

Talking to Your Child about Marijuana

Youth are viewing marijuana more positively and believe marijuana use is not dangerous. Efforts to legalize marijuana decrease youth perceived risk which may result in increased use.

Risks of Marijuana Use:

- 1 Difficulty learning and retaining information
- 2 Lowered IQ scores
- 3 Decreased ability to deal with life stressors
- 4 Poor decision making skills
- 5 Increased risky and impulsive behaviors
- 6 Increased risk of mental health concerns (depression, anxiety, and even schizophrenia in vulnerable individuals)
- 7 Chronic cough or bronchitis

What Do I Say?

Parents have an important role in preventing marijuana use. The subject of marijuana can be difficult to talk about due to mixed messages related to legalization and medical use. Parents talking openly and honestly with their children about drugs is one of the most effective ways to prevent substance abuse.

Your child says: "Weed is safer than drinking alcohol."

What to say: "Whether it's smoking pot, cigarettes, drinking or behaving recklessly, I honestly don't want you doing anything that can harm you. What is going on in your life that makes you feel like you want to use drugs or alcohol?"

Your child states: "Marijuana comes from a plant, so how harmful could it be?"

What to say: "Cocaine and heroin come from plants, and poison ivy is a plant as well, but that doesn't mean they are healthy or good for you. Using marijuana can affect your judgment and be harmful. Tell me about what activities you and your friends like to do that doesn't involve using drugs."

For more scenarios related to your child's age go to www.parentslead.org/parents/talk