

5 URGENT REASONS TO KEEP OUR KIDS MARIJUANA-FREE

care connect communicate careful attention | PARENT UP



Because young people's brains are still developing into their mid-20s, they are much more vulnerable to the harmful effects of marijuana, and can become addicted much more easily and quickly than adults over age 25.¹

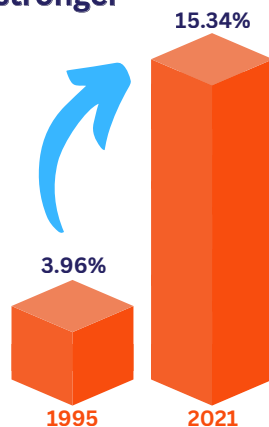
In fact, **90% of Americans struggling with drug addiction started using drugs like marijuana in their teen years,**² highlighting just how important early prevention is to reducing our kids' risk of addiction.

1 Marijuana today is stronger than ever before.

The average potency of THC in marijuana flower in 1995 was just 3.96% compared to 15.34% in 2021.³

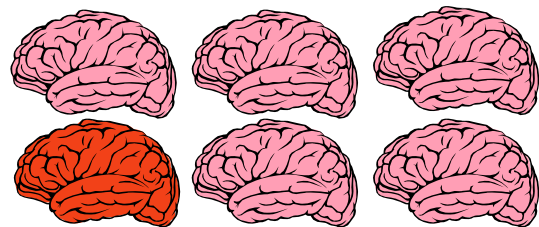
That's almost a 400% increase in just the last 25 years!

Marijuana extracts can contain 39% THC to OVER 80% THC!⁴



2 Marijuana, like other drugs, can be addictive.

About 1 in 10 people who use marijuana will become addicted, **but if they start before age 18, the risk of addiction rises to 1 in 6.**⁵



3 Marijuana use harms teen mental health.

Mental health issues can lead teens to try to cope by using marijuana, even though marijuana use can negatively impact mental health.

- ! **Depression, anxiety, and psychosis** are more common in teen marijuana users than their non-using peers.⁶
- ! Teens who use marijuana are also at a **higher risk of suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts** than their non-using peers.⁷



4 Marijuana use negatively impacts school performance.

Students who use marijuana tend to get **lower grades and are more likely to drop out of high school** compared to their peers who don't use.⁸

The effects of marijuana use include:

- **difficulty thinking**
- **worse problem solving**
- **problems with memory and learning**
- **difficulty maintaining attention**

- all important to succeeding in school.⁹



5 Marijuana use makes driving dangerous.

Marijuana negatively affects the skills needed for safe driving, like alertness, coordination, concentration, judgement, and reaction time.¹⁰

Marijuana alone is thought to roughly **double a driver's chances of being in a crash.**¹¹

Teens who use marijuana are **more likely to be a passenger of an impaired driver.**¹²



THE GOOD NEWS

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WE CAN HELP PREVENT YOUTH MARIJUANA USE

The good news is that marijuana rates among Northland youth are currently low, and we can help keep it that way! Kids who learn about the risks of marijuana and other drugs from their parents (and know their parents' no-use expectations) are half as likely to ever use these drugs compared to their peers.

You can help protect your child and prevent marijuana use by following these tips:



Set clear expectations that kids will stay marijuana-free.

Let them know that any substance use, including marijuana use, is harmful to their growing brains and you care about their mental health and well-being. Talk early and often. Conversations before middle and high school can lessen your child's risk of using substances in the future, so keep talking to teens too!



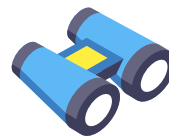
Be curious and keep the dialogue open about marijuana.

Talk often and ask kids what they think or have heard about marijuana. Let them know they can come to you or other trusted adults for help with peer pressure, stress, or anxiety. Assure your child that their well-being is a priority and that they have options for relief other than turning to substance use.



Prepare kids for peer pressure.

Help youth gain confidence to say "no" by practicing scenarios and brainstorming what they might say if offered marijuana. Work with your teen to come up with a code word to text you or another trusted adult if they feel like they need help to get out of an unsafe situation. Support your teen in finding positive and drug-free ways to spend their time with peers.



Watch for early signs of marijuana use and changes in behaviors, friend groups, or attitudes.

Some warning signs include: Glassy, red eyes, slurred speech, dry mouth, a "skunky" smell, anxiety, a drop in grades, quitting activities, and difficulty thinking and problem solving. Get your child help early if you suspect any substance use, including marijuana use.

- Safeguarding the well-being of our youth must remain a top priority as we navigate the increasing availability and potency of marijuana in our communities.
- Its addictive nature, impact on mental health, and harmful effects on the growing brain all underscore the importance of keeping kids marijuana-free.
- As adults, we have the power to help protect our kids and prevent addiction, and Parent Up is here to help!

Check out all of our free resources at [ParentUpKC.com](https://parentupkc.com)



Find all data and references listed on [ParentUpKC.com/Marijuana](https://parentupkc.com/marijuana). References:

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