TAKE ACTION

It's never too early to talk with your children about the risks of marijuana use. Research suggests that one of the most influential factors for children is a strong, open relationship with a parent.[7] Though it may not seem like it, children really hear your concerns, and it's important that you discuss the risks of using marijuana with them.

Use these tips to talk with your child:

- Plan to have many short talks;
- Choose informal times to have conversations, such as in the car or during dinner;
- Continue talking as they get older;
- Clearly state what you expect regarding drug use;
- Create family rules together, such as expectations when hanging out with friends; and
- Let them know you are always there for them.

Talk with your children about having an "exit plan" if they are offered marijuana. Peer pressure can be powerful among youths, and having a plan to avoid drug use can help children make better choices. Talk with your children about what they would do if faced with a decision about drugs, such as texting a code word to a family member. Be sure to practice the exit plan in a safe environment.

[7] National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2004). Young children develop in an environment of relationships. Working Paper No. 1.

talk they hear you®

www.underagedrinking.samhsa.gov

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

SMA-18-5080

TALKING WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT MARIJUANA:

Keeping Your Kids Safe

talk they hear you®

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE TRYING MARIJUANA

Marijuana is a mind-altering drug made from the dried hemp plant Cannabis sativa. It can be consumed in a variety of ways—including through edibles, oils, vaping, and smoking.

An estimated 1.2 million youths aged 12 to 17 tried marijuana for the first time in 2017—that's approximately 3,300 kids each day.[1] In fact, about half of youths aged 12 to 17 said that it would be easy to get marijuana if they wanted some.

It's important to talk with your children from a young age to ensure they understand what marijuana is and why they shouldn't try it.

THE RISKS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Parents should know the risks of marijuana use and start talking with their children about them early on. Marijuana use in any form is not safe for a child's brain development.

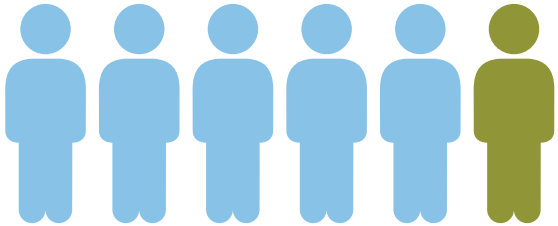
Risks include, but are not limited to:

- **Issues with attention, concentration, problem solving, learning, and memory**, which could cause poor academic or future job performance;
- **Lack of balance and coordination**, which could increase injury risk when playing sports or driving;
- **Poor judgment and decision making**[2], such as having unprotected sex or impaired driving; and/or
- **Poor school performance**, which could also affect academic or future job performance.[3]

IS MARIJUANA ADDICTIVE?

Marijuana use can impact your children despite it being known as a "natural" substance. Using marijuana can lead to a substance use disorder. Research shows that trying marijuana from a young age increases the likelihood of problems with marijuana use later in life.[4]

Additionally, nearly one in three people who use marijuana may have some degree of marijuana use disorder.[5] One in six people who start using marijuana as teenagers will become addicted.[6]



[1] Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2018). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (HHS Publication No. SMA 18-5068, NSDUH Series H-53). Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

[2] Crane, N. A., Schuster R. M., Mermelstein R. J., Gonzalez R. (2015). Neuropsychological sex differences associated with age of initiated use among young adult Cannabis users. *J. Clin. Exp. Neuropsychol.*

[3] Lynskey, M. Hall, W. (2000). The effects of adolescent cannabis use on educational attainment: a review. *Addiction*;95: 1621-30.

[4] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *The Health Effects of Cannabis and Cannabinoids: The Current State of Evidence and Recommendations for Research.* Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

[5] Hasin, D. S., Saha, T. D., Kerridge, B. T., et al. (2015). Prevalence of Marijuana Use Disorders in the United States Between 2001–2002 and 2012–2013. *JAMA Psychiatry, 72*(12):1,235–1,242. doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2015.1858.

[6] Hall, W. Degenhardt, L. (2009). Adverse health effects of non-medical cannabis use. *Lancet*;374:1383-91.