



# This doesn't have to be a hard conversation.

They should know about the harms and risks associated with using marijuana, as well as how any substance use affects their developing brains.

Legalization has brought marijuana into the open. That's an opportunity to talk directly and honestly with your kids about it.

## 5 Tips to Make the Conversation Easier

### 1. Begin talking to your child as early as possible.

- Begin talking to your child about marijuana at a young age, and keep the conversations going until they're an adult.
- Explain your concerns for their healthy and safety. Express your hope for your child's future.
- Let them know that you will always be there to help them if they are in an unsafe situation, regardless of whether it involves drug use. Assure your child that they can call you to be picked up whenever needed, no questions asked.

### 2. Explain the facts about marijuana.

Talk to your child about the unique risks to users under 25 years of age:

- The brain continues to grow and develop into the mid-twenties.
- THC, the chemical that gets you high, affects brain development in ways related to learning and memory.
- Using marijuana while the brain is still developing can affect school and athletic performance, and increases the chance of depression and other mental health problems later in life.
- Encourage your children to learn the facts! And take time to read up-to-date information on the reasons why young people use marijuana, where they typically use, and how they use it.



*Learn More*



### 3. Don't talk the whole time. Ask open-ended questions.

- Be patient and be ready to listen. Your child is more likely to listen if it's a conversation and not a lecture.
- Find the right moments to talk. Driving past a dispensary or seeing an ad for recreational or medical marijuana products provide opportunities for conversation.
- Ask your child open-ended questions like, "What do you think about marijuana?"
- Be prepared to give them honest, age-appropriate answers so that they see you as a good source of information, rather than an authority figure.

### 4. Talk about refusal skills: How to say, "No."

- Despite what it seems, there are more youth who say NO to marijuana use than there are youth who choose to use it.
- Help your child think of ways to say no, so they can feel prepared when they encounter situations where they feel pressured to use drugs.

### 5. Keep talking.

- It's important to continue talking to your kid about marijuana until they're an adult.
- Share new research about cannabis and risks associated with drug use.
- Review the things you discuss with your child to make sure they understand. Encourage them to ask questions!
- Observe your child's behavior and mental well-being. If they are stressed or sad, encourage them to find healthy ways to manage their emotions.

**Visit [MarijuanaHarmlessThinkAgain.org](https://MarijuanaHarmlessThinkAgain.org) for more information.**

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#### What if my child uses marijuana?

- First, try to be understanding rather than negative or reactive. Even if you are angry, scared, or both, do not show it. That may push your child away, and you may lose the chance to help them.
- Ask your child why they choose to use marijuana, and try to understand what's driving their decision. Is it social pressure? Curiosity? Coping with stress, anxiety or depression?
- Clearly and concisely communicate your rules and expectations about drug use.
- Encourage your child to engage in less risky behaviors that are safe and healthy.

## Partnership to End Addiction

**drugfree.org**

From tips for parents and caregivers on preventing substance use to guidance on managing recovery from addiction, we have the information and resources you need at every step of the way.

Connect with a specialist now. Support is free and confidential. Specialists are ready to listen and help you find answers for yourself and your child.

Servicio disponible en Español.

- Text 55753
- Email a specialist
- Schedule a call



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