

## STOP AND THINK SOCIAL SKILLS

### Dealing with Peer Pressure

As kids grow older, they'll be faced with some challenging decisions. Some don't have a clear right or wrong answer - like should they play soccer or field hockey? Other decisions involve serious moral questions, like whether to cut class, try cigarettes, or lie to parents. Making decisions is hard enough, but when other people get involved and use peer pressure - it can be even harder. It's something everyone has to deal with - even adults. Peers can have a positive influence on each other. Students might teach each other strategies for dealing with certain problems or they might teach each other a cool trick with the soccer ball. Students can influence each other to join club activities or encourage each other to turn in their homework. These are examples of how peers positively influence each other every day. Sometimes peers influence each other in negative ways. For example, a student may try to convince another student to be mean to someone or a peer may try to convince another student to cheat or shoplift. Some kids give in to peer pressure because they want to be liked, to fit in, or because they worry that other kids may make fun of them if they don't go along with the group. Others may go along because they are curious to try something new that others are doing. The idea that "everyone's doing it" may influence some kids to leave their better judgment, or their common sense, behind.

### Use the Stop and Think language at home with your children to help reinforce the steps of Dealing with Peer Pressure

**Step 1:** Stop and Think.

**Step 2:** Am I going to make a good choice or a bad choice? A good choice!

**Step 3:** What are my choices or steps?

1. **Listen** to what the others want you to do.
2. **Decide** if what they want you to do is a good or bad choice.
3. If it is a bad choice, **think** about your choices, you can:
  - a. **Tell** them you won't do it in a firm voice.
  - b. **Suggest** something else to do.
  - c. **Walk away**, go to a safe place, and do something else.
  - d. **Ask** an adult for help.
4. **Choose** and act out your best choice.

**Step 4:** Just do it!

**Step 5:** Good job!