

Parent-Teen Conversation Guide: Talking About Cannabis and Driving

Purpose:

To help parents have calm, open, and non-judgmental Conversations with their teens about the risks of cannabis and driving.

Before You Start

- **Pick a calm moment:** Try talking in the car, during dinner, or while doing something together.
- **Stay curious, not critical:** Ask questions and listen more than you speak.
- **Aim for dialogue, not a lecture.**
- **Do not blame yourself.** Sometimes having difficult conversations takes a lot of time and effort.
- **Try and try again.**

Conversation Script & Questions

*Use the flyers to help guide conversations, serve as reminders, and offer visuals.

1. Opening the Conversation

“Hey, I saw something about teens and driving after using weed, and it made me think.
“I’d really like to hear what you think about it.”

Ask: How do you feel about teens using weed before driving?



“I want to share something with you. Let’s talk about it together.”

Ask: Have you seen or heard anything about car crashes lately?



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If your teen says...

"I didn't think it was that dangerous."

You could say:

"A lot of people feel that way. Did you know it actually slows reaction time and affects judgment, kind of like alcohol does?"

"Some friends do it anyway."

You could say:

"That must be tricky. How do you handle it when you're around that?"

"That's a tough one. Do you think they'll follow your lead if you set a good example?"

"It's not like I'm going to get caught or anything"

You could say:

"What do think would happen if you do get caught?"

"It's legal now"

You could say:

"I heard things are different when you drive. Let's look at this together."

"Leave me alone"

You could say:

"Ok, let's talk about it later. I'm going to leave this here in case you change your mind."

"Dad/Mom/Grandma/Grandpa/Aunt/Uncle, etc. said it was ok."

You could say:

"What did you talk about it?"

2. Building Understanding

Ask:

“What do you know about how cannabis affects driving?”



Follow-up prompts:

- “I hear what you’re saying. Let’s look at this more.”
- “I didn’t know about all of this. Did you?”
- “Have you ever learned about this in health class or from friends?”
- “What surprises you most about how it affects reaction time or coordination?”

3. Talking About Real Situations

Ask:

“Have you ever been in a car with someone who was high or using?”
“How did it make you feel?”



If they’ve experienced it:

- “That sounds uncomfortable. What did you do?”
- “What could make it easier next time to say something or leave the situation?”
- “Even though you felt safe, do you think that will always be the case?”

If they haven’t:

- “That’s good — but what do you think you’d do if that ever happened?”
- “Do you want to hold onto these tools?”
- “Do you feel comfortable sharing this information with your friends?”

4. Exploring Consequences

Ask:

“What do you think could happen if you or a friend drive high or while using?”



Then connect it to reality:

- “Right — there could be a DUI, accidents, or losing your license. Even one bad choice can affect college or job opportunities.”

5. Problem-Solving Together

Ask:

“What strategies could you use to avoid driving high, while using, or riding with someone who is?”



Encourage ideas like:

- “What about using a rideshare or calling a sober friend?”
- “What about waiting until you’re completely sober before driving?”
- “Have you thought of planning ahead before going out?”
- “Could you share all of this with your friends?”

6. Empowering Positive Influence

Ask:

“How can you be an influencer among your friends to make safe choices?”



Parent can add:

- “You probably have more influence than you realize —your friends pay attention to what you do.”
- “You always set a great example.”
- “Your friends and siblings look up to you.”
- “I’m proud of all the good choices you make.”
- “I tell everyone about how great you are.”

7. Wrapping It Up

Ask:

“What’s one action you’ll take to stay safe behind the wheel?”



End on support:

- “Thank you for talking this out with me.”
- “I’m proud we can talk about this. I trust you to make smart choices — and I’m/we’re always here if you’re stuck or need a ride.”
- “You can always call me/us if you’re unsure.”



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Tips for Parents

- **Keep it short but meaningful:** A few minutes of genuine conversation goes a long way.
- **Never feel defeated. You can do this.**
- **Revisit often:** It's not one talk — it's an ongoing dialogue.
- **Model safe choices:** Teens notice what you do more than what you say. Encourage others to model safe choices.
- **Use teachable moments:** News stories, celebrity incidents, or local events can be great openings.



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