



# News You Can Use

SPRING 2024

## Beyond “Just say no.” How to talk to kids and teens about marijuana.

Talking to kids and teens about marijuana is a crucial part of guiding them through the complexities of growing up in today’s world. It’s about opening a channel for honest communication, providing them with factual information, and supporting them in making informed decisions. Engaging in this dialogue early and continuing it throughout their adolescent years helps them to understand the potential risks associated with marijuana use and equips them with the knowledge and skills to face peer pressure and make healthy choices. As parents, caregivers, or educators, it’s important to create a space where kids feel safe to discuss their thoughts and questions about marijuana without fear of judgment or immediate repercussions.

**Start Early:** Begin conversations about drug use early, before your teen is likely to encounter these situations.

**Use Open-Ended Questions:** Encourage dialogue by asking questions that require more than a yes or no answer, such as “What do you think about marijuana use among your peers?”

**Be Informed:** Understand the facts about marijuana, including its effects on the adolescent brain, to provide accurate information.

**Listen Actively:** Show that you’re listening by summarizing what they say and asking follow-up questions. This demonstrates respect for their opinions and feelings.

**Discuss Reasons to Avoid Marijuana:** Talk about specific reasons to avoid marijuana, such as its impact on brain development, academic and athletic performance, and mental health.

**Highlight Legal and Social Consequences:** As it’s illegal for under 21 in NY, discuss the legal implications of marijuana use and its potential impact on future job opportunities or college applications.

**Use Real-Life Examples:** Share news stories or examples to make it more relatable.

**Set Clear Expectations:** Be clear about the rules as well as the consequences for breaking those rules.

**Offer Support:** Let your teen know you’re there for them, always.

**Offer Solutions:** Discuss strategies for avoiding peer pressure related to drug use.

**Role-Play Scenarios:** Practice how to say no through role-playing, giving them confidence to handle these situations.

**Emphasize Care, Not Control:** Make sure your teen knows your primary concern is their well-being and safety, not controlling their lives.

**Address Misinformation:** Correct myths or misinformation about marijuana.

**Discuss the Impact on Mental Health:** Talk about how marijuana use can exacerbate or contribute to mental health issues like anxiety and depression.

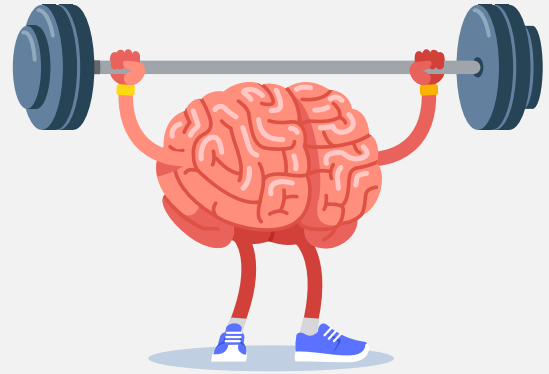
**Encourage Healthy Alternatives:** Promote engaging in sports, hobbies, and other interests for dealing with stress or boredom.

**Keep the Conversation Going:** Don’t let this be a one-time talk. Continue the conversation, keeping lines of communication open.

ADAPP is here for you with tips and resources.

# Celebrating 420 as a dedicated “Healthy Brain Day.”

**Shifting the Focus.** April 20th, traditionally marked by many as a day to celebrate marijuana use, is taking on a new, positive significance. Let’s rebrand 420 as Healthy Brain Day—a movement dedicated to promoting brain health among children and teens. This initiative aims to steer conversations towards the importance of nurturing our young ones’ developing brains, and the impact substances like marijuana can have on them.



**Understanding the Impact.** Research has shown that marijuana use can adversely affect the developing brains of kids and teens, potentially leading to issues with memory, concentration, and learning. On this Healthy Brain Day, we encourage parents and caregivers to engage in open dialogues about brain health and the risks associated with early marijuana use.

**Fostering Futures.** As we embrace Healthy Brain Day this April, it’s vital to recognize the role we play in shaping the minds that will lead tomorrow. The developing brains of children and teenagers are not just sensitive to the negative impacts of substances like marijuana; they are also incredibly receptive to positive environmental influences. By dedicating this day to brain health, we’re not only diverting focus from substance use but also actively contributing to a culture that values mental agility, emotional resilience, and intellectual growth. Encouraging our youth to engage in brain-healthy activities and habits sets the foundation for a generation of innovators, thinkers, and leaders. Let’s commit to this change, showing our children and teens that we’re invested in their futures by celebrating and promoting brain health on 420. Together, we can cultivate an environment that prioritizes their development, well-being, and ultimate success in life.

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## Seasonal stress and substance use: helping your kids and teens navigate spring pressures



### **Understanding Spring Stressors.**

As the snow melts and the days grow longer, spring brings a sense of renewal but also unique stressors for kids and teens. The anticipation of final exams, the pressure of upcoming sporting events, and the social dynamics of spring break can be overwhelming. This period of heightened stress may make some teens more vulnerable to experimenting with substances like marijuana as a coping mechanism.

### **Spotting the Signs.**

Parents should be vigilant for changes in behavior, sleep patterns, or academic performance, which might indicate stress or substance use.

An open, non-judgmental communication channel is crucial for understanding your child’s experiences and concerns.

### **Fostering Healthy Coping Mechanisms.**

**Encourage Open Conversations:** Regular check-ins can help your child feel supported and understood. Discuss the importance of healthy stress management strategies and the risks associated with substance use.

**Promote Stress-Relief Activities:** Introduce your child to stress-relieving activities such as sports, reading, or creative arts. Encouraging participation in hobbies and interests can provide a positive outlet for stress.

**Model Healthy Behavior:** Demonstrate positive coping strategies in your own life. Your behavior can serve as a powerful example for your child in managing stress healthily.

**Seek Professional Help:** If you notice persistent signs of stress or substance use, ADAPP is here for you.

As we welcome the rejuvenation spring brings, let’s also be mindful of the challenges it may pose for our children. By providing a supportive and understanding environment, we can help them navigate these pressures safely and healthily.