dangers. So, we might not recognize that they are dangerous, and even if we recognize that they are dangerous, we might not realize how severe the danger is. As a result, we do not take a stand against these hidden dangers.

Slide 9

How do we promote hidden dangers in society? *[Read through bullet points on slide.]*

As parents, we set the examples for our children through our words and actions. If we see a hidden danger around our kids and don't react to it, we are sending the message that we do not disapprove of this behavior. If we tell our kids that a behavior is not okay for them and then do it ourselves, we are also sending a mixed message.

[This might be a good time to talk about how unhealthy tobacco use is even for adults. This is also a good time to encourage parents to talk with their children about how they regret even starting to smoke. Parents should know that it is okay to keep trying to quit and ask for their children's support.]

Slide 10

When parents see an obvious danger threatening their children, they generally take one of two approaches to keeping their kids safe. They either get between their child and the potential threat, essentially blocking their child from the risk, or they remove their child from the threat. Animal parents like bears do this, too: it is called “fight or flight.” These reactions to threats work well for hidden dangers, too, as long as we know how to recognize what a hidden danger looks like. We as parents should think like a bear and be strong and assertive to keep our children safe from both obvious and hidden dangers.

Slide 11

It may seem a little scary to think that there are hidden dangers influencing our kids. But don't worry: As parents, we CAN learn how to recognize what hidden dangers look like so that we can protect our children with the appropriate fight or flight response.

Slide 12

Think back to the adult behaviors that were not okay for kids. *[These were using firearms, drinking alcohol and smoking.]* Although these behaviors have their dangers, they can be made much safer with proper education and practice. However, using tobacco is one behavior that cannot be made safer. Tobacco is a particularly harmful danger because it has both an obvious and a hidden influence. The hidden dangers of being around smokers, seeing tobacco glamorized, and the heavy marketing of tobacco companies all lead up to the obvious danger of tobacco use by our children.

Slide 13

Most smokers start smoking when they are teenagers or even younger, before they are old enough to make good decisions. Why? Kids want to be like us, and the tobacco industry knows this. Tobacco ads make it look as if smoking is rebellious and glamorous and something that older people do. If we combine the hidden danger of the addictive nature of tobacco and the amount of money that the tobacco industry spends making children want to try smoking or other tobacco products, then we start to see some of the pressures that our children face to start smoking and then to keep smoking once they start.

Slide 14

Tobacco companies know that it is very easy to get addicted to smoking. Because using tobacco can be seen as a “cool” and “grown-up” activity, some kids will want to sneak cigarettes and experiment with them before they turn 18. This experimenting might seem harmless, but it is actually a significant danger. Did you know that a person can be addicted after trying just a

few cigarettes? If your child starts using tobacco at a young age, the tobacco companies could have a customer for life!

Slide 15

The way tobacco products are made to look is a hidden danger that we might not recognize. Flashy marketing and bright packaging makes smoking look cool and fun and does not show the bad health effects caused by cigarettes. Think of tobacco products as a trap set for our children. The trap is camouflaged and looks enticing and our kids won't realize they are in trouble with tobacco until it is too late.

Let's talk for a minute about some ways tobacco products are made to look appealing to children. *[Open up for discussion.]* Those are great responses.

Some ways that tobacco products are made to look appealing include advertising that makes tobacco use look very glamorous and mature, making cigarettes seem appealing to children with products like candy cigarettes, and marketing intended to bait certain groups like African Americans, Latinos and young adults.

As you probably know, pipes, cigars and cigarettes are not the only tobacco products out there. However, did you know that there are many new tobacco products coming on to the market that are smoke-free or even spit-free? For example, snus are tiny pouches of tobacco that allow the user to swallow tobacco juice instead of spitting it out. There are also new dissolvable tobacco products that come in different forms, including strips, toothpick-like sticks and candy-shaped orbs. These are particularly dangerous products for our youth because they look and are packaged similar to candy or breath strips and are easy to conceal. Also, these products can be very appealing because some people might feel they are a safe alternative to cigarettes. Commercial tobacco use in any form is never safe.

The handout you will receive at the end of the presentation includes some more information about emerging and unique tobacco products. As a parent, it is important for you to know what to look for when protecting your children from the dangers of tobacco use. Emerging and unique tobacco products may be more appealing to youth than cigarettes because they look fun and are easy to hide from you!

Slide 16

Now let's talk about the effects of tobacco on our children's health. You have probably noticed that some cigarette packages have a label warning pregnant women against smoking. This is because tobacco can harm a child's health before it is even born. **[Click]** Did you know that smoking while pregnant is associated with increased ADHD in children? It's also associated with slower learning and a lower IQ, a higher rate of infant mortality, and an increased chance of an unhealthy birth weight. Low birth weight can lead to increased illness and morbidity later in life.

Slide 17

Tobacco use affects nearly every organ of the body, causing many diseases and reducing quality of life and life expectancy. The use of tobacco products increases the likelihood of your

child suffering from a stroke, heart disease and decreased fertility. Tobacco use also increases the likelihood of your child suffering from cancer!

Although longer durations of tobacco use mean more damage, even casual use causes harm. For instance, even a small amount of tobacco smoke can trigger sudden blood clots, heart attacks and strokes in those who have heart disease or risk factors for heart disease.

Slide 18

Nicotine from tobacco products affects a part of the brain responsible for decisionmaking and logical thinking. This means that kids who use tobacco may be more prone to irrational behavior and poor choices.

Nicotine also affects parts of the brain responsible for aggression and emotional control, making users more aggressive and less able to control their emotions than someone not using tobacco.

Adolescents who use nicotine also have a harder time focusing on tasks, which means they may struggle in school. Nicotine can also impair memory function.

Even a few cigarettes can have long-lasting effects on the brain. As soon as you smoke a couple of cigarettes, a chemical in your brain that can lead to addiction is reset to a lower level than was natural for your brain. That new setting can remain depressed for years, which is one of the reasons why people who have smoked previously (even if not for very long) are so much more likely to pick the habit back up even years down the road.

Slide 19

The big picture is that nicotine has been shown to decrease metabolic activity throughout the brain. This means that a brain exposed to nicotine is not as active as a brain that is not exposed to nicotine. Nicotine can cause the brain to function less. This decreases the youth's capacity to function.

Slide 20

Did you know that cigarettes are dangerous to your children, even if they aren't the ones smoking? Secondhand smoke can cause ear infections, asthma attacks, eye infections, allergies, cancer and forgetfulness in kids, not to mention that cigarette smoke can leave your clothes smelly and give you red, irritated eyes.

Not only does secondhand smoke harm your kids right now, it also may increase their chances of suffering from cancer and heart attacks as adults.

Slide 21

So all of this might seem a little scary, but there is something you can do to help protect your children. You can become a mama or papa bear, someone who bravely erases adolescent risks!

Slide 22

Becoming a mama or papa bear to protect your children is easy. Here are some simple steps:

- **[Click]** Start early. It is never too early to begin to help your children learn about the dangers of tobacco use and the ways that tobacco products are camouflaged to seem fun and appealing. Your teaching will reach your children BEFORE they are tempted to experiment with tobacco.
- **[Click]** Talk often. Let your kids know that you are always willing to answer any questions they might have about tobacco. Talk to them about how tobacco products can make people sick, and that they are hard to stop using once a person starts. Make sure they understand that most people who use tobacco are addicted and want to quit. Tell them that secondhand smoke is dangerous, too.
- **[Click]** Be the example. Young kids are wired to watch their parents to learn how to react to dangers in the world. Show your kids by your own actions that you think tobacco is dangerous by removing your kids from a dangerous situation. Take steps to keep your kids and yourself away from tobacco smoke. Walk around smokers to avoid being close to the secondhand smoke and let your children know you're doing this to avoid breathing the dangerous things in cigarette smoke. Let your kids know that you think cigarette smoke is yucky and smells bad. Encourage discussions with your kids about healthy lifestyles and choices. And don't allow people to smoke in your home.
- If you use tobacco, quit. It may be hard, but never quit quitting.

As a mama or papa bear, you are teaching your kids danger awareness. Start this training with them today and continue giving these messages as your kids get older!

Slide 23

As your kids grow up, you can continue to be a vigilant mama or papa bear. Can you think of some ways to protect your kids from tobacco as they get older? *[Discuss.]*

- Look together with your adolescent to find examples of how tobacco is being glamorized. These examples can be everywhere, from cigarettes in TV or in movies to other smokeless tobacco products like chewing tobacco and snuff.
- Stay vigilant. Continue to act with alarm and react to tobacco as a danger.
- Do not allow cigarettes or other tobacco products to be in places adolescents can find them and experiment.
- Be a role model. Avoid secondhand smoke whenever possible.

Slide 24

Even if you smoke, you can still be a mama or papa bear for your kids and show them that tobacco is dangerous. Here are some steps that you can take.

Quit! Keep trying until you are successful. Having a parent who smokes is the number one predictor of whether a child will become a smoker. We know that quitting is hard, and you do not have to do it alone. Call Quitline NC if you need support in your quit attempt, or talk to your doctor about ways to make quitting easier.

Talk to your children about the reasons you want to quit.

Slide 25

Remember to use love and logic when talking to your children about tobacco. Help your kids think of ways to say no if someone offers them a tobacco product. Let them know that you want to keep them safe and would prefer that they never try tobacco. Make sure they understand that trying tobacco is against the rules in your house, and if you find out they have tried tobacco, there will be consequences. It is in your power to keep your kids away from tobacco!

Slide 26

There are many ways that mama and papa BEARs can help protect their children from hidden dangers:

- Knowing who their children are with at all times and the kinds of things their friends are doing.
- Providing other activities that serve as healthy alternatives, such as extracurricular activities, to help keep children from hidden dangers.
- Suggesting some healthy alternatives, such as listening to music or aerobic exercise, which can actually stimulate some of the same pleasure centers in the brain that smoking does.

Thank you for your time today. I would like to encourage you to keep being the best BEAR you can be and continue to bravely erase adolescent risks. By recognizing the hidden dangers of tobacco use and protecting your kids from them, you are helping them to have healthier and happier lives.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like additional resources. *[Offer handouts with additional information.]*

Thanks again. If you can, before you leave, please fill out this form rating the presentation.

[End of slide show.]

Presentation Evaluation and Follow-Up

A great way to get feedback and gauge the effectiveness of your presentation is to pass out a presentation evaluation form to the parents in the audience. Parents can use this form to convey (1) what they thought was particularly enlightening and effective; (2) areas they thought could be improved; and (3) things they would like to learn more about. For your convenience, we have included a sample evaluation form in the appendix.

After your presentation is done, make sure to follow up with the organization that invited you to speak. If they were pleased with the presentation, they may ask you to present at another event. Be sure to provide the organization with your contact information and perhaps leave a few extra handout materials with the organization. That way, they can be prepared if any parents follow up for further information.

Conclusion

Thank you for joining the tobacco prevention movement! Through your efforts, parents and their children will be better equipped to fight the dangers of tobacco use and lead healthier and higher-quality lives. We hope that you find this manual helpful as you pursue educating parents on the realities of tobacco.

Appendix

Presentation Evaluation Form

Thank you for participating in the *Keeping Your Children Safe* presentation. We would appreciate it if you would take a minute of your time to evaluate the presentation. We value your feedback.

Directions: Please mark the appropriate rating.

Presentation Area	Rating				
	1	2	3	4	5
	Poor	Some Problems	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Overall Presentation Rating					
Presenter's Knowledge of the Material					
Presenter's Preparation					
Presenter's Style of Delivery					
Did the presentation increase your knowledge of the dangers of tobacco use?	No		Yes		
What was something you thought was interesting from the presentation?					
Please note any additional comments here. Is there anything you would like to learn more about? Is there anything you think could improve the presentation?					

List of Additional Resources

The following list includes websites and other resources that you can use to supplement your presentation. You can also share these resources with your audience to arm them with additional tobacco prevention knowledge:

- Quitline NC: www.quitlinenc.com
- Tobacco Reality Unfiltered: www.realityunfiltered.com
- CDC Youth Tobacco Prevention: www.cdc.gov/tobacco/youth/index.htm
- NC Tobacco Prevention and Control Program: www.tobaccopreventionandcontrol.ncdhhs.gov
- *Encyclopedia of Tobacco Control: Your Guide to Successful Community-Based Educational Programs* (booklet included with your other presentation materials)
- National Institutes of Health. 2011. "How Secondhand Smoke Affects the Brain." <http://www.nih.gov/researchmatters/may2011/05162011smoke.htm>

Frequently Asked Questions from Parents

The following is a list of frequently asked questions from parents and some example responses.

1. Can a few cigarettes really hurt a teenager?
 - Yes! Research shows that even a few cigarettes can cause long-term changes in a teenager's brain that may increase their likelihood of becoming addicted to cigarettes in the future.
2. I know cigarettes can affect the lungs, but I didn't know they could affect the brain! How does that happen?
 - Cigarette smoke (even secondhand smoke) can create lasting changes in the brain's chemical processes that can result in mood issues such as increased depression and irritability, lack of attention and longer-term changes that may have lasting effects.
3. Why do teenagers need alternative activities to help keep them from using cigarettes?
 - Teenagers often use cigarettes to help them "fit in." Having alternative activities they do with groups provides ways for them to "fit in" without using tobacco. Other activities, such as listening to music or aerobic exercise, can provide some of the same relaxing or pleasurable activities for your teenager in healthy ways.
4. I'm a smoker myself. How can I encourage children not to smoke?
 - If you currently smoke and would like to quit, share with your child that you would like to quit and how hard it is to do so. There are resources, such as 1-800-QUIT-NOW, that are available to help you. You can also share with your child how quickly you became addicted to cigarettes and your regret at ever starting the habit. Sharing some of the health consequences you have experienced could also be helpful for your child to hear.
5. I think my child may be hanging around other teenagers who are smoking. What can I do?
 - Talk to your child and share your concerns. Try asking questions that help your child think through the consequences of using tobacco for themselves. Examples of these questions include:
 - What do you think it would be like to be addicted to cigarettes?
 - What are some of the impacts on health and appearance that you see in smokers?
 - What are some of the other negative things about smoking (e.g., smell)?
 - Why do you think kids use tobacco?
 - You can also point out that MOST teenagers do not use tobacco. Only a minority of teenagers are tobacco users. Finally, don't be afraid to set limits for your children and hold them accountable to those limits.

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Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch



North Carolina
Public Health



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Center for
Health Equity

State of North Carolina
Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health
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