

Let's Be Clear Georgia

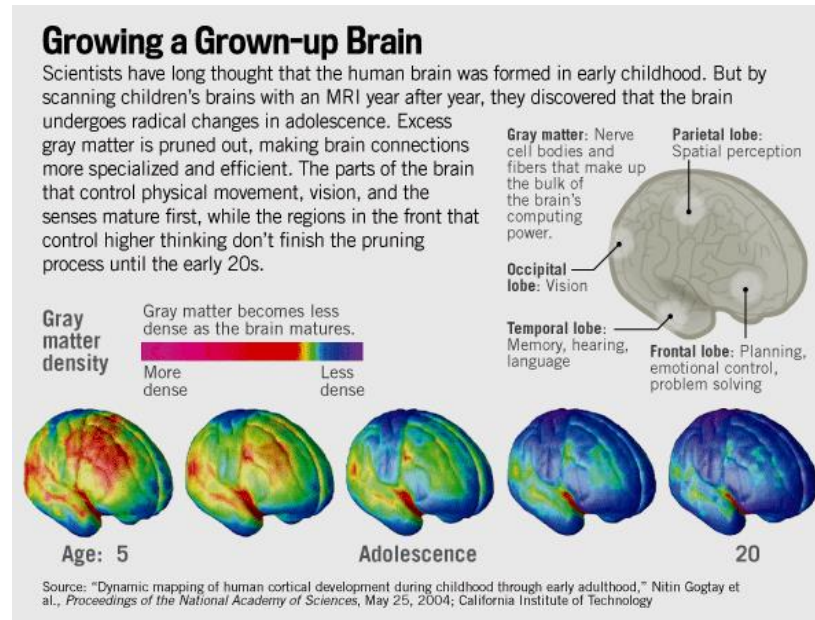
A Collaborative to Prevent Marijuana Abuse

Let's Be Clear Georgia is a partnership of private and public agencies, employers, and individuals engaging in best practices and policies to prevent marijuana abuse in our state.

MARIJUANA AND THE TEEN BRAIN

TEEN BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Human brains begin functioning long before they are fully developed. We begin experiencing the world and develop our sense of identity with very immature brains unable to understand abstract reasoning or the realistic consequences of our actions. At puberty the brain undergoes a stunning growth of new connections and the brain continues to grow and undergo important development until the age of 25.



MARIJUANA USE IS HARMFUL TO THE TEEN BRAIN

Any drug that enters the brain has the potential to affect normal brain development. Marijuana is no exception. When marijuana is smoked, its active ingredient, THC, rapidly passes from the lungs into the bloodstream, which carries the chemical to the brain and other organs throughout the body causing a "high". It is absorbed more slowly when ingested in food or drink. Effects to the brain include altered perceptions and mood, impaired coordination, difficulty with thinking and problem solving, and disrupted learning and memory.²

INCREASE POTENCY, INCREASE RISK

In 2012, THC concentrations in marijuana averaged 15%, compared to around 4% in the 1980s. The full range of consequences associated with marijuana's higher potency isn't well understood. Experienced users may adjust their intake in accordance with the potency or may be exposing their brains to higher levels overall, or both. New users may be exposed to higher concentrations of THC, with a greater chance of an adverse or unpredictable reaction.²

MARIJUANA ADDICTION IN ADOLESCENCE

Here is how the California Society of Addiction Medicine describes the risk:

"Children and adolescent brains and personalities are under rapid development...we are certain that critical

periods occur when the excessive cannabinoid stimulation produced by marijuana has significant impact on the course of brain development. As a result, adolescents can become addicted more often and more rapidly than adults.”¹

- 1 in 6 kids who try marijuana will become addicted to it.³
- Marijuana is the #1 reason adolescents are admitted for substance abuse treatment in the United States.⁴

MARIJUANA USE IN ADOLESCENCE LOWERS IQ LATER IN LIFE

In 2012, one of the most well designed studies on marijuana and intelligence found that marijuana use reduces IQ by as much as eight points by age 38 among people who started using marijuana regularly before age 18.⁵

WHAT GEORGIANS SHOULD KNOW:

- 1) The teen brain is fragile, especially in adolescence.
- 2) Like all drugs of abuse, marijuana can affect the normal development of the teen brain.
- 3) Today’s highly potent marijuana poses an acute health problem for teens.

SOURCES

¹ “Impact of Marijuana on Children & Adolescents: CSAM WEBSITE Evidence-Based Info on Cannabis/Marijuana.” California Society of Addiction Medicine, Sep 2009.

² National Institute on Drug Abuse <http://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/drugfactsmarijuana2014.pdf>, Jan 2014

³ Anthony, J.C., Warner, L.A., & Kessler, R.C. (1994). *Comparative epidemiology of dependence on tobacco, alcohol, controlled substances, and inhalants: Basic findings from the National Comorbidity Survey. Experiential and Clinical Psychopharmacology*

⁴ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. *Treatment Episode Data Set 1992-2000; National Admissions to Substance Abuse Treatment Services. DASIS Series: S-17, DHHS Pub. No. (SMA) 02-3727, 2002.*

⁵ Meier MH, et al. (2012) Persistent cannabis users show neuropsychological decline from childhood to midlife. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 109(40):E2657–E2664.