

Youth and Marijuana Use – Impacts on Brain, Development and Public Safety

■ Impacts on the Brain and Development

- Chronic use of marijuana in childhood may contribute to changes in brain structure that are associated with having schizophrenia, the Northwestern research shows. - See more at: <http://bit.ly/1dI72UJ>
- One of the most well designed studies on marijuana and intelligence, released in 2012, found that persistent, heavy use of marijuana by adolescents reduces IQ by as much as eight points, when tested well into adulthood.¹
- A Northwestern University study showed casual use of marijuana is related to major brain changes. It showed the degree of brain abnormalities in these regions is directly related to the number of joints a person smoked per week. The more joints a person smoked, the more abnormal the shape, volume and density of the brain regions. - See more at: <http://bit.ly/WIGJFq>

■ Impacts on School Performance

- According to data on marijuana use in youth from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2006), teens whose grades averaged “D” were four times more likely to have smoked marijuana in the past year than students whose grades averaged “A”.
- Other studies have found that marijuana use is linked with dropping out of school, and subsequent unemployment, social welfare dependence, and a lower self-reported quality of life than non-marijuana abusing people.
- The Maryland School of Public Health (June, 2013) found that college students who smoked marijuana weekly skipped more classes, earned lower grades and were unemployed more often after leaving school.
- In 2012, 10.47 percent of youth ages 12 to 17 were considered current marijuana users compared to 7.55 percent nationally. Colorado, ranked 4th in the nation, was 39 percent higher than the national average.²
- Drug-related suspensions/expulsions increased 32 percent from school years 2008/2009 through 2012/2013. The vast majority were for marijuana violations.³

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■ Impacts on Safety

- Marijuana-related exposures for children ages 0 to 5 on average have increased 268 percent from 2006–2009 to 2010-2013 in Colorado, since medicinal marijuana dispensaries were instituted.⁴
- From 2011 through 2013, there was a 57 percent increase in marijuana-related emergency room visits.⁵
- Hospitalizations related to marijuana have increased 82 percent from 2008 to 2013.⁶



Drug Free Action Alliance

Contact us for more information on marijuana:

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Drug Free Action Alliance is a statewide, 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization founded in 1987. We deliver up-to-date information and develop initiatives that serve the immediate needs of those working to prevent substance abuse throughout the State of Ohio and beyond.

While young people are our primary target population, we also engage in efforts to promote healthy lifestyles for all Ohioans. We form partnerships with businesses, community members, substance abuse prevention professionals, policy makers, law enforcement, school personnel, and, most importantly, parents.

1 Meier et al. (2012). Persistent cannabis users show neuropsychological decline from childhood to midlife. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

2 Rocky Mountain HIDTA Report: Volume 2, 2014

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