



# Parenting Made Simple

© Copyright 2010 MpoweredParent.com

**D**on't think for a second that all of these strategies are going to complicate your life, or that of your child. Being a more effective parent does not mean that you're becoming a more difficult parent. Much to the contrary! You will soon find that becoming an MpoweredParent means that you can free yourself from many of the doubts and suspicions that are notorious for producing conflict within families. You can improve communication between you and your child, and you can strengthen relationships within the home.

One of the most frustrating and stressful factors reported by parents is that they do not believe they could confidently detect and diagnose drug use by their children. For this reason, some parents become overly suspicious, overly regulatory and less trusting. Other parents choose to back off entirely, giving free reign to their teens and sentencing themselves to years of sleepless nights and disappointing surprises. Acquiring the knowledge and techniques to quickly and confidently detect substance abuse, means that you can be the supportive and protective guardian that your family needs.

Its easy and unobtrusive. Though we will show you how to conduct a full drug evaluation, capable of rooting out even subtle signs of drug use, your most potent weapon from now on will be the Hug or Handshake. Simply greeting your child with this proven technique will at once serve as a teambuilding exercise, as well as give you the perfect opportunity to subtly apply your new drug detection skills.

“Every night  
should end  
with a HUG!”

In addition to learning on-the-spot techniques, our worksheets will help you assess the current status of your kids, and enable you to reliably track subtle, yet critical changes that could indicate the development of a substance abuse problem. We're going to say goodbye to the adversarial relationships that tend to develop around adolescence, and instead help you recruit the entire family as active partners in the fight against substance abuse. Our family contracts will clearly spell out the terms and importance of your group partnership. Our strategy sheets will solidify the expectations that you have for one another, introduce stability to the sanctions you use and create a powerful system for reinforcing good behavior.

*As an added bonus, you'll find that many of our techniques work for all kinds of behavior related issues. Knowledge is power, and becoming an MpoweredParent means that you'll have the techniques, tools and confidence to keep your family on a clean and sober path towards success!*

# Nightly Greeting

A physical greeting should occur with each and every after-hours homecoming of your child. Though inconvenient at times, your family will soon benefit from the environment you create, the information you learn and the danger you prevent.

The first benefit of greeting your child is the immediate sense of caring that you convey. Too often we ignore homecomings, or simply yell our greeting from another room. By just taking a moment to physically greet our kids, we demonstrate a leadership role in creating a supportive family environment.

It also makes clear the fact that we consider our children more important than that TV show, snack, hobby or whatever else we may have been engaged in when they arrived.

Most of what we communicate is borne by way of acts and gestures. Even if it goes unspoken, a physical greeting conveys love, respect and concern.

The physical greeting can convey an immense amount of information in a matter of seconds. Much of it would be invisible otherwise. Imagine your child slinking home after a schoolyard fight, a brush with a bully or an embarrassing moment. Without the physical greeting, they may as well slip right past you and retreat to room isolation.

Whether it's a black eye that's bothering them, or hurtful gossip within their social clique, you'll be the first to know, and the first to offer your support. That's true friendship, and the meaning of family.

Some of the information that you'll get is useful in other ways too. The odors, mannerisms and physical characteristics that you observe can contain critical indicators of substance abuse.

**"If you ever need motivation to get up and greet your child...just think about those parents whose children will never come home again."**

Simply by shaking your son's hand, or hugging your daughter, you can perform a remarkably thorough scan for signs of risky behavior.

Without saying a word, or tipping your hand, you can: check their hair, breath and clothes for odors or stains, check their eyes for redness or abnormal pupils, evaluate speech for signs of rapid, slow or slurred words,

evaluate muscle tone and physical coordination, scan their nose for powder and their arms for needle marks.

The third essential benefit of the physical greeting is that it serves as a critical deterrent. The knowledge that mom or dad will be there to physically greet them is enough to keep some kids honest. It eliminates the chance that they can just slip quietly, and undetected, into bed.

It's not always easy. Some seventeen year olds can earn curfews of midnight or later. This means that Mom or Dad has to cut into their own sleep in order to welcome their child home. Though inconvenient, it's a good problem to have. Just ask the thousands of parents whose children will never come home again.

If practiced regularly and universally, this tactic conveys more respect than regulation. It is a subtle, but potentially lifesaving measure. In addition, it can give you peace of mind, and your children the care and support that they all crave.

# 7 Steps to a Safer Home

# Nightly Greeting

## HOW ITS DONE

1. As you approach your child, scan their clothes for obvious stains that could be alcohol related. Be alert for cover-up attempts.
2. Scan their facial gestures for an abnormal lack of expression. Offer a quick “Welcome home”, but save your questions for later.
3. As you step in for the hug or handshake, you must deliberately inhale through your nose. You’re looking for odors in the hair, breath and clothes. Alcohol, tobacco and marijuana have conspicuous smells. A flip of the hair sometimes reveals odors that have been trapped by a quick layer of hairspray or perfume. Also make note of fresh fragrance, kids often spritz-up just before coming in.
4. As you step back, take a good look at the eyes. Is the white part reddened? Do the pupils look abnormally large or small? Are the eyes watery?
5. Now you can ask some general questions about their night. As you do, check the upper lip and nose area for white powder or residue from huffing.

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Understand that this greeting can be done very subtly, but its important purpose should be clearly evident to both you and your child. You’re glad they’re home safe, you’re proud of them for obeying your rules, *and* your going to verify that both of these things keep happening. There are no exceptions. There’s no time off for good behavior. Once understood, this procedure will quickly become routine.
- Make an indisputable agreement that your child will wake you up upon coming home. Every night.
- Make an indisputable agreement which parent will be getting out of bed tonight.
- Pre-set a well-lit and level area in which to greet your child. This should include lighting which shines up into the face. Upward shining light often reveals evidence that they could not see themselves. (You can also use a small flashlight for this.)

6. As they speak, continue to check the breath for odors, and note whether or not the face is flushed. Is their speech abnormally rapid, slow or slurred?
7. Now step back a bit and observe their balance. Do they sway, stand wide-legged or lean on something for balance?

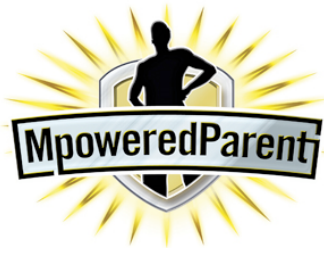
This process should only take about 90 seconds.

## NOW WHAT?

Remember, this two minutes could save your child’s life. You’re looking for very subtle signs. Be suspicious, and thoroughly vet out anything that doesn’t seem right. We’ve given you everything you need to do so.

If you notice any of the subtle symptoms mentioned in the first seven steps, or any signs of an attempted cover-up, move on to the full evaluation.

If not, go back to bed. Everyone should feel good knowing that the rules were obeyed, the trust was reinforced, and the future is still in good standing. Congratulations!



# Make Every Night Count

MPOWEREDPARENT.COM

## NIGHTLY GREETING

Evaluation Criteria	Any Symptoms?	Full Evaluation Needed
Approach:		
Stains or burns on clothes?	No	Yes
Signs of cover-up or changed outfit?	No	Yes
Facial gestures devoid of expression?	No	Yes
Hug or Handshake:		
Unusual odors on hair, clothes or breath?	No	Yes
Fresh and heavy odor of body spray or perfume?	No	Yes
Heavy breath-freshener, mint or gum?	No	Yes
(If visible: signs of needle puncture in arms?)	No	Yes
Step back:		
Eyes reddened or watery?	No	Yes
Pupils abnormal size?	No	Yes
Jaw clenched tight or hanging limp?	No	Yes
Face flushed?	No	Yes
Powder in or below nostrils?	No	Yes
Chemical or paint residue around mouth?	No	Yes
Overall:		
Swaying, wide-legged or leaning for balance?	No	Yes
Speech unusually rapid, slow or slurred?	No	Yes
Strange Disposition?	No	Yes

**Instructions for the full evaluation can be found at [www.MpoweredParent.com/Drug-evaluation](http://www.MpoweredParent.com/Drug-evaluation)**

Don't worry about having a copy of this checklist in your hand each time you conduct the nightly greeting. Keep a copy in your bedroom, and after meeting your child, fill out as much as you can remember. Once you've done this two or three times, you'll remember what to look for.

**See the following page for tips and tricks on conducting your Nightly Greeting.**

# TIPS & TRICKS

For your Nightly Greeting

**Breath:** The odor of an alcohol flavored beverage on a person's breath is a dead giveaway that we must look for, but don't rely upon it. The odor is not always present, and it can be misleading. For example, someone that's consumed an entire bottle of vodka, many teen's drink of choice, might not smell at all. So if the odor is there, you've got all the evidence you need. If its not there though, don't stop looking for other clues.

People use breath-fresheners *before* going out, not at the end of a night. If you detect fresh minty breath, or see breath-fresheners in use when your child walks through the door, you would be remiss not to get suspicious. But don't worry, these things only cover up the smell of alcohol –they don't dissolve it. If you remove the breath freshener and keep the mouth clear for 20 minutes. Any odor of alcohol will return in full force.

**Face:** When people use drugs, they oftentimes forget to clean up after themselves. In other examples, the drug use will produce visible evidence on their face. Alcohol, for example, is a vasodilator. It opens up blood vessels. This is why we sometimes see reddened eyes, flushed cheeks and swollen noses. Marijuana will produce alarmingly red eyes. Huffing gasoline can dry out the area around the mouth and nose, sometimes producing a chapped ring of skin. Huffing paint or glue from a bag will sometimes leave residue. People who have snorted cocaine or heroine oftentimes have white powder clinging to their nasal passages. People who have used depressants can be seen to have droopy eyelids or unusually slack jaw muscles. People who have used stimulants will oftentimes grind their teeth. They could also have abnormally dilated pupils. All of these things can be observed by a simple and casual observation of the face. You just have to know what you are looking for.

**Sobriety Tests:** Every parent should know how to administer some basic sobriety tests. We have several good suggestions for you at [MpoweredParent.com](http://MpoweredParent.com). These tests will allow you to assess the physical and mental agility of your children. They're easy to administer and easy to evaluate.

**Follow Up:** Don't let yourself down. The signs of drug use can be subtle. On top of that, you can bet that the drug user will be trying to conceal them. If you observe something suspicious, make sure that you explore it further. Do a more thorough evaluation or administer a home drug test. It could be the last opportunity you have to save your child's life.

**Be Consistent:** To obtain the full team-building and deterrent benefits, the physical greeting should be done as frequently as possible. It should definitely be a part of every after-hours homecoming. Again, just knowing that mom or dad is going to get close enough to give you a hi-five, see your eyes and smell any strange odors, is enough to prevent some kids from indulging in risky behaviors.

© Copyright 2010 MpoweredParent.com

*If you are part of a non-profit organization, MpoweredParent L.L.C. will be happy to provide you with written permission to duplicate and distribute it's copywritten material for non-profit purposes. Email your request to [editor@mpoweredparent.com](mailto:editor@mpoweredparent.com).*