



Why We Need to Talk to Our Children About Marijuana

MISCONCEPTIONS—Teens think “marijuana is natural so it must be safe.” Marijuana smoke contains 50-70 percent more cancer causing chemicals than tobacco smoke. Marijuana use compromises judgment which can lead to engaging in risky behaviors.

DRUGGED DRIVING—Marijuana impairs judgment, motor coordination and slows reaction time. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration states: drugs other than alcohol (e.g., marijuana and cocaine) are involved in about 18 percent of motor vehicle driver deaths. ⁽¹⁾

BRAIN BASED CHANGES—Marijuana can be especially toxic to a developing teenager’s brain. Marijuana use can lead to panic attacks, depression, anxiety and other behavioral health issues. ⁽²⁾

DEPENDENCE—Long-term marijuana use can lead to addiction. It is estimated that nine percent of people who use marijuana will become dependent on it. The number goes up to about 1 in 6 in those who start using young (in their teens) and to 25-50 percent among daily users. ⁽³⁾

PERCEPTION—Since the passage of the 2008 Medical Marijuana Law, fewer teens see marijuana use as risky.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE—The more a student uses drugs such as marijuana, the lower their grade-point average is likely to be and the more likely they are to drop out of school. ⁽⁴⁾

(1) <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana-abuse/does-marijuana-affect-driving>

(2) <http://checkyourself.com/FiveMyths.aspx>

(3) <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana-abuse/marijuana-addictive>

(4) Johnson, L.D., O’Malley, P.M., Bachman, J.G., & Schulenberg, J.E. – University of Michigan, 2011. Monitoring the Future Study



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