

CANNABIS

WHAT PARENTS AND EDUCATORS SHOULD KNOW

21 is the legal age in Maryland for purchasing and possessing cannabis.

Underage youth should be discouraged from using cannabis.

Brain development isn't fully complete until the mid 20s. Using cannabis while the brain is still developing can change how it builds connections that are important for attention, memory, and learning. Regular cannabis use prior to age 18 has also been linked with problematic use, including addiction. And, like alcohol, cannabis affects judgment and motor skills, which is especially risky for new and inexperienced drivers.

Signs of use include mood changes, loss of interest in academics or extracurricular activities, changes in grades or sleep habits, as well as poor coordination, red eyes, and acting foolishly or strangely.

What should parents and caregivers know?

- Parents are the #1 influence on youth substance use. It's never too soon to start the conversation about the potential impacts of underage cannabis use.
- If you or other adults in the household use cannabis, avoid doing so in front of children and teens, don't smoke or vape indoors, and be sure to keep it locked and out of sight.
- If your child is using cannabis, stay calm and talk with them about your concerns. If needed, seek help from your pediatrician, school, or community resources.

What should teachers and educators know?

- Teachers are valuable partners in the delivery of health education. Youth respond to age-appropriate, fact-based information.
- Clearly communicate the school's substance-use policy and consequences. Educational approaches to violations (e.g., counseling) versus home suspension or expulsion have been shown to reduce cannabis use.



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