



Raising Healthy Teens

Promoting the Health & Safety
of Rhode Island Teens

Fall 2018

Nine Parent Tips for Talking About Marijuana with Your Teen

With the legalization of marijuana in many states including Massachusetts — our children might be getting mixed messages on the risks, impact and dangers.

1 Discuss How Laws are Different for Young People

Similar to alcohol laws, marijuana laws differ between adults and children. Recreational use laws apply to adults 21+ with medicinal use laws typically applying to adults 18+. If using, buying or possessing marijuana while underage, there can be serious consequences with a possible criminal record, fines or disciplinary action at school.

2 Set Clear Expectations

Have agreed-upon expectations and an understanding that it is not okay for children to use marijuana. We need to reinforce that even in a state with legal use — that does not apply for those underage.

3 Teach About the Unique Dangers to Young People

Young people don't often think about the impact of marijuana on their developing brains. Marijuana not only makes it harder to think clearly, learn and solve problems effectively, but regular use can cause

lasting changes to the brain. 1 in 6 teens who use marijuana become addicted and the younger they start the greater the likelihood of addiction. Marijuana use is also linked to depression, anxiety, paranoia, school drop-outs and lower test scores.

4 Discuss Other Health Effects

Marijuana smoke contains toxic chemicals that impact not only those smoking, but those around the smoker. There is a misconception that hookah or vaporizers eliminate these risks. The dangers of street drugs are real as you don't often know what you are truly buying. It could be laced with other drugs or have an unexpected intensity. Edibles made with marijuana can also lead to dangerous impacts. Studies have shown that people who smoke marijuana are more likely to become addicted to alcohol or other drugs.

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5 Talk About Safety Risks

Driving under the influence of marijuana creates increased risk of injury with the decrease in reaction times, and impaired coordination and judgment. Remind your child to always call you or find a safe ride home if someone is under the influence.

6 Encourage Questions

Create an environment where your child can trust you to be a source to answer questions about things they are hearing in school or the media.

7 Be Honest About Your Own Use

If your child asks, be honest and provide context. Reinforce your decisions were made before you understood the risks and with a reminder that marijuana is dramatically stronger today. If you are using now, don't smoke in front of your children, secure its access and never drive when under the influence.

8 Stay Informed

Marijuana research and laws are changing. Keep up-to-date so you can communicate and support your child.

9 Keep the Conversation Going

Your child will continually be faced with making decisions about marijuana use so make sure you support their growth and good choices with ongoing dialogue. Find teachable moments based on news stories, consequences of bad choices and new developments. Serving as your child's guide and trusted advisor will be invaluable for their safety and best health.

Parents Can Help Their Teens Navigate Friendship Dynamics

Summer brings many wonderful opportunities for new experiences, summer camps, family travel, summer jobs and possibly time at a summer home. Being outside the confines of a school routine and community, creates inevitable changes in the flow of friendships. New friendships are formed or expanded based on the proximity to new friend groups and shared activities.

This can be a wonderful time for exploration beyond your child's own classroom or grade, but can also be stressful in returning to an environment that has shifted.

Listen to your child and watch the dynamics of how the summer has evolved to help them find ways to manage their expectations of returning to school. As we know, children grow at different rates and take their individual time to find their own passions. As adults, we understand that some friendship we might outgrow and others we might seek out for shared connections. However, for children, this can be a painful and upsetting process if they feel they are being left out or left behind.

As parents, we can model how our own friendships grow, evolve, change and even move on from the place of comfort. Talking about our experiences helps our child see that it is okay to branch out with new friendships and maybe move on from ones that might no longer serve us.



For older children, we can play more of the role of a guide as they learn to navigate their way through sometimes complicated friendship changes.

We can also work to help them keep things in perspective and focus on the positives in their lives that bring them happiness. For younger children, there is more of an opportunity to help our children make new friends through clubs, activities and get-togethers that we might have a role in coordinating.

Learning about friendships and building a support network are critical skills for our children. It is a lifelong process, but starts at a young age in finding ways to make good friend choices, drive or accept changes when necessary, and keep our perspective in managing the often-shifting dynamics.

Helpful Tips for a Successful Transition Back to School

Summer often brings an increase of freedoms, reduction in daily commitments and ease to the flow of each day. However, after several months away from the rigor and routine of a school day, it can be tough for students — and parents alike — to get back into the groove.

Some tips to help make the transition easier for all.

1. Use online or printed resources to help your child freshen up on the subjects for the school year. Helping them re-engage in school work through summer work tutorials fosters confidence and a return with the basics in mind.

2. Create a “back to school” list with your child and go shopping together to prepare both physically and mentally. Check teacher communications and school websites for guidance on lists, recommendations and/or requirements.

3. If your child is starting a new school or transitioning to a new level of education (i.e., middle school or high school), take advantage of school programs for tours or summer programs that allow your child to be physically in the school and start feeling comfortable in their new space, meet their teacher(s) and identify where they will report on their first day.

4. Have a conversation with your student on the expected ground rules for the school year such as expectations on school work completion, use of electronics, involvement in extracurricular activities, visiting with friends, etc.

5. Listen to your child for any anxieties or concerns so they can be addressed to help kick-off the year in the best possible way. While at school, remind them that the Student Assistance Counselor (SAC) is always there to help them have the best possible experience at school. Many area schools have SACs available at both the middle and high school levels.

Enjoy the last few weeks together as a family by taking advantage of having evenings free of homework or the demands of homework. These bonding moments are an important foundation for supporting your child during the school year.



DRUGS 101

What Parents Should Know



The Addictive Dangers of Juuling

The Juul was created by two Stanford graduate students who wanted to create an e-cigarette alternative for adults that provided a cigarette experience. Fast forward 10+ years, and the Juul is the best-selling e-cigarette in America.

To give perspective, Juul Labs generated \$224 million in sales (according to Nielsen data) and the company saw growth of 621% year-over-year⁽¹⁾ with the Juul holding 68% of the e-cigarette market share.

So what is a Juul? It's a sleek USB designed e-cigarette vaporizer with a replaceable nicotine juice cartridge, marketed in youthful colors and flavors. The cartridge can be charged in a laptop's USB slot and often not recognized as an e-cigarette. Juuls are now easily purchased online, and at vaping shops, gas stations and convenient stores. The vaporizer costs around \$35, with a four-pack of pods at \$16.

Juuling has the addictive qualities of nicotine as it delivers a powerful buzz of more than double the nicotine of other vaping products. It is estimated that one Juul cartridge equals the same nicotine as a pack of cigarettes. With the pervasiveness of use, our youth are getting addicted at alarming rates so as parents we need to quickly learn about this dangerous trend.

⁽¹⁾ *Business Insider*; November 21, 2017 report by Melia Robinson; <http://www.businessinsider.com/juul-e-cigarette-one-million-units-sold-2017-11>

RI RESOURCES

BH Link Hotline — 401-414-LINK (414-5465)
24/7 call center connecting people to care and resources.

National Suicide Hotline 1-800-273-TALK (273-8255)
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/

Samaritans www.samaritansri.org/our-programs/hotline

Change Direction (Mental/Emotional Health)
www.changedirection.org/

RI Smoker's Helpline 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669)
Tobacco Free RI www.tobaccofree-ri.org/

Alcoholics Anonymous (401) 438-8860
www.rhodeisland-aa.org

Parents Support Network of RI
(401) 467-6855 or (800) 483-8844 www.psnri.org

Helping Your Child Build a Strong Foundation for Success

Some children are born good organizers and some need to learn it. Some are very health-conscious, some not so much. Regardless of where your child might be, being organized, having good study habits and living a healthy lifestyle are definitely skills that can be learned — skills that ensure a solid foundation for their future success.



At the basic level, your body and mind work best when properly cared for so discuss the following questions with your child:

■ ***Is your child getting adequate and peaceful rest?*** If not, do they need an earlier bedtime or less after-school activities? Are electronics removed from bedrooms to reduce the impact screens can have on the ability for a deep sleep?

■ ***Is your child eating healthy?*** Are they starting their day with a breakfast that will allow them to perform? Is a healthy lunch packed for each day? Try to sit down to a family dinner as much as you can as that will have multiple benefits beyond good nutrition.



■ ***Is your child hydrated?*** Student athletes tend to be dehydrated so need to find ways to drink enough water. Dehydration creates fatigue and doesn't allow your child to perform at their best. Water helps for the proper transfer of nutrients throughout the body and flushes out toxins. How much water your child might need can be individual based on size, activity and climate so encourage consistent drinking of water (not sports drinks that can be heavy in sugar).

■ ***Is your child exercising adequately and engaging in activities of interest?*** This will allow for the necessary focus and reduction in stress.

A healthy body supports a strong mind and this basis will allow for better study habits. Once your body is ready for school demands, there are other activities that can help improve focus and organization. Help your child find the routines they need to build structure and focus. It might mean creating a schedule for school work and quiet study spaces. It could be removing electronics and access to social media to reduce distractions. Find the length of time your child can study, and build in breaks to refresh and recharge.

Monitor what's best for your child, but allow them to try on their own what might work for them. Your support and guidance is invaluable, but they will need to find the independence and confidence to manage their own schedules successfully.



For more information on your regional coalition, please visit us at www.riprevention.org

The Coalitions are federally funded organizations providing leadership for youth substance use prevention and mental health promotion.