

Drug Education and Addiction Awareness Curriculum Outline for Elementary School Students

Grade Level: 3rd - 5th Grade

Objective: To introduce students to basic concepts about drug education, healthy choices, and the risks of addiction, with a focus on prevention and fostering positive habits.

❖ Unit 1: Introduction to Health and Healthy Choices

Duration: 2-3 weeks

Key Concepts:

What is health?

The importance of making healthy choices (physical and mental well-being).

Understanding the body and its basic functions.

Learning Goals:

Students will understand the concept of health, including physical and mental health.

Students will recognize the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices to stay strong, focused, and happy.

Students will identify healthy foods, activities, and habits that promote overall wellness.

Activities:

Healthy Choices Chart: Students will create a chart to track their daily healthy habits (exercise, nutrition, sleep, etc.).

Class Discussions: Discuss scenarios involving healthy vs. unhealthy choices (e.g., eating too much junk food, playing outside vs. staying on the couch all day).

Interactive Games: Use role-playing or Choose Your Own Adventure style activities to make decisions about health and wellness.

Materials:

Visual aids about healthy eating and exercise

A simple video about the human body and the importance of staying healthy

❖ Unit 2: What are Drugs and Why Do People Use Them?

Duration: 2-3 weeks

Key Concepts:

What are drugs?

Different types of drugs and their uses (medicine, recreational, etc.).

Why some people use drugs and the concept of misuse.

Learning Goals:

Students will understand that drugs are substances that can affect the body in different ways.

Students will learn the difference between medicine and harmful drugs.

Students will explore why people might misuse substances and the risks involved.

Activities:

Class Discussion: Use child-friendly analogies to explain the difference between prescription medication (used when sick) and drugs that can harm the body (e.g., alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs).

Drug Use Stories (Role-playing): Present scenarios where characters choose to use medicine properly or misuse substances. Discuss the outcomes.

Guest Speaker: Invite a healthcare professional to talk about safe use of medications and the dangers of harmful substances.

Materials:

Simple fact sheets or books (e.g. The Drug-Free Me by Jeff J. Stroud)

Short animated videos explaining the basics of drug use and its effects.

❖ Unit 3: Understanding Addiction

Duration: 2-3 weeks

Key Concepts:

What does addiction mean?

How addiction affects the brain and behavior.

The difference between liking something and being addicted to something.

Learning Goals:

Students will understand the concept of addiction in simple terms, focusing on the idea of too much of a good thing

Students will recognize that addiction can affect the brain, making it harder to make healthy choices.

Students will identify behaviors and substances that can lead to addiction.

Activities:

Brain & Addiction Model: Use a simple model of the brain to explain how addiction changes the way the brain works (e.g., repetition of behavior to feel good, leading to unhealthy habits).

Addiction Metaphor: Use analogies like too much screen time or eating too much candy to explain how addiction can start small and get bigger over time.

Storybook Reading: Read a story about a character who makes choices to stay healthy and avoid addiction (e.g., The Berenstain Bears Get the Gimmies by Stan & Jan Berenstain).

Materials:

Brain diagram for kids

Picture books with stories about making good choices and avoiding addiction

❖ Unit 4: Peer Pressure and Saying No

Duration: 2-3 weeks

Key Concepts:

What is peer pressure?

How peer pressure can affect choices.

How to say no and stand up for yourself.

Learning Goals:

Students will recognize that peer pressure can make it hard to make healthy choices.

Students will learn strategies to resist peer pressure and confidently say no.

Students will practice making their own decisions.

Activities:

Role-playing: Practice scenarios where a friend or classmate offers something harmful (e.g., tobacco, alcohol), and students will role-play saying no.

Peer Pressure Posters: Students will create posters or write stories showing how to resist peer pressure.

Group Discussion: Discuss how to find friends who make good choices and support each other.

Materials:

Scenario cards with peer pressure situations

Art supplies for making posters

❖ Unit 5: Building a Support System and Healthy Alternatives

Duration: 2 weeks

Key Concepts:

How to find support from trusted adults and friends.

Healthy alternatives to cope with stress and emotions (e.g., talking to an adult, exercising).

The importance of having a support system when faced with tough choices.

Learning Goals:

Students will learn how to identify trusted adults and friends who can help in difficult situations.

Students will explore healthy ways to deal with stress or emotional challenges (e.g., sports, hobbies, talking to a parent).

Students will develop a personal plan for managing challenges with healthy activities.

Activities:

Support System Activity: Students will list trusted adults in their lives and share examples of times they might need help.

Stress Management Techniques: Teach students simple relaxation techniques like deep breathing or visualization.

Group Discussions: Discuss how to stay healthy and positive in tough situations.

Materials:

Support system worksheets

Relaxation videos or audio guides for kids

Assessment and Reflection:

Duration: Ongoing

Key Concepts:

Reinforce learning with assessments (quizzes, group discussions, project presentations).

Encourage students to reflect on their learning.

Activities:

Quiz on Key Concepts: Short quizzes covering the basics of drugs, addiction, and healthy choices.

Reflection Journals: Students keep a journal to reflect on what they have learned about drugs, addiction, and health.

Final Project: Students present a poster or project on how they can make healthy choices and avoid addiction.

Resources & References:

1. U.S. National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) -
<https://www.drugabuse.gov/parents/for-kids>
2. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
<https://www.samhsa.gov>
3. The American Academy of Pediatrics - Drug Use and Addiction in Children and Teens
<https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/substance-use/pages/default.aspx>
4. The Berenstain Bears Get the Gimmies by Stan and Jan Berenstain
5. The Drug-Free Me by Jeff J. Stroud

This curriculum is designed to help young children understand the basics of drug prevention and addiction awareness in a developmentally appropriate way, with a strong emphasis on making healthy choices, resisting peer pressure, and building a strong support system.