

Talk With Your Kids: Conversation Guide



PARENT POINTER:

Lead with empathy, not judgment. Whether you know your child is vaping or are just trying to gauge their knowledge, start with kindness. Avoid criticism and try to see their perspective first. This builds trust and sets the tone for the rest of the conversation.

How To Prep

1. **Find the place.** Where do you have the most meaningful conversations with your kids? Choose a comfortable, casual environment where your child is relaxed. It doesn't have to be formal or planned — a backyard, car or bedroom make great locations.
2. **Avoid scare tactics.** Using judgment or fear can put your child on the defense, especially older teens. Stick to facts over dramatizations.
3. **Tailor the conversation to your child.** Talk about their dreams, passions and interests to make the conversation feel personal.
4. **Be ready to really listen.** Make it a dialogue, not an interrogation. Ask questions, let them share their views and don't just lecture. Remember: You're a team!

Conversation Starters

1. **"What do you know about vapes/dip/cigarettes/tobacco?"**
Open the conversation in a casual way that allows you to correct any misunderstandings.
 - For young kids: Gauge their basic knowledge.
 - For teens: Discuss how tobacco marketing tries to make nicotine seem harmless.
2. **"Have you ever seen a tobacco product? Have any of your friends used these?"**
Learning where and when your child is exposed to these products will help you steer the rest of the conversation.
 - For young kids: See if they have seen the products in person or in media.
 - For teens: Avoid terms like "peer pressure," which may make them defensive.
3. **"Have you ever been tempted to smoke or vape?"**
Do not ask them if they have — ask if they've been tempted.
 - For young kids: The answer will more than likely be "no." However, this will help you gauge their comfort level with products.
 - For teens: Asking if they've been tempted gives them the opportunity to lead the conversation in their direction.

What You Need To Know

- Nicotine can impair brain development (continues until age 25)
- Vapes and pouches are among the most popular emerging nicotine products
- Alternative nicotine products contain dangerous amounts of nicotine
- Teens who vape are up to 7x more likely to smoke cigarettes later in life
- Vapes contain cancer-causing chemicals like heavy metals
- Nicotine can cause or worsen:
 - * Anxiety
 - * Learning difficulties
 - * Nosebleeds
 - * Increased thirst
 - * Caffeine sensitivity
 - * Impulsivity
 - * Irritability
 - * Mood swings

Be Prepared...

- 1. To learn your child is using a tobacco or nicotine product.** DO NOT get angry or lash out. Thank them for their honesty and let them know you're ready to support their quit journey.
- 2. For your child to push back or get defensive.** If your child feels attacked or accused, they won't be as receptive to your discussion.
- 3. To talk about yourself.** Whether you struggled with addiction in your past or are currently using tobacco products yourself, you are still the parent responsible for protecting your child. You should not be ashamed. Instead, use your experiences as evidence to back up your points.
- 4. To have more than one discussion.** The tobacco industry is always changing and always looking for new ways to addict kids. Make sure your child sees you as a trusted source by talking often and keeping the conversation moving.



**ELEMENTARY
CONVERSATION GUIDE**



**MIDDLE SCHOOL
CONVERSATION GUIDE**



**HIGH SCHOOL
CONVERSATION GUIDE**