

# TIPS FOR YOUTH-SERVING PROFESSIONALS



May 21, 2015

## Prevention information for educators, administrators and other youth-serving professionals.

### WHAT STEPS CAN PREVENT YOUTH USE OF AND ACCESS TO MARIJUANA?

#### REVIEW AND ALIGN POLICIES

The Tobacco Free Schools law (C.R.S. 25-14-103.5) requires that school districts **prohibit marijuana use on school property**.

This promotes a safe environment that helps students make healthy choices and protects them from secondhand smoke.

#### STRENGTHEN POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

- ➡ **Ban possession** of all marijuana products in addition to marijuana use.
- ➡ **Include consequences for violations.** Promote alternatives to suspension that improve educational outcomes, like restorative justice approaches or in-school suspension.
- ➡ **Define smoking** in your policy to include vaping and electronic smoking devices.
- ➡ **Promote evidence-based substance abuse prevention curricula** or programs available in resources section. Engage youth to help select the program.

All youth-serving organizations are encouraged to adopt similar policies and programs that promote healthy environments.

### RESOURCES FOR YOUTH-SERVING PROFESSIONALS

For more information on marijuana in Colorado, including methods of use and health risks, visit [Colorado.gov/Marijuana](http://Colorado.gov/Marijuana).

#### POLICY AND PROGRAM SUPPORT

For school district policy support and evidence-based health education curricula for marijuana prevention, visit [bit.ly/RMC\\_MJ](http://bit.ly/RMC_MJ).

For instructional units and evidence-based programs that prevent or reduce youth marijuana use, visit [bit.ly/students\\_mj](http://bit.ly/students_mj).

#### CONCERN ABOUT YOUTH USING MARIJUANA

For specific tips on age-appropriate ways to talk to youth, suggested talking points and how to spot high-risk behavior, visit [SpeakNowColorado.org](http://SpeakNowColorado.org).

For more information on the laws and consequences for youth marijuana use, visit [bit.ly/CDE\\_under21penalties](http://bit.ly/CDE_under21penalties).

To access Colorado substance abuse treatment professionals, visit [LinkingCare.org](http://LinkingCare.org).

## **TALK TO YOUTH ABOUT MARIJUANA TO HELP THEM BETTER UNDERSTAND THE RISKS**

**Listen carefully and stay positive.** Keep the conversation open so they can come to you with questions. Knowing they can ask you questions helps youth make good decisions for their future.

**What you talk about may depend on how old they are.**

### **MARIJUANA DAMAGES THEIR GROWING BRAINS**

- Marijuana can make it harder to learn, sometimes weeks after quitting.
- Problems with learning increase as more marijuana is used.
- Youth who start using marijuana are more likely to become addicted in the future.

**Encourage youth to protect their brains by not using marijuana.**

### **MARIJUANA CAN GET IN THE WAY OF THEIR GOALS**

- Ask about their dreams and help them connect with what they need to achieve their goals.
- Be honest. Explain how doing well in school and staying out of trouble can help them reach their goals.

### **MARIJUANA CAN GET THEM IN TROUBLE**

- **Breaking family and community rules:** Set clear rules for youth. Share that younger siblings and neighbors see them as role models, so they should not use marijuana.
- **Breaking school or after school activity rules:** Youth may be referred for drug counseling, suspended, expelled or face prosecution.
- **Breaking Colorado laws:** Youth may get a Minor in Possession charge. This can lead to fines, public service, substance abuse education, loss of a driver's license and misdemeanor or felony charges.
- **Breaking federal laws:** Since marijuana is still illegal outside Colorado, youth with marijuana charges may not get financial aid to help pay for college.

## **TALK TO PARENTS**

Encourage them to be good role models and to talk with youth about the risks of using marijuana.

Visit [Colorado.gov/Marijuana](http://Colorado.gov/Marijuana) for parent-specific resources.

### **CONCERNED ABOUT PARENTS USING MARIJUANA?**

Talk to them about your concerns. Remind them to provide a safe, smoke-free environment and to store marijuana in a locked area that children cannot see or reach.

If you are unsure if marijuana use is a concern for the welfare of a child, contact your local Department of Human Services.

If you suspect child abuse or neglect (i.e. that the health or welfare of a child is threatened), report your concerns to the Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 1-844-CO-4-KIDS.

You can learn more about the signs of child abuse and neglect from the Colorado Department of Human Services.

For Colorado mandatory reporter trainings, visit [coloradocwts.com/community-training](http://coloradocwts.com/community-training).

