

# MARIJUANA AND YOUR KIDS

LEGAL DOESN'T MEAN SAFE.



**“What’s the biggest obstacle to high school students in reaching their potential?”** This question was asked of high school students in recent focus groups across the Denver metro area. The overwhelming answer was *marijuana*. “Marijuana has become the #1 issue our schools are dealing with today,” said Diane Carlson of Smart Colorado at PIN’s October presentation. “Within Colorado, there are now more than 2,800 state-licensed marijuana businesses,” she added, making accessibility to the drug easier than ever before.

Legalization of marijuana has lowered the perception of risk among youth, leading to higher usage rates. Carlson said Colorado is now the #1 state for marijuana use among kids age 12 and up. What’s especially alarming about this is the fact that today’s marijuana is 5-10 times stronger than the marijuana of the 1970s, making it similar to a “hard” drug.

“After we’re born, most of our brain development occurs in our adolescent years,” explained Marcello La Rocca of youth counseling and treatment group Sandstone Care. Kids who use marijuana become susceptible to reductions in their IQ potential, as well as impaired executive function and marijuana-induced psychosis. “90% of adults who abuse or are addicted to drugs began in their adolescent years,” added La Rocca.

## So what's a concerned parent to do?

1. Listen to the podcast of the presentation at [www.PINccsd.org](http://www.PINccsd.org).
2. Visit [www.SmartColorado.org](http://www.SmartColorado.org) to find out more about marijuana and to learn about steps you can take to help protect your kids.
3. Talk to your kids. Legal doesn’t mean safe.
4. View the attachments to learn more information about marijuana and its various insidious forms.

**The message of the true dangers of pot is no longer coming from the law, so parents need to make sure their kids know marijuana is dangerous and addictive; that it can derail their life and lower their IQ; and that it sometimes leads to mental illness.**

If you think your child may be struggling with marijuana or other drugs, contact your school counselor or mental health professional, or visit [www.smartcolorado.org](http://www.smartcolorado.org) for information about a range of counseling and treatment resources across the Denver metro area.



## Mark Your Calendar for PIN's Two November Presentations:

Tuesday Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>, 9:15-11:00 a.m.

**Learning Differences: The Challenges &  
Joys**

Plus a special evening presentation on

Wednesday Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>, 7-8:30 p.m.

**Resilient Families: Being Present,  
Peaceful and Positive**