

# cannabis

# CONVERSATIONS

→ For adults with youth ages 8-12 ←

## WHAT to SAY



Before you begin, think about whether your child is looking for connection, facts or direction.

(Choose the ones you think will resonate with your child.)

**1** "You might hear a lot of different things about cannabis, but I want you to come to me with your questions."

**2** "Cannabis and marijuana are becoming a little more common but that doesn't make it O.K. for kids."

**3**

"Cannabis is legal for adults over 21, like alcohol. Adults might use cannabis for lots of reasons. No matter why anyone uses cannabis, it isn't safe for you. Your brain is growing really fast and cannabis isn't good for growing brains."

**4** "Trying cannabis or marijuana can get in the way of you making good choices."

*If you're worried about your youth using:*

**5** "If you're thinking about trying it, I want you to come talk to me so we can go over things together."

**6** "You matter to me and I love you. It's my job to help you stay safe and healthy. Using cannabis or marijuana in any form is not O.K."

# BRAIN matters

Every brain & body are different. Here's what we know so far.



- **Development:** Marijuana affects the parts of the brain that control emotions, memory, and judgement.
- **Coordination:** THC in any form will likely impair the ability to drive, play sports, and do other activities.
- **Learning and Memory:** Heavy marijuana use by young adults can cause problems with thinking, memory & learning. (NIDA)
- **Dependence:** Repeated marijuana use can lead to addiction—which means people have trouble controlling their drug use and often cannot stop even though they want to.

## WHY this conversation MATTERS

- You are your child's main influence and they want to trust you first.
- Starting this conversation now helps build the foundation for future conversations.
- Youth at this age are shifting from concrete (black and white) thinking to abstract (gray area) thinking. They want the simple facts but can handle some complex information.
- Setting clear boundaries and common sense reasons work best at this age.
- Reassuring kids and tweens of how much you care creates connection and trust. (Even if they roll their eyes and squirm away.)



# TIPS to help adults CONNECT

- 1 Establish clear rules, set your **expectations** and stick to them.
- 2 You may need to **put your opinions aside** before you have a conversation with your youth. Any emotional charge you bring to the table will affect the clarity of your message for your youth.
- 3 Seek to **listen** and **connect**. Find common ground with your teen. When they know you're on their side, you can have an ongoing conversation to help guide good choices.
- 4 Keep the conversation **balanced**, listen and don't talk over or down to them.

WHO CAN HELP?



Almost everyone has a sassy aunt or cool uncle. Enlist your favorite to help out!

Close Friend • Grandparent • Doctor  
Chosen Family • School Counselor  
Trusted Teacher • Faith Leader



- 5 Focus on **positive** messages and compliment youth when they make healthy decisions. Focusing on the negative might overwhelm them or make them act out of fear or defensiveness.
- 6 Talk about **friends**: know their friends and how they might influence your child.

**CONNECTION** *is the best*  
**PREVENTION**

developed by:



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