



# Cann WeChat?

**EQUIPPING PARENTS TO TALK WITH THEIR KIDS ABOUT CANNABIS**

***AS A PARENT YOU ARE THE #1 INFLUENCE ON YOUR CHILD'S LIFE, AND THE CONVERSATIONS YOU HAVE WITH YOUR KIDS NOW WILL IMPACT THEIR DECISIONS THROUGHOUT THEIR WHOLE FUTURE.***

**HOW DO I BRING UP AND TALK ABOUT CANNABIS USE IN A WAY MY TEEN WILL ACTUALLY LISTEN?**

**CONVERSATION TIPS FOR CARING ADULTS**

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR CHILD IS ALREADY USING CANNABIS**

## **HOW DO I BRING UP AND TALK ABOUT CANNABIS USE IN A WAY MY TEEN WILL ACTUALLY LISTEN?**

Talking to your kids about substance use can be challenging, but these conversations need to happen. An easy way of bringing up the topic would be to relate it to something your teen has seen or experienced recently. For example, if you are driving and you hear an ad on the radio for a dispensary, or if you have recently seen a tv series that shows substance use, you could ask your child what their thoughts are on the subject. Informal conversations like this may feel more relaxed and natural than if you sit them down to have “the talk.” Your teen will likely be more open to continuing the conversation if they don’t feel cornered or pressured. For more support, you can utilize SAMHSA’s “Talk. They Hear You.” mobile app, which helps parents and caregivers prepare for some of the most important conversations they may ever have with their kids. It shows you how to turn everyday situations into opportunities to talk with your children about alcohol and other drugs, and equips you with the necessary skills, confidence, and knowledge to start and continue these conversations as your kids get older.



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## CONVERSATION TIPS

### Prepare

**Recommendation:** Prepare for these conversations by talking with other influential adults in your child's life. Decide on your expectations and your family rules. Consider how you are going to answer questions like – did you use marijuana when you were a kid?

**Example:** Listen to the ParentingMontana.org Podcasts “Mixed Messages about Marijuana” and “Establishing Rules About Marijuana” before talking to your child.

### Start Early

**Recommendation:** Starting at age 8, talking often and consistently about your clear rules and expectations about why no substance use until after 21 is critical.

**Example:** If you're listening to the radio and you hear an ad for a dispensary, you can ask your child if they know how using cannabis affects the body. Keep the info simple: Cannabis affects how your mind works, and can make it hard for you to remember or learn new things.”

### Be Repetitive

**Recommendation:** Lots of LITTLE talks are more effective than one BIG Talk. Youth are more likely to remember those conversations when they are in a stressful situation if they heard the information repeatedly.

**Example:** Check in with your child during their school's unit on substances in health class, Red Ribbon Week, school events like Prom, before holidays and vacations, or even during random times where you are together. Use the Wellness Awareness Calendar to initiate topics during specific times of the year.



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## CONVERSATION TIPS

### Get Input

**Recommendation:** Get input from your teen before beginning the conversation. Start by mentioning something you know they may have seen in a movie or tv show, and ask them about it to gauge their opinion. This casual introduction will help them to open up and engage.

**Example:** “What did you think about that episode in Euphoria? Do you know anyone who has done something like that?”

### Be Clear

**Recommendation:** Be clear about your own opinions on youth use. Remember that they may have questions about whether you have used drugs before - Be honest with them, but make it clear that now you know why something was the healthy/unhealthy choice.

**Example:** “Yes, I’ve used that substance before. Now that I know it was unhealthy for me I would choose differently. If you were in a similar situation I hope that you would say ‘no,’ and call me if you need to leave.”

### Be Empathetic

**Recommendation:** Be empathetic if they disagree with you, and try not to cast blame or shame them. Express the reason *why* you feel this way and always bring it back to your care for their health and wellbeing.

**Example:** “Your friend’s family may allow that, but our family has different rules. I know that marijuana use before your brain is done developing can be really damaging, and I want you to have a healthy life.”



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## CONVERSATION TIPS

### Be Credible

**Recommendation:** Be credible when talking about drugs, use resources like the CDC or SAMHSA to educate yourself and your child. Show your child how to find and identify these credible resources on their own so that they can learn as well.

**Example:** *When you are looking for information, make sure it is from a credible source. Consider, “Who is publishing this, and what do they have to gain from saying \_\_\_ about marijuana?” “Is the research peer reviewed or from a scientific journal?”*

### Take Action

**Recommendation:** Take action by establishing rules for your family and outlining consequences. Show that you are paying attention to their choices in life.

**Example:** *“I know you have the homecoming football game tonight and will be hanging out with your friends after. I’ll let you take the car tonight with the understanding that you will not use drugs or drink, and will call/text me to let me know if you will be home late or need me.”*

### Find Solutions

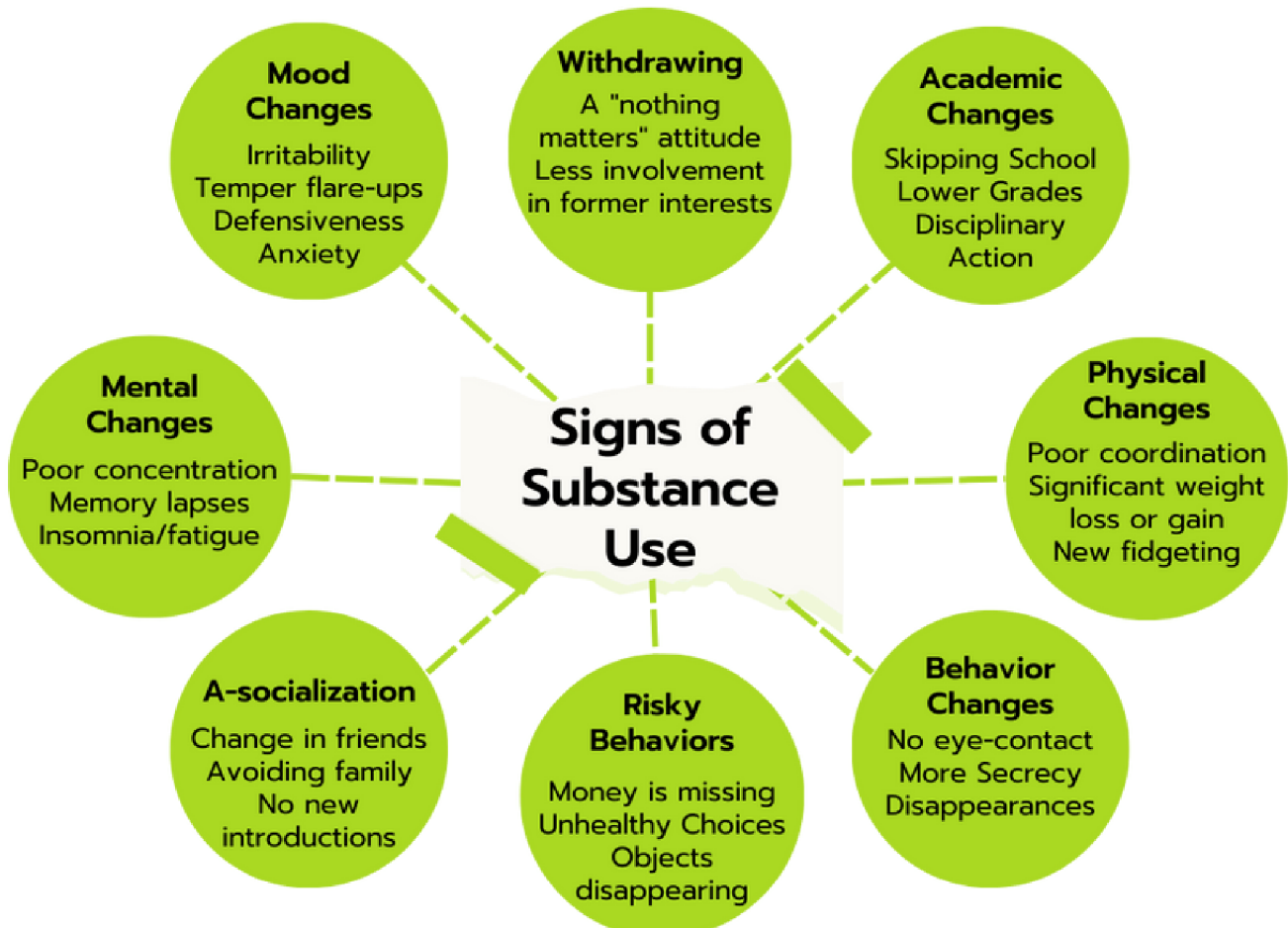
**Recommendation:** Find solutions by offering to continue the conversation with your child(ren), or offering help/practice in how to say no.

**Example:** *“If you’re ever feeling overwhelmed or pressured and need to leave a party, know that you can call/text me and I will come get you. Let’s set a codeword just in case.”*



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Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 2023

### WHAT DO I DO IF I SUSPECT MY CHILD IS ALREADY USING CANNABIS?

If you have noticed signs that your child may be using cannabis, or they have told you they are, the best thing to do is talk to them about it. Express your care and concern for them, while explaining why using cannabis is not a healthy coping mechanism. If your child is using cannabis because they believe it will help them in some way, gently correct them and assist with building healthy resiliency skills or finding professional support. A list of local mental health and substance use related resources can be found by clicking the "Get Help" button at the top right of the website.