



HOW TO GUIDE THE CANNABIS CONVERSATION

YOUR WORDS MATTER

You are the #1 influence on your child's behavior. Studies show teens are less likely to use cannabis if their parents talk to them about the risks. These health risks include physical changes to the brain that can permanently impact their memory, learning, and attention.

WHY TALK NOW?

Kids start early. **Every day 3,300 children try cannabis**—some as young as 12.

TIPS FOR PRODUCTIVE CONVERSATIONS

01

TALK EARLY AND OFTEN

Start the conversation as early as 10 years old, or as soon as they start asking questions. Continue the conversation as your kids grow up.

02

KEEP IT CASUAL AND CLEAR

Set clear rules around cannabis use. Instead of a formal family meeting, look for natural opportunities to start a conversation, such as driving past a dispensary.

03

LISTEN WITHOUT JUDGEMENT

Hear what they have to say and ask questions to encourage conversation. **Avoid lecturing** so they feel comfortable coming to you with questions later.

04

STAY GROUNDED AND FACT-BASED

Teens know when you're trying to scare them. **Keep cannabis conversations honest** and focused on proven facts and real-life situations.

05

DON'T PANIC IF YOU SUSPECT USE

Stay calm. Ask why they chose to experiment. Discuss non-cannabis alternatives and share positive reasons for wanting them to avoid using.

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BE A VOICE OF REASON FOR YOUR TEEN

SPEAK UP ABOUT THE RISKS OF CANNABIS

You carry a heavy weight of influence when it comes to your child's behavior and views. Use your influence intentionally. Have regular conversations to help your teen understand and avoid the risks that come with cannabis use.

TALK EARLY & OFTEN

The conversation around the risks of cannabis should be ongoing. Have **short and frequent discussions** with your teen.

WAYS TO ENCOURAGE HEALTHY DECISIONS

01

SHARE FACTS

Be open about the risks of marijuana and other substances. Help your teen see that regular marijuana use can **interfere with the development of their brain**.

02

EMPHASIZE SLEEP

Encourage your teen to get enough rest. Consider a “**no screen time**” before bed where you shut down all televisions and phones earlier in the evening.

03

CHECK IN

Have regular check-ins with your child. See what’s happening in their life and how they’re feeling. If they are struggling, investigate ways you can **best support them**.

04

PROMOTE GOALS

Help your teen create short-term and long-term goals. Be a **champion of their dreams** and help support the vision they have for their life.

05

CELEBRATE WINS

When your teen accomplishes a goal, share your praises and lift them up. **Reinforce** positive decisions and hard work.

Source: [National Institutes of Health](#)

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MARIJUANA'S IMPACT ON THE TEENAGE BRAIN

PROTECT YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPING MIND

Your teen's brain doesn't fully mature until their mid or late twenties. Regular marijuana use before then can physically change their brain and cause long-term damage. When you know the facts, you can help your teen see them too.

BE PROACTIVE

Learn the risks and then share. Have **short and frequent talks** with your teen about the specific dangers of marijuana.

THE RISKS OF YOUTH MARIJUANA USE

01 IMPAIRED FUNCTIONS

Regular marijuana use can negatively **impact important functions**. Research shows that it can impair one's memory, learning, and attention.

02 COGNITIVE SKILLS

Marijuana is associated with reduced cognitive function in teens and can be linked to lower IQ scores. Teens who regularly use can lose an average of **6 IQ points** by adulthood.

03 THE BRAIN

Marijuana use puts the physical structure of the **developing brain at risk**. Exposure to marijuana can interfere with neurotransmitters and affect the brain's shape and structure.

04 MENTAL HEALTH

Marijuana can **negatively impact mental health**. Regular use can increase teenagers' risk for anxiety, depression, and psychotic episodes.

05 DAILY LIFE

Using marijuana can affect teens' **every day life**. Research shows that those who use are more likely to have relationship and educational problems.

Source: [National Institutes of Health](#)

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SEE THE VALUE OF YOUR SUPPORT

YOU HAVE AN INFLUENCE ON YOUR TEEN'S CHOICES

According to research, children who have a supportive parent or guardian are less likely to use marijuana and illegal drugs. Find moments to show your teen that you're there and you care about their well-being.

SHOW UP & SPEAK UP

Be there for your teen and encourage a [cannabis-free life](#).

WAYS TO SUPPORT

YOUR TEEN'S BEST LIFE

01

GUIDELINES

Set clear expectations and a **zero-tolerance policy** around cannabis use. Continue to check in with your teen and make sure your guidelines are understood and being followed.

02

ENCOURAGEMENT

Build your teen up with your words. Encourage them and remind them of **their worth and potential**. Celebrate their positive decisions.

03

CURIOSITY

Show interest in your child's life and their decisions. **Keep tabs** on how your teen spends their time, who they spend it with, and any struggles they may be facing.

04

CONSISTENCY

Be careful not to send mix messages. **Stand firm** on your stance around marijuana and be sure that your behavior and conversations don't make your child question your views.

05

LISTENING

Sometimes your ears are just as important as your words. It's important that your teen feels heard by you. Create a **safe space** where you and your child can have authentic conversations.

Source: [American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

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