



# Talking to Your Kids About Vaping

Without Making It Awkward.



**Let's be real,**

talking to kids about vaping isn't always easy.

**But it is important.**

**The good news?**

You don't need to be an expert or have the perfect words.

**You just need to start the conversation.**

# Why This Conversation Matters.

Kids are seeing vaping everywhere, on social media, at school, and sometimes even at home. **And it's not just nicotine anymore.** Some vapes contain THC, the chemical in marijuana that causes a "high."

**Talking about it early (and often)** helps them:

- Understand what vaping really is (and what it isn't).
- See through myths and marketing.
- Know the difference between nicotine vapes and THC vapes.
- Understand the real consequences.
- Feel more confident saying "no".
- Know they can come to you with questions or mistakes.

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# How to Start the Conversation

You don't need a big "sit-down talk." Small, casual moments work well.

## Try this:

- **Share what you've learned** about vaping, nicotine addiction, harmful chemicals, and THC.
- **Talk about how vape companies** use flavors, colors, and social media to target kids.
- **Mention that some vape devices now contain THC** and can look like pens, USB drives, or lighters.
  - *In Texas, possession of a THC vape can result in felony charges, even if the person did not know the device contained THC.*
- **Ask what they would do** if someone offered them a vape.
- **Help them practice** what to say if they feel pressured.
- **Remind them that they don't have to follow the crowd** and that choice can have real consequences.

## Most important:

Listen more than  
you talk.

Their answers will  
tell you where the  
conversation needs  
to go.

# Keep the Conversation Going

This shouldn't be a one-time talk.  
As long as vapes exist, the conversation should stay open.

- **Bring it up naturally** when vaping shows up on TV or social media.
- **Share new information** as you learn it.
- **Keep reinforcing** your child's strengths and confidence.
- Let them know **you trust them** and that **you're always there**.



# Is Vaping Really Worth It?

Help your child see the real-life impact vaping has, not just the health risks.

## Vaping affects more than your lungs.

Vaping has been linked to:

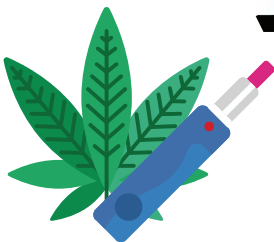
- **Skin issues** like redness, dryness, and early aging.
- **Bad breath**, dry mouth, tooth decay.
- A condition informally known in medical circles as “**black, hairy tongue**” caused by irritation and chemical exposure.

## Not exactly what most kids are going for.

If the vape contains **THC**, the risks increase and can include:

- Impaired memory and concentration.
- Increased anxiety or paranoia.
- Mood changes.
- Impact on developing brain function.





# What About THC Vaping in Texas?

This is an important part of the conversation.

In Texas, possessing THC vape products can be a **felony offense**.

## You can say:

"Some kids think it's just vaping. But in Texas, THC vapes are treated very seriously. One decision can have consequences that last much longer than the moment."

## Stay calm. Be factual.

Let the seriousness speak for itself.

## That means:

### If 17 or older:

- Adult criminal justice system.
- 180 days to 2 years in jail.
- Fines up to \$10,000 plus legal fees.
- A felony record that can affect:
  - Future job opportunities.
  - College and scholarship applications.
  - Military eligibility.
  - Housing applications.
  - Professional licenses.
  - Firearm ownership rights.

### If under 17:

- Juvenile detention.
- Court-imposed curfew.
- Electronic ankle monitoring.
- Intensive probation.
- Residential placement or commitment to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department.

# Vaping in Texas

## It can put opportunities at risk:

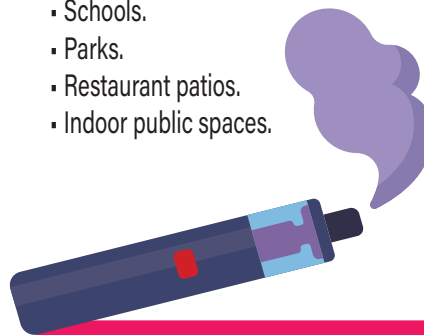
Beyond legal trouble, **vaping THC can have lasting consequences**. In some cases, a THC possession conviction may eliminate eligibility for the opportunities listed below:

- College acceptance.
- Scholarship eligibility.
- Military recruitment.
- Employment opportunities.
- Residency status.
- Section 8/public housing eligibility.
- School sports and extracurricular activities.

## And, it can cost you money:

**Vaping is banned in many places**, including:

- Schools.
- Parks.
- Restaurant patios.
- Indoor public spaces.



Getting caught can mean fines that add up quickly.  
Legal consequences are far more expensive.

# The Environmental Side of Vaping

## (Kids care about this.)

Throwing away a vape means throwing away:

- Hazardous waste (nicotine salts, heavy metals).
- Lithium batteries that can cause trash fires.
- Plastic that break down into microplastics.

**One device = multiple  
environmental problems.**



# Healthy Alternatives to Vaping

If your child is anxious, stressed, bored, or curious, help them find better ways to cope.

## For managing emotions, try:

- Deep breathing.
- Journaling.
- Talking to someone they trust.

## For stress or boredom, try:

- Fidget tools or games.
- Learning a new hobby.
- Physical activity or sports.



# Conversation Starters That Actually Work

**Parents should be direct and consistent with their message:**

"I don't want you vaping."

"I don't approve of vaping or THC products."

"In our family, we don't support vaping."

"My job is to keep you safe, and this is something I take seriously."

**Instead of starting with a lecture, start with curiosity and keep the conversation open.**

**Let their answers guide the discussion — but don't be afraid to clearly state your expectations, too.**

"I've been hearing about THC vapes — what do kids think about them?"

"Do you think most kids know they can get in serious trouble for those?"

"If someone offered you one, what would you do?"

**The goal is to create a conversation that is both open and clear: listening without judgment, while still setting firm expectations.**



# If Your Child Says Friends Are Pressuring Them

## You might say:

"Thanks for telling me. Wanting to fit in is normal."

"You can say, 'No thanks, I'm good,' but I know that's not always easy."

"It helps to have at least one friend who's also saying no."

"Call me anytime if you need an exit. No questions asked." (*at that time.*)



# If Your Child Thinks Vaping Isn't Harmful

## Share facts calmly:

"It's not just water vapor — it's aerosol with chemicals."

"Some vapes contain THC, and that changes everything legally."

"Nicotine can harm your developing brain."

"We don't always know what's inside these devices."



# If They Say, “But It’s Candy-Flavored”

## Explain:

“Flavors are designed to hook young users.”

“Companies know sweet flavors make it easier to try.”



# If They Say, “You Vape/Smoke — Why Can’t I?”

## Honesty matters:

“I’ve made mistakes, and I don’t want you to make the same ones.”

“Quitting has been really hard, and I don’t want that for you.”

“I care about your health and your future.”



# If Your Child Admits They've Tried Vaping

## You might say:

"I appreciate you telling me."

"I'm not here to punish you. I'm here because I care."

"We're on the same side."

Remind them: Big Tobacco targets kids on purpose. The same companies that sold cancer-causing cigarettes are behind many vape products today, using flavors, influencers, and social media to hook young users for life.

**First:** Thank them for being honest.

## If THC is involved, stay calm and address it directly:

"In Texas, THC carries serious legal consequences. Let's make sure we keep you safe."

# Final Reminder for Parents

**You don't need to  
scare your child.**

**You don't need  
to be perfect.**

## You just need to:

- Stay informed.
- Stay calm.
- Stay consistent.
- Keep the door open.
- Clearly tell your child you do not approve of vaping or THC products.

Because the most powerful prevention tool isn't fear.

**It's a connection.**

# Helpful Resources for You and Your Child

- Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for help quitting smoking
- Text **JOINRESPIRA** to **88709** for help quitting vaping in **ENGLISH**
- Text **ADIOSNIC** to **88709** for help quitting vaping in **SPANISH**

## Want to learn more?

Scan for local resources in your community.



smokefreepdn.org

Scan for quick, helpful videos you can watch anytime.



youtube.com  
@smokefreepasodelnorte

Scan for information on Marijuana and CBD.



samhsa.org

Scan to decipher vaping emoji language:



smokefreepdn.org

Scan to learn current nicotine and THC slang



smokefreepdn.org

This guide is informed by trusted public health organizations and youth prevention experts, including:

A Smoke-Free Paso del Norte

American Lung Association

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

Canadian Lung Association

QuitNow Canada

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

All information reflects current, evidence-based research on youth vaping prevention and parent-child communication.

## About a Smoke-Free Paso del Norte

Smoke-Free Paso del Norte, an initiative of the Paso del Norte Health Foundation, works to prevent youth vaping and tobacco use across our region and supports individuals and families on their journey to quit.



A Smoke-Free Paso del Norte is an initiative of the Paso del Norte Health Foundation.  
Need help quitting tobacco or vaping?  
Free support is available at 800-QUIT-NOW or [vapefreepdn.org](http://vapefreepdn.org).

