

Talking with youth about marijuana



It's important for parents to talk with their kids about marijuana early and often.

Focus on active listening, open-ended questions, objectivity, empathy and honesty. Though youth may be drawn to marijuana because of curiosity, peer-pressure, a desire to fit in, and stress in their lives, parents can make a difference. One of the main reasons young people choose to avoid drugs is because they know their parents don't approve of it.

Share time with your kids and make conversations about hard subjects like drug use a part of your relationship. Your kids see you as a model of how to behave. Start talking early and often.

81% of Alaska high school students don't use marijuana

The side effects of use can be serious. Teens who use marijuana daily or almost daily may

- struggle with anxiety, depression and paranoia
- lack motivation for and interest in activities they used to enjoy
- experience more intense or enduring symptoms of existing mental health conditions

When talking about marijuana, let youth know that it

- is illegal for people under 21 to use
- can be harmful to developing brains
- can get in the way of work, school, and family activities



Using marijuana can get in the way of life

An arrest or record of use can mean losing out on

- college financial aid
- vocational training
- jobs
- driving privileges

Young people are more susceptible to the negative effects

Research shows that teens who use marijuana are more likely to

- do poorly in school
- get addicted to marijuana than teens who don't use marijuana
- have distorted thinking and an increased difficulty in memorizing things

For more detailed guidance on how to talk to kids about marijuana, go to the parent's guide at

www.marijuana.dhss.alaska.gov

