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Know! What's Up With Weed

Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.

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Marijuana has become a regular subject on the nightly news, along with heated debates between those for legalization of the drug and those against it. It seems everyone is talking about marijuana, including your students. Depending on what state you are in, the laws surrounding “weed” will vary, as well as attitudes and perceived risk of using the drug.

In the U.S., as state laws surrounding marijuana began to loosen, attitudes began to soften. And as perceived risk of marijuana began to decrease, use of the drug increased. While this is unfortunate news, there is hope. Studies show that as knowledge on marijuana increases, use of the drug decreases.

With this in mind, it is important to know what's up with weed and share that information with your students.

Marijuana has the potential to negatively impact adolescent brain development and function and cause various breathing problems. Marijuana use also changes the way many people think, impacts the choices they make and alters the way they behave.

Marijuana use in the short-term:

- Causes cognitive dysfunction when it comes to memory, perception of time, and ability to complete complex tasks and learn (some of which can become long-term issues as well);
- Negatively impacts decision-making, including increased risky sexual behavior;
- Impairs coordination and balance, leading to an increased risk of accident, injury and death.
- And while marijuana may have a calming effect on some users, it significantly increases the heart rate of others, and can cause panic and anxiety.



Talk early and often about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Even when it gets tough.

Empowering Parents To Raise Their Children To Be Substance-Free



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Marijuana use in the long-term has been linked to:

- Higher incidences of students dropping out of school;
- Poorer life outcomes and life satisfaction, including career and relationship matters;
- Poorer physical health and mental health problems, including depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts among teens;
- Addiction – about 1 in 11 marijuana users become addicted and the odds may increase to about 1 in 6 for those who begin using in their teens.

This is certainly not what anyone wants for their students. Federal law says one thing, some state laws say another. Regardless, your voice matters. You have the power to positively influence your students in making healthy, positive lifestyle choices. Talk to them about the dangers of marijuana.

You can get the conversation started in your classroom by asking students what they know about marijuana, and their opinion on the topic. Listen closely and keep your cool even if some students express opinions that are not in line with yours. This is your opportunity to provide the facts and clear up the misperceptions.

Sources: MSNBC: UN report: Number of marijuana-related injuries is on the rise. June 27, 2014. Neurology Advisor: Marijuana-Related Emergency Department Visits on the Rise, December 17, 2014. National Institute on Drug Abuse: Marijuana – Selected Effects on the Brain, Body & Behavior.

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