

# EXPERTS AGREE THAT MARIJUANA AND LEARNING DON'T ADD UP.

The high school years can be an anxious time in your child's life and perhaps yours as well. As teens set their sights on making the grade and making their way in the world, the stresses can begin to add up for the entire family. You've worked hard to encourage your child in school. But you might not be aware of the increased risk for drug use during this important life phase, or of the impact marijuana can have on a teen's ability to learn and succeed.

Teens are at a critical point in building the academic foundation for the rest of their lives. But experts agree, marijuana has no place in the equation for success. Consider this:

1. Teens who begin marijuana use at an early age, when the brain is still developing, may be more vulnerable to neuropsychological deficits, especially of verbal abilities.<sup>1</sup>
2. Researchers have found that heavy marijuana use impairs the ability of teens

to concentrate and retain information.<sup>2</sup> This can be especially problematic during peak learning years.

3. Research has discovered that teens with an average grade of "D" or below are more than four times as likely to have used marijuana in the past year as youth who reported an average grade of "A."<sup>3</sup>

4. The more a student abuses substances, the lower his grade-point average is likely to be. Further, those who drink underage or use drugs are up to five times more likely than their peers to drop out of high school.<sup>4</sup>

Don't let drugs or alcohol compromise your child's ability to learn. The good news is that teen drug use and underage drinking have dropped in the past two years. Help keep that trend going by staying involved in your teen's school life, and share these facts about marijuana. Be clear about your expectations, because the rules you set and enforce today will make all the difference in your teen's life tomorrow.

an  
open  
letter  
to  
parents

## SIGNED

*American Academy of Family Physicians*    *American Academy of Pediatrics*  
*American School Counselor Association*  
*The Center for College Health and Safety*    *Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities*  
*National Association of Asian and Pacific-American Education*  
*National Student Assistance Association*    *Partnership for a Drug-Free America*  
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<sup>1</sup> "Early-onset cannabis use and cognitive deficits: what is the nature of the association?" *Journal of Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 2003 Apr 1, 69 (3): 303-310 (ISSN: 0376-8716). Pope HG; Gruber AJ; Hudson JI; Cohane G; Huestis MA; Yurgelun-Todd D. Department of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, McLean Hospital. <sup>2</sup> *Infofacts: Marijuana*. (Revised March 2004) National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). [Online: <http://www.nida.nih.gov/Infofax/marijuana.html>] <sup>3</sup> *Marijuana Use Among Youths, The National Household Survey on Drug Abuse Report*, July 19, 2002. <sup>4</sup> The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University. *Malignant Neglect: Substance Abuse and America's Schools*. New York: Columbia University, 2001.