Focus Your Efforts

The purpose of this exercise is to help you focus on the things you CAN do to help your child, and to let go of the things you CAN'T do. If you focus on what you CAN do, you will increase your influence. If you focus on what you CAN'T do, you will diminish your influence.

There are very few outcomes you can control. Your child is an individual with free-will and they can use that free-will wisely or poorly. Ultimately, they could choose a life of misery or happiness. That's up to them, not you.You can't control them, but you CAN control the support you provide and how your respond to their wise/poor decisions. Though you can't control the outcome, you can increase your influence by focusing your efforts.

1) List all of the worries that you have about your child.

EXAMPLE
Failing school 8/5
Serious injury or death because of substances 10/10
Spend too much time on video games 4/7

2) Next to each worry, write a score for importance, and a score for urgency. 1 is low, 10 is high. Notice which concerns are both important and urgent.

3) From your previous list, what are 2-3 worries that you believe are the most important to focus on now.

EXAMPLE
Serious injury or death because of substances

4) Which aspects of these worries are actually out of your control? Are you ready to let go of any worries that you can't control? If you can let go, you will save your energy for what you can control.

EXAMPLE
Using substances outside of my supervision.
Using substances after moving out of my home.
Their desire to not use substances.
Whether they like the support/rules.

5) Which aspects of these worries are 100% within your control? These are the areas in which to focus your efforts.

EXAMPLE
Creating expectations and consequences around substance use. Following through with these.
Providing therapeutic support (child's engagement is out of your control).
Providing regular drug testing.
Not providing access to things that increase risk, such as a car.
Not providing access to things that increase access, such as cash.