

# Why Isn't Anybody Talking About the Dangers of Marijuana Use for Our Kids?



## LET'S LOOK AT THE RESEARCH!

**Monitoring the Future (2016), a national survey, showed a higher rate of marijuana use by 12th graders in states that had passed medical marijuana laws compared to states that had not.<sup>1</sup> Colorado, a state that legalized recreational marijuana in 2012, leads the nation in past month youth marijuana use.<sup>2</sup>**

### LET'S TALK ABOUT THE FACTS!

#### MARIJUANA HAS INCREASED IN POTENCY OVER THE YEARS

THC, the addictive element in marijuana, has increased significantly overtime. Marijuana is now 3 to 7.5 times more potent than that used in the 1990s. Marijuana concentrates, another form of marijuana, contain extremely high levels of THC (40%-80%) and are used in various forms - food, drink, and smoked, increasing the potential for addiction.<sup>3</sup> Increases in marijuana potency may be the cause for a rise in emergency room visits.<sup>4</sup>

#### MARIJUANA IS AN ADDICTIVE DRUG

The **YOUNGER** marijuana use begins, the **HIGHER** the risk of addiction.<sup>5</sup> One in 6 teens who start using marijuana become addicted.<sup>6</sup> Each year, more teens enter treatment with a primary diagnosis of marijuana addiction than for all other illegal drugs combined.<sup>7</sup>

#### MARIJUANA NEGATIVELY AFFECTS SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Marijuana decreases attention, memory, and the ability to learn. Students who smoke marijuana tend to get lower grades and are more likely to drop out of school. Effects on learning can last for days or even weeks.<sup>8</sup>

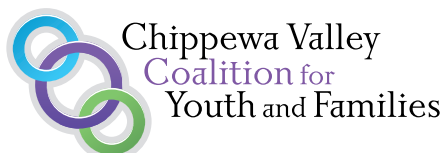
#### MARIJUANA CHANGES THE DEVELOPING TEEN BRAIN

The human brain continues to develop until someone is in his/her 20s. Marijuana use affects the prefrontal cortex, which controls impulses and decision-making.<sup>9</sup> A recent study found that marijuana users had abnormalities in areas that interconnect brain regions involved in memory, attention, language, and organizational skills.<sup>10</sup> Heavy marijuana use during the teen years can **permanently** lower intelligence (IQ) in adult life by as much as 8 points, a significant reduction.<sup>11</sup>

#### MARIJUANA AND DRIVING IS A DANGEROUS COMBINATION

The risk of being involved in a car crash roughly **DOUBLES** after using marijuana.<sup>12</sup> Driving studies indicate that marijuana use can negatively affect a driver's coordination, reaction time, tracking ability, attention, and judgment.<sup>13</sup> In 2014, 10 million people aged 12 or older reported **driving** under the influence of illicit drugs in the past year. After alcohol, marijuana is the drug most often linked to **drugged driving**.<sup>14</sup>

For more information about  
**MOBILIZING MICHIGAN**  
- Protecting Our Kids from Marijuana,  
visit: [www.mcosa.net](http://www.mcosa.net)  
or [www.cvcoalition.org](http://www.cvcoalition.org)



## MARIJUANA AND LATER PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

Marijuana (and alcohol and/or cigarette) use during the teen years has been connected with abuse of prescription painkillers (opioids) in young adult life.<sup>15</sup>

## MARIJUANA AND MENTAL HEALTH

Marijuana use is associated with mental health problems. Research shows a connection between marijuana use, depression, anxiety, suicide, and psychosis.<sup>16</sup>

## MARIJUANA AND PREGNANCY

Marijuana use during pregnancy presents dangers, raising concerns about the development of children exposed to marijuana prenatally.<sup>17</sup>

## SOME OF THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT OPPOSE MARIJUANA USE AND LEGALIZATION

**The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)** states that marijuana use is very harmful to adolescent health and development. Short and long-term recreational use of marijuana in adolescence can cause mental health problems, decrease lung function, lead to substance use disorders, increase use of other drugs, and decrease the likelihood of completing high school or obtaining a college degree. **Even with age restrictions, policy that leads to increased adult use of marijuana is likely to result in increased adolescent use, despite attempts to restrict sales to underage youth.** Visit: [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

**The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)** states that **legalization of marijuana for medicinal or recreational purposes, even if restricted to adults, is likely to be associated with negative consequences:** (a) decreased adolescent perceptions of marijuana's harmful effects, (b) increased marijuana use among parents and caretakers, and (c) increased adolescent access to marijuana. AACAP states that marijuana use is not benign and adolescents are especially vulnerable to its many known adverse effects. Visit: [www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)

**The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) opposes legalization of marijuana anywhere in the United States...** ASAM asserts that the anticipated public health costs of marijuana legalization are significant and are not sufficiently appreciated by the general public or by public policymakers. **ASAM reports that marijuana use is neither safe nor harmless.** Visit: [www.asam.org/advocacy/find-a-policy-statement](http://www.asam.org/advocacy/find-a-policy-statement)

1 *Monitoring the Future* (2016)

2 *Rocky Mountain HIDTA* (2016)

3 *National Institute on Drug Abuse* (2014)

4 *National Institute on Drug Abuse* (2016)

5 *University of Mississippi, Potency Monitoring Program, Quarterly Report 135*

6 *Marijuana: Facts Parents Need to Know, National Institute on Drug Abuse* (2014)

7 *National Council of Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, INC.*

[ncadd.org/about-addiction/faq/facts-about-drugs](http://ncadd.org/about-addiction/faq/facts-about-drugs) (2015)

8 *Marijuana: Facts for Teens, National Institute on Drug Abuse* (2015)

9,10 *National Survey on Drug Abuse Facts Parents Need to Know* (2016)

11 *National Institute on Drug Abuse* (2015)

12 *Drugabuse.org* (2015)

13 *National Council of Alcoholism and Drug Dependence* (2015)

14 *Drugabuse.org* (2014)

15 *Journal of adolescent Health*

16 [Drugabuse.gov/news-events/nida-notes/2014](http://Drugabuse.gov/news-events/nida-notes/2014)

17 *American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*

For more information about Mobilizing Michigan - Protecting Our Kids from Marijuana, visit:

[www.mcosa.net](http://www.mcosa.net) or [www.cvcoalition.org](http://www.cvcoalition.org)

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