

# Important Information for Parents

## Your Child/Teens' Brain & the Use of Substances - Alcohol, Marijuana, Tobacco, & Other Drugs



The brain of your child/teen continues developing until the mid-20s.

Scientific research has found that the use of alcohol, marijuana, & tobacco can have many negative effects on the developing brain and can result in life-long damage.



Research tells us that these substances can damage areas of the brain, including the prefrontal cortex, which is important to decision-making and problem-solving.

The effects of the use of alcohol, marijuana, tobacco and other drugs on the developing teen brain can include:

- Problems with memory and learning, resulting in less success in school and in life
- Mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, and the potential for suicide. (Teens often think that the use of substances helps decrease stress, but it can actually increase it.)
- Inability to manage emotions and behave appropriately
- Development of adult health problems, e.g. heart and lung disease, high blood pressure
- Addiction. When teens begin drinking and/or using marijuana, tobacco, or other drugs, there is a much greater risk of addiction than when use begins in adult life.



### **PARENTS!**

**TALK WITH YOUR CHILDREN/TEENS OFTEN ABOUT THE DANGERS OF USING ALCOHOL, MARIJUANA, TOBACCO, AND OTHER DRUGS.**

Talking with them makes it much more likely your children/teens will understand the risks and won't use harmful substances.

Information from the National Institute on Drug Abuse. <https://nida.nih.gov>