

Mental Health &
Recovery Services
Board of Allen,
Auglaize, and
Hardin Counties

January 2022 School Newsletter

Talking to Teens About Marijuana

Marijuana has become legal in more states and more socially acceptable across the nation. These laws are becoming more lenient for adult use, comparable to other substances like alcohol. But like alcohol, marijuana is illegal for youth.

While marijuana addiction rates are lower than other illicit drugs, it is still possible to become addicted. The idea that marijuana is entirely non-addictive is a common misconception. Addiction is a disease that depends on various factors like family history, other drug use, peer relationships, and the age a person starts using. Approximately 9% of marijuana users become addicted.

That addiction rate increases to 17% for those who start using marijuana as a teen. Youth, ages 13-18, are at significantly higher risk for developing a cannabis use disorder (CUD) than those aged 22-26. The developing adolescent brain is at a much higher risk for substance abuse. The longer your kids wait to try any drug, the less likely they will develop an addiction.

Talking to your kids is the best way to prevent drug use and addiction.

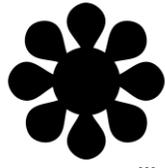
Children are more receptive to talks about harmful substances than teenagers. Don't wait until they are "old enough" for these topics. You can start covering harmful substances at ages 3-5 regarding dangerous substances in their environment like bleach or tobacco. Have an ongoing conversation about drugs and the harms of use with your child as they grow up. Learn how to start these conversations at [letstalk.care](https://www.letstalk.care).

How to talk to your teen about cannabis:

- **Be self-aware of your own beliefs and views on marijuana.** Your child may disagree with you on some of your beliefs. Find resources on it all. Cannabis has changed. Know how.
- **Start early by having conversations on other difficult issues.** Creating a family habit of discussing hard topics makes it easier to bring up cannabis.
- **Stop talking and listen.** Don't correct your child. Learn what they think and believe about marijuana. Start with, "Tell me all you know about cannabis." Ask clarifying questions that begin with "how," such as, "how did you learn that?" Avoid statements like, "You are wrong."
- **Talking with teens can be difficult.** Asking questions and listening is the key. They need to feel in control, so let them lead some conversations.

Learn more in this comprehensive guide on talking to teens about cannabis: [stayhonest.org](https://www.stayhonest.org).

If you or your child would like to talk about the dangers of substance use, call the Hope-line at 1-800-567-4673. Call 211 for mental health and community resources. You can also go to the We Care Crisis Center in Lima at 797 South Main Street, Lima, OH 45804.



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If you have concerns about substance use like vaping or marijuana, register your child for the iMind program. iMind is a voluntary one-day weekend program that gives adolescents tools to avoid substance use. Learn more and register at wecarepeople.org/imindprogram.