

PARENT GUIDE

Season 5, Episode 6 – *Available Doesn't Mean Safe*

(For Parents & Caregivers)

WHAT THIS EPISODE COVERS (Key Takeaways)

From the expert conversation and episode materials, parents learn:

- Products that are legal, common, or advertised are not automatically safe for kids
 - Youth are being targeted through flavors, designs, and messaging
 - “Everyone’s doing it” is often a misleading claim
 - Fact-checking helps kids push back against hype
 - Clear, practiced responses make it easier for kids to say no
 - Parent modeling and open dialogue matter more than lectures
-

AGES 6–9 (WITH THE EXPLAINER VIDEO)

Before Watching

Say something simple:

“This video helps us learn how to tell the difference between something that looks fun and something that’s actually safe.”

Ask:

- “Have you ever seen ads that make unhealthy things look exciting?”
- “Who helps you figure out what’s safe?”

Name a few trusted adults together.

During Watching

Let the video lead. Pause briefly to notice:

- When the characters **check facts**



- When they **say no**
- When they **leave together**
- When they **tell a trusted adult**

You can ask:

- “What did the kids do when the cloud said ‘everyone’s doing it?’”
-

After Watching

Review the three smart moves together:

1. **Say No**
2. **Leave**
3. **Tell a trusted adult**

Reinforce one clear message:

“Just because something is easy to get doesn’t mean it’s safe.”

Optional activities:

- Make simple “Fact Glasses” and write one truth that helps beat hype
 - Play a quick *Myth or Fact* game (keep it light and short)
-

AGES 10–13 (USING THE IDEAS WITHOUT THE VIDEO)

Before the Conversation

Frame it as learning, not rules:

“This is about noticing how things are marketed and deciding what’s right for you.”

Ask:

- “What kinds of ads or posts do you see a lot?”
 - “How do they try to get attention?”
-

During the Conversation

Discuss:

- How companies use bright colors, flavors, or characters
- Why “everyone’s doing it” messages are powerful
- How checking facts helps slow down impulsive choices

Practice simple responses:

- “No thanks — not my thing.”
 - “Let’s go do something else.”
 - “I’m good.”
-

After the Conversation

Agree on:

- Who the trusted adults are if something feels unsafe
- A simple plan for leaving situations together

Reassure:

“You can always come to us — even if you’re unsure.”

AGES 13+ (TEENS)

Acknowledge independence:

“You’re making more decisions on your own now.”

Conversation focus:

- How availability and legality can be confusing
- Why developing brains respond differently to substances
- How marketing often targets younger audiences

Encourage reflection:

- “Who benefits if someone starts using?”
- “What’s the real goal of that ad?”

Keep the tone calm and collaborative.

PARENT-ONLY CONTEXT (FROM THE EPISODE)

(Do not share verbatim with kids)

From the expert discussion:

- Youth are exposed to heavy marketing through stores, billboards, and social media
- Flavoring and design increase appeal for younger audiences
- High-potency products pose greater concerns for developing brains
- Kids benefit when parents stay curious and informed
- Conversations work best when they are ongoing and non-judgmental

You don't need to cover everything at once.
Short, honest conversations add up.

PRACTICAL TOOLS YOU CAN USE

1. The “Check the Claim” Habit

When something sounds too easy or too good, pause and ask:

- “Who’s saying this?”
 - “What’s the goal?”
-

2. Practice Exit Lines

Help kids rehearse calm ways to leave situations that feel off.

3. Model Fact-Checking

Let kids hear you question ads, headlines, or trends out loud.

CORE LINE (CONSISTENT ACROSS EPISODES)

“We don’t have to know everything — we just have to stay connected.”

Important Note for Parents and Caregivers

This parent guide is provided for **educational and informational purposes only**. It is not intended to replace medical, psychological, legal, or substance use treatment advice.

Every child and family situation is different. The strategies and suggestions shared here are meant to support thoughtful conversation and prevention-focused parenting, but they may not apply to all circumstances. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to use their own judgment and to consult qualified professionals when appropriate.

Neither the producers of *Awkward Conversations*, nor the participating organizations, hosts, or guests assume responsibility for decisions made based on this material.

If you believe a child or family member may be at risk of harm, please seek immediate professional support or contact local emergency services

