



# PARENT TOOLKIT

## — TALKING TIPS FOR PARENTS —

**The strongest defense youth have against engaging in risky behaviors are their parents. Building a good relationship and having ongoing conversations will help youth make healthy decisions in their lives.**

### START TALKING EARLY



It is never too early to start talking to your children. Don't wait until they are in high school. When young children develop personal responsibility, they are less likely to make decisions that could affect their health and future.

### BUILD TRUST



Show your teen they can trust you by listening to what they have to say without judgement. Young people are more likely to open up if they know you will listen and answer their questions honestly.

### SET EXPECTATIONS



Teens are less likely to get into risky behaviors if they know their parents' expectations. Make sure they know the consequences of breaking the rules and follow through consistently.



## KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

Having one conversation about marijuana won't make a difference. Communication must happen all the time for youth to understand you truly care and are there for them.



## PRACTICE WITH THEM

Practice different ways of saying 'no' with them. They will be better prepared if they know how to push back on peer pressure. Sit down with your teens and come up with a plan together.



## KNOW THEIR FRIENDS

Get involved and meet their friends. Learn where they hang out and what they like to do. Check in occasionally, but don't forget to give them their space.

### — TALKING TECHNIQUE: OAR —

There are many techniques that can help you start, and continue, conversations with your teen.

#### OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Always use open ended questions that can't be answered with a simple yes or no. This will help you engage them in the conversation.

**EXAMPLE** How do you feel about other youth using marijuana?

#### AFFIRMATIONS

Acknowledge your teen's abilities through affirmations. These are statements that focus on positive attitudes.

**EXAMPLE** You have worked really hard to get good grades and I know you will continue to achieve your life goals by not letting marijuana get in the way.

#### REFLECTIONS

Use reflections to show them that you are listening and understand what they are telling you. Rephrase and repeat back what you think you heard.

**EXAMPLE** I am hearing that you are worried that your friend is using marijuana to deal with stress from school instead of doing something more positive like working out. Is this right?