

Tips for Parents, Caregivers and Trusted Adults

Homecoming Season



Fall is finally here—an exciting season filled with homecoming, football games, dances, and parties. These festive events are great opportunities to connect with your teen—and to have an honest conversation about marijuana.

Why now? Marijuana use is harmful to the developing teen brain, and unfortunately, it's easily accessible in many forms—from slow-acting edibles to ultra-potent THC in vape pens. These products might show up at fall gatherings, making it even more important to talk with your teen ahead of time.

How to start? Research shows that scare tactics and anger don't work. What does work is a calm, respectful conversation grounded in facts and science. And don't forget—you are still one of the biggest influences in your teen's life. What you say matters.

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BASIC TALKING POINTS

- **Legal doesn't mean safe.** Just because marijuana is legal for adults in some states doesn't mean it's safe for teens. The teen brain is still developing—and marijuana interferes with brain development.
- **It can impact your teen's full potential.** Using marijuana during adolescence can impair learning, memory, and academic performance—including math and reading skills.
- **There are long-term emotional risks.** Teens who use marijuana are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, have suicidal thoughts, and greatly increases the risk of psychosis and schizophrenia.
- **Family history matters.** If your family has a history of mental health issues or addiction, this is a good time to share that. Let your teen know this could increase their risk of negative effects from marijuana use.
- **Marijuana and driving don't mix.** Using marijuana affects reaction time, depth perception, and judgment. It's not safe or legal to drive—or even ride with someone—who has been using marijuana.

Wrap it Up with a Clear Message

End the conversation by making your expectations known. Let your teen know you expect them to avoid marijuana—and that you're always there to talk, no judgement.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Encourage your teen to attend school-sponsored, adult-supervised events like homecoming, dances, or football games—these offer safer, structured environments.

If your teen is planning to ride in a limousine or party bus:

- Who arranged the transportation?
- Will there be adult supervision during transit?

If your teen is going to a party or gathering:

- Will parents or trusted adults be present and actively monitoring the event?
- Who's hosting? Do you know and trust them?
- Who is attending?

Before the evening begins:

- Who will they be with? Can they call you anytime for help or a ride?
- Have you discussed what they should do if someone offers marijuana or other substances?

Have an honest check-in afterward:

- How did the event go?
- Did anything surprise or concern them?
- Keep the door open for future talks

GET EDUCATED

The basics: <https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/cannabis-marijuana>

Know what THC looks like: *It's not just a plant* thcphotos.org

Parents make the difference:

https://onechancetogrowup.org/education-resources/Marijuana_risks

Talking with your child about marijuana: <https://library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma18-5081.pdf>

Drugged driving: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drug-impaired-driving>

One Chance to Grow Up does not take sides on the politics of legalization but instead serve as a reliable resource for parents, media, policymakers, and all who care about kids. Started by concerned parents, we're a 501(c)(3) nonprofit supported by charitable contributions and a project of the Colorado Nonprofit Development Center.

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