

Tips for Parents, Caregivers and Trusted Adults

Let's keep kids away from marijuana 420 festivals



Every April 20th, in parks across the U.S., people will gather for the unofficial marijuana holiday. These events are sponsored by the marijuana industry or marijuana legalization proponents. Even in states where recreational marijuana use is legal, it remains illegal for anyone under 21, yet these events are often open to all ages.

Although marijuana and marijuana products cannot be sold at these events, we know from previous events that they will be present.

Open and public marijuana consumption is illegal under many state laws, however, visible consumption will occur.

We know that many teens attend these events, often without parental knowledge.

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In Denver, the epicenter of marijuana commercialization in the first state to legalize recreational marijuana, absenteeism increased in public high schools in years when 420 fell on a weekday.

We believe that 420 is an opportunity for you to have a conversation with your teen about marijuana. Remember that you as a parent remain a strong influence on your teen. What you say matters.

Research shows anger or scare tactics don't work, but a calm discussion of facts may. Here are three evidenced-based facts to consider when talking with your teen:

- > Marijuana use affects the brain. A developing brain is especially vulnerable.
- > Marijuana use can keep your child from reaching their full potential. Teen use can impair learning, memory, and math and reading achievement.
- > Marijuana use can affect emotions later in life. Teen users are more likely to be depressed or have suicidal thoughts in adulthood.

If you have a family history of addiction or mental health risks, now might be the time to share this information with your teen. You could note that this family history may make your child more likely to become addicted to marijuana or develop negative symptoms.

Conclude the conversation with a clear statement of your expectations and encourage your teen to steer clear of the festival and plan other activities that day.

If you use marijuana, it is important to distinguish your behavior from your expectations for your child. If you are of legal age, different facts apply to you.

Finally, if you plan to attend a 420 event, please leave your kids at home and/or in the care of a trusted caregiver.

Here are several resources for parents and teens:

Tips for parents <https://www.samhsa.gov/know-risks-marijuana>

Tips for teens <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/marijuana>

How to talk to young people in your life about marijuana https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/marijuana-brochure-newpics-r15f_508c.pdf

One Chance to Grow Up is an initiative developed by Smart Colorado that focuses on protecting kids across the nation from the dangers of today's marijuana. We serve as a reliable resource for parents, media, policymakers, and all those who care about kids. Started by concerned parents, we're a 501(c)(3) nonprofit supported by charitable contributions.

