

**MARIJUANA: TALKING TO KIDS & TEENS  
UNDERAGE RETAIL MARIJUANA USE & CONVERSATION  
TIPS FOR PARENTS**

**BY  
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH &  
ENVIRONMENT  
APPRECIATION TO CACTUS**

**LISTEN**

- Listen carefully and stay positive.
- Keep the conversation open so your children can come to you with questions.
- Knowing they can ask you questions creates an open dialogue and ultimately, smarter decisions.

**AGES 13-16**

**START THE CONVERSATION** – Decide when the time is right for you. And remember, conversation is much better than ignoring the issue.

**LISTEN** – Be a good listener. Get their opinion. Don't talk over or down to them. When you allow them to be heard, they'll be more likely to listen when you speak.

**ESTABLISH CLEAR RULES** – Set your expectations. Make them clear and stick to them.

**ROLE-PLAY HOW TO SAY "NO"**- Find tools to deal with peers. This can be as simple as: "No thanks, if I get in trouble, I won't be able to do sports, theater, etc."

**FOCUS ON POSITIVE MESSAGES** – Positive messages are empowering. Being negative might overwhelm them or make them act out of fear or defiance.

**TALK ABOUT FRIENDS** – Know who their friends are, what they're like, and how they influence their lives.

**PROMOTE SELF-CONFIDENCE** – Teach them that marijuana use is not something to build an identity around.

**KEEP YOUR RELATIONSHIP STRONG** – Let them know you're on their side. You want them to make the best decision for themselves.

**YOUR INFLUENCE MATTERS** – You might be surprised at how much influence your words, actions and opinions can have on your child's choices.

**AGES 17-20**

**KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING** - Even if you've talked before, their issues and opinions change all the time.

**STAY CONNECTED** – Be involved in their lives. It will help you to be able to key into what they're thinking and feeling.

**SET EXPECTATIONS** – Be clear about the rules and expectations. Stick to the rules you set and be serious about consequences.

**PROMOTE RESPONSIBILITY** – Teaching them how to behave responsibly in all aspects of life decreases the likelihood of marijuana causing problems in the future.

**EXCOURAGE BALANCE** – Reinforce and celebrate their passions, hobbies, interests, etc. – the things that keep them balanced.

**PRACTICE ASSERTIVENESS** – Listening to and considering their opinion is important, but remember to stand your ground on how you feel about marijuana.

**HELP THEM ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS** – Help them identify the passions, hobbies, dreams, and freedom they want for themselves, and to prioritize those interests over using marijuana. If they're focused on goals that are meaningful to them, they'll be less likely to let marijuana get in their way.

## **LEGAL CONSEQUENCES**

- Financial Aid – Marijuana can cause loss of financial aid for college including grants – loans – work-study programs.
- Sports and Activities – Breaking school policies can result in removal from sports teams and extracurricular activities, school suspensions, expulsion, and drug counseling.
- Employment – Breaking work policies can result in loss of employment.
- Freedoms – Getting caught with marijuana means getting charged with an MIP (minor in possession). MIP charges can involve fines, public service hours, misdemeanor/felony charges, and even possible loss of driver's license.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF UNDERAGE RETAIL MARIJUANA USE**

**#1 First Offense** – Fine of no more than \$100. Court order to complete a substance abuse educational program. Possible loss of driver's license.

**#2 Second Offense** – Fine of no more than \$100, the court shall order completing a substance abuse education program, completing a treatment assessment, and performing up to 24 hours of public service.

**#3 Third / Subsequent Offense** – Fine up to \$250, submit to substance abuse assessment and complete any treatment recommended by the assessment, and perform up to 36 hours of useful public service.

**For additional information please go to:  
*Good to Know* ([www.GoodToKnowColorado.com](http://www.GoodToKnowColorado.com))**