

## Talking to Your Teen About Marijuana

Parents should **state clearly** to their pre-teens and teens that they would be very disappointed if they started using marijuana. **Parents may also want to explain that marijuana use interferes with young people's concentration, memory, and motor skills, and that it interferes with motivation, leads to poorer school performance, and can cause users to disappoint the people most important to them.**

All of this can be communicated in a loving way: *"I love you and I want the best for you, so I hope you won't try marijuana."*

Some parents who saw marijuana being widely used in their youth still wonder: **Is marijuana really so bad for my child? The answer is an emphatic yes!** Not convinced? Need more reasons?

**Read these:**

- Marijuana is illegal.
- Marijuana now exists in forms that are stronger with higher levels of THC, the psychoactive ingredient than in the 1960s. Get more facts [here](#).
- Studies show that someone who smokes five joints a week may be taking in as many cancer-causing chemicals as someone who smokes a full pack of cigarettes every day.
- Hanging around users of marijuana often means being exposed not only to other illegal drugs, but also to a lifestyle that can include trouble in school, engaging in sexual activity while young, unintended pregnancy, difficulties with the law, and other problems.
- Marijuana use can slow down reaction time and distort perceptions. This can interfere with athletic performance, decrease a sense of danger, and increase risk of injury.
- Regular marijuana users can lose the ability to concentrate that is needed to master important academic skills, and they can experience short-term memory loss. Habitual marijuana users tend to do worse in school and are more likely to drop out altogether. Read more about the negative consequences of marijuana on students.
- Teens who rely on marijuana as a chemical crutch and refuse to face the challenges of growing up never learn the emotional, psychological, and social lessons of adolescence.
- The research is not complete on the effects of marijuana on the developing brain and body.

*Source: The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign's Behavior Change Expert Panel*

**Next: Use Teachable Moments**