



**Big Brothers Big Sisters**  
of Central Carolinas

## Substance Use Awareness & Prevention

You would be hard pressed to find an individual that can say they were never offered any sort of substance during adolescence. Adolescence is already a confusing time – puberty, challenges at school and home, greater pressure to fit in and assimilate with peers. If you could go back and talk to your younger self about drugs, alcohol, and peer pressure, what would say? In November’s issue you’ll gain the tools and information necessary to master this tricky conversation about substance use with your Little or child.



“**Addiction** is defined as a chronic, relapsing brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences. It is considered a brain disease because drugs change the brain; they change its structure and how it works. These brain changes can be long lasting and can lead to many harmful, often self-destructive, behaviors.”

:: National Institute on Drug Abuse

### Opiate-related deaths:

NC total:	Mecklenburg:
2005: 642	2005: 26
2015: <b>1,110</b>	2015: <b>61</b>

This indicates a  
**73%**  
increase

Source: [governor.nc.gov](http://governor.nc.gov)

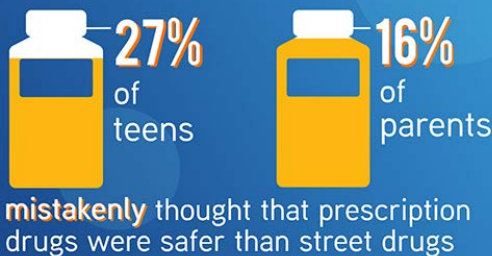
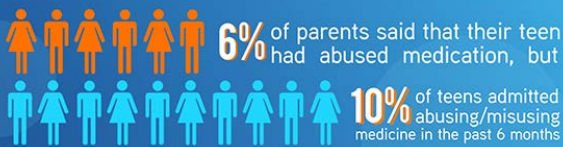
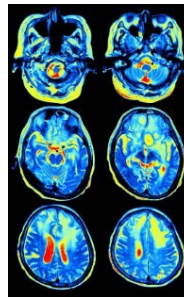
### TALK TO ME

Talking to kids can be difficult with simple topics let alone important

(and sometimes uncomfortable!) ones like drugs and alcohol. [Huffington Post](http://Huffington Post) lists 15 tips on how to make the conversation go smoothly. [Narconon](http://Narconon) also has info on how to talk to your child/Little, as well as being a host of additional resources – drug education programs, helpful hotlines, and more. The goal is to keep an open flow of communication between you and your child/Little, so make sure you listen, answer honestly, and approach the conversation in a positive and calm manor.

*As with many important topics such as this Parents/Guardians and Bigs should support each other and talk about how they are discussing this topic with the child/Little to ensure no confusion to the child.*

Substances can drastically affect our bodies. From our brain and lungs, to our eyes, heart, skin, even our bones! Drugs not only affect the body and mind, but they affect our lives in countless negative ways. Drug addiction and overdose, especially those related to opiates, has become a major **public health** problem. With permission from your Little’s parent/guardian, grab your Little and help them complete these worksheets from Scholastic’s **Heads Up** program to learn more about the effects of drugs on **your body** and **your life**. Also, click on the video to see a real-life comparison between smoker and non-smoker lungs!



### THE SCIENCE OF ADDICTION

Many people who don’t understand addiction believe the addict lacks willpower and that they could stop simply by choosing to do so. Although a person may choose to begin using a drug, they don’t choose to become an addict. In fact, addiction is considered to be a complex and chronic **disease**. The [National Institute on Drug Abuse](http://National Institute on Drug Abuse) created an interesting series to

explain the science behind addiction. The series allows you to explore the **neurobiology** of addiction by learning about the different parts of the brain, how drugs like heroin and cocaine act on the brain, and our brain’s reward pathway and **pleasure center**.

[NA](#) Meetings

[AA](#) Meetings

[SMART Recovery](#) Meetings

[Anuvia](#) – Treatment & recovery

**Local Support Groups & Treatment**

Thank you for taking the time to be part of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Carolinas. Keep an eye out for next month’s topic:

**Diversity**



Source: [promoteprevent.org](http://promoteprevent.org)