



Marijuana is harmful to children and adolescents ...

The negative consequences of marijuana use include:

- A deleterious impact on brain development, both in structure and function.ⁱ
- Poorer working memory, visual scanning, and cognitive flexibilityⁱⁱ, and decreased concentration, attention span, problem solving, motor control, coordination, judgment, reaction time, and tracking abilityⁱⁱⁱ, all of which greatly interfere with learning and contribute to unintentional deaths and injuries^{iv}.
- Reduced odds of high school completion and degree attainment, increased use of other illicit drugs and instances of suicide attempts^v.
- Decreased IQ of eight points from adolescence to adulthood among heavy users of marijuana who started in adolescence^{vi}. This drop is comparable to the decrease experienced by children who have high exposure to lead.
- Research has shown that the younger an adolescent begins using drugs, including marijuana, the more likely it is that drug dependence or addiction will develop in adulthood^{vii}.

And legalizing it will only make things worse ...

- As perceived risk goes down, marijuana use goes up^{viii}, suggesting that legalizing it would send the message that it is a safe and “ok” thing to do.
- In the first year of legalization in Colorado, the number of 12- to 17-year olds using marijuana within the past month increased by eight percent^{ix}, while the number of probationers the same age testing for marijuana increased by 20 percent^x.
- In the first year of legalization in Colorado, college age Coloradans (ages 18-25) using marijuana in the past month increased by 11 percent to nearly 30 percent^{xi}.

ⁱ *Pediatrics*. The Impact of Marijuana Policies on Youth: Clinical, Research, and Legal Update, Technical Report, March 2015

ⁱⁱ Medina KL, Hanson KL, Schweinsburg AD, Cohen-Zion M, Nagel BJ, Tapert SF

ⁱⁱⁱ Schweinsburg AD, Nagel BJ, Schweinsburg BC, Park A, Theilmann RJ, Tapert SF. Abstinent adolescent marijuana users show altered fMRI response during spatial working memory. *Psychiatry Res*. 2008;163(1): 40–51

^{iv} *Pediatrics*. The Impact of Marijuana Policies on Youth: Clinical, Research, and Legal Update, March 2015

^v Silins E, Horwood LJ, Patton GC, et al. Young adult sequelae of adolescent cannabis use: an integrative analysis. *Lancet Psychiatry*. 2014;1(4):286–293. Available at: [www.thelancet.com/journals/a/article/PIIS2215-0366\(14\)70307-4/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/a/article/PIIS2215-0366(14)70307-4/fulltext). Accessed September 10, 2014

^{vi} Meier et al., *PNAS*, 2012

^{vii} Schepis TS, Adinoff B, Rao U. Neurobiological processes in adolescent addictive disorders. *Am J Addict*. 2008;17 (1):6–23.

^{viii} University of Michigan, 2013 Monitoring Future Study

^{ix} SAMHSA.gov, National Survey on Drug Use and Health 2012 and 2013

^x State of Colorado Judicial Branch, Division of Probation Services

^{xi} SAMHSA.gov, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2006–2013