

THE PARTNERSHIP™
AT DRUGFREE.ORG

Marijuana: It's Legal, Now What?

**A Dialogue About America's Changing Attitudes,
Laws and What This Means for Families**

A Marijuana Attitudes Survey – Report Summary

Released: July 16, 2013

Background:

With marijuana now legal for recreational use in Colorado and Washington State, for medical use in 18 states and the District of Columbia, and effectively decriminalized in 14 states, it's clear that society's approach to marijuana is changing dramatically.

[The Partnership at Drugfree.org](#) is committed to helping young people live lives free of drug and alcohol abuse. With 90 percent of addictions beginning in adolescence, the organization is particularly focused on providing parents and families with the tools they need to help protect their kids from the dangers of substance abuse, especially during the vulnerable teenage years.

It is in this context that The Partnership at Drugfree.org sought to learn more about what parents today believe about:

- marijuana use and the risks it may or may not pose to adolescents
- medicalization, decriminalization and legalization
- and how parents think marijuana, if legal, should be regulated so as to protect young people

The Partnership at Drugfree.org collaborated with Batten & Company, a subsidiary of advertising agency BBDO Worldwide, which in turn enlisted an independent researcher, Whitman Insight Strategies to field an online survey of 1,603 adults in early March of 2013. Of the 1,603 adults surveyed, 1,200 were parents of children ages 10-19. Of the 1,200 parents, 200 were from Colorado and 200 from Washington State, allowing researchers to analyze parent attitudes in these states where marijuana was legalized in November 2012.

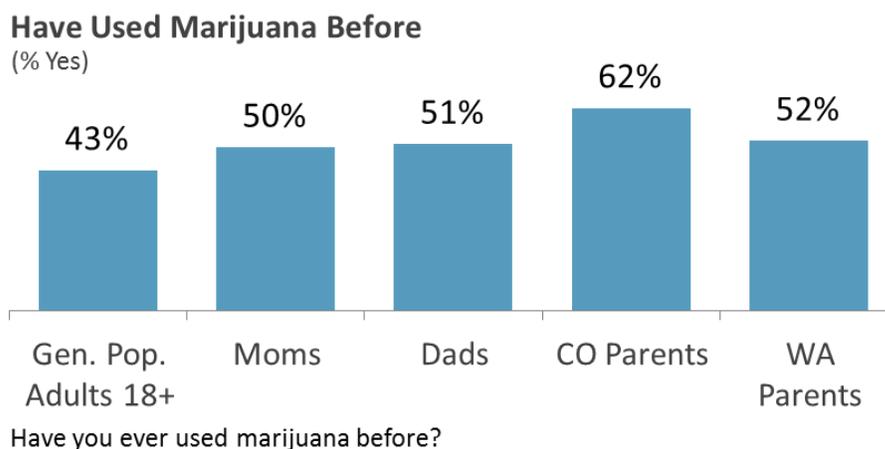
Methodology

Survey Type	Online Survey
Field Dates	March 5 th to 11 th 2013
Audience	<p>N = 1,603 Adults aged 18+</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N=400 Gen. Pop. Moms of Children Aged 10-19 • N=400 Gen. Pop. Dads of Children Aged 10-19 • N=403 Gen. Pop. Adults (18+) • N=200 Colorado Parents of Children Aged 10-19 • N=200 Washington Parents of Children Aged 10-19
Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gen. Pop. audiences regional quotas to match census data • Gen. Pop. Adults (18+): even split between age 18-39 and 40+
Margin of Error	Margin of error at the 95% confidence level is ± 4.9 for sample of 400 and $\pm 6.9\%$ for Washington/Colorado audiences.

Survey: Key Findings

1. It's clear that the cultural landscape around marijuana is changing:

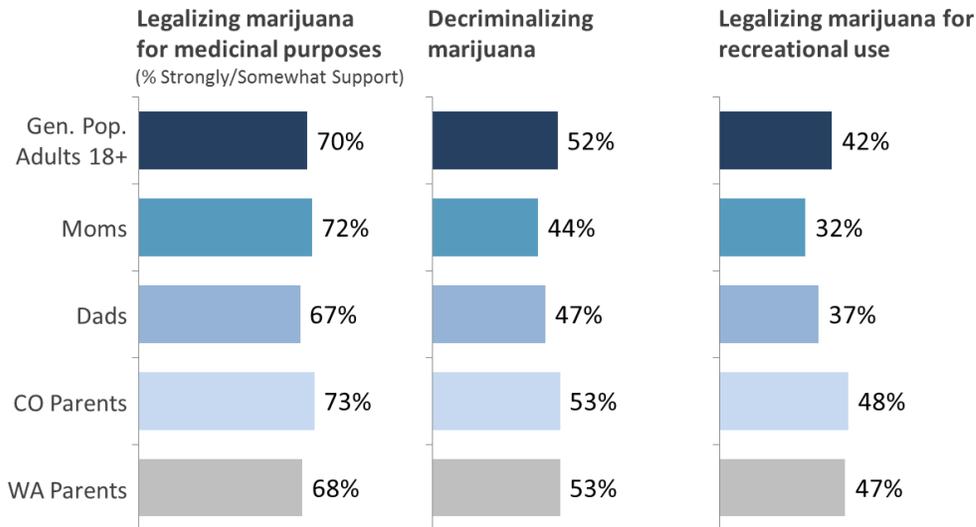
- a. Roughly half of parents in the survey report having used marijuana before. The number is somewhat higher (62 percent) for parents living in Colorado.



2. Support within the general population for medicalization, decriminalization and legalization of marijuana is approximately 70

percent – 50 percent – 40 percent, respectively, and only slightly lower among parents.

Support for Marijuana Initiatives



Thinking about some different topics, please indicate if you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose each of the following...

Interestingly, support for each of these scenarios *increased* by anywhere from three to 11 percentage points when survey respondents were given more information about what medicalization, decriminalization and legalization of marijuana means:

- **Medicinal marijuana** refers to marijuana being made available through licensed medical centers only to individuals who have a doctor's recommendation to possess and use marijuana to treat a medical condition.
- **Decriminalization** of marijuana refers to changing laws so that those caught with marijuana would receive a warning or fine (much like a speeding ticket), but would not face jail time.
- **Legalization** of marijuana refers to changing laws so that anyone over a certain age would be permitted to possess, buy, sell, and use marijuana for recreational purposes within the limits of the law (much like alcohol).

3. Despite growing support for legalized marijuana, prevention of marijuana use remains a relevant and important topic that matters to parents:

Parents are most concerned with the developmental consequences of teen marijuana use, and about their children's futures being harmed by marijuana use.

In Colorado, 85 percent of parents agreed that marijuana can have strong negative consequences on the still-developing brains of teenagers, and 85 percent agree that marijuana use at a young age can hurt performance in school and impact a young person's future.

Increasing tolerance does not equate to support for a "laissez faire" attitude toward marijuana – even in Colorado and Washington State. Fully 90 percent of parents in those states, for instance, believe that "marijuana should be sold only through licensed growers / sellers and not in places like convenience stores, grocery stores or newsstands."

- Similar proportions of parents say that marijuana should be prohibited in public places where tobacco smoking is now banned (92 percent of Colorado parents, 96 percent of Washington State parents agree).
- A majority of parents surveyed agree that it should be illegal to provide marijuana to underage children at home (90 percent of Colorado parents, 91 percent of Washington State parents agree).
- Over 80 percent of parents (87 percent of Colorado parents) believe "marijuana advertising should still be banned." Interestingly, when forced to choose, parents identify the #1 place where it should be permissible to advertise marijuana as "nowhere."

Appropriate Marijuana Advertising

	Gen. Pop.	Moms	Dads	CO Parents	WA Parents
On the internet	21%	14%	20%	21%	22%
In newspapers	17%	15%	19%	24%	19%
In the yellow pages	17%	15%	15%	25%	19%
In magazines	19%	14%	18%	16%	14%
Inside stores (e.g. on the store shelf or at checkout counter)	17%	12%	19%	16%	11%
Through the mail	14%	12%	14%	16%	13%
Over social media	15%	7%	15%	14%	10%
Location-based smartphone apps that could show users where to buy or smoke marijuana	13%	12%	10%	13%	10%
Over the radio	10%	8%	10%	9%	10%
On TV	12%	7%	8%	6%	7%
By offering coupons	10%	5%	8%	11%	7%
On billboards	6%	4%	8%	7%	6%
Using celebrity endorsements	4%	2%	6%	4%	4%
In movie theaters	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%
By sending text messages to mobile phones	4%	2%	3%	2%	1%
Inside games people play on the internet	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%
Marijuana sellers should not be allowed to advertise through any of the above choices	56%	60%	60%	56%	64%

In your opinion, if marijuana were legal, how should marijuana sellers be allowed to advertise? (Select all that apply)

4. Parents and medical professionals have important roles to play.

Parents are viewed (and view themselves) as the most effective source in providing accurate and useful information about marijuana *to their children*, helping them make informed and positive choices. Over 60 percent of Colorado and Washington State parents feel *they* are the most effective source, compared with 16 percent (in each state) saying that schools are most effective.

Similarly, over 60 percent of Colorado and Washington State parents consider doctors and medical professionals the best sources of advice for providing *parents* with information about marijuana prevention for their children – more than the Internet (48 percent of parents in Colorado, 47 percent in Washington

State), television advertising (39 percent of parents in Colorado, 33 percent in Washington State) or law enforcement (32 percent of parents in Colorado, 38 percent in Washington State).

Most Effective Way to Communicate Marijuana Information to Children

	Gen. Pop.	Moms	Dads	CO Parents	WA Parents
Parents	45%	54%	56%	62%	63%
Schools	20%	18%	21%	16%	16%
From other young people	13%	9%	9%	13%	11%
Youth groups (eg. Boys and Girls Clubs)	12%	8%	5%	3%	5%
The media	7%	6%	4%	5%	4%
Another Source	3%	3%	5%	3%	2%

Which of these outlets is the MOST EFFECTIVE in providing useful and accurate information to help young people make informed and positive choices?

Most Effective Way to Communicate Marijuana Information to Adults

	Gen. Pop.	Moms	Dads	CO Parents	WA Parents
Doctors or medical experts	59%	65%	64%	64%	62%
Over the internet	46%	46%	48%	48%	47%
Television advertising	43%	43%	44%	39%	33%
Law enforcement officials	37%	36%	38%	32%	38%
Over social media	34%	33%	36%	34%	29%
Radio advertising or announcements	22%	21%	28%	20%	23%
Information in the mail	19%	25%	20%	20%	22%
Advertising In movie theaters	17%	18%	18%	17%	18%
Magazine advertising	17%	20%	15%	11%	16%
Newspaper advertising	16%	17%	16%	12%	16%
Billboard advertising	15%	16%	16%	12%	11%
Advertising inside games people play on the internet	13%	14%	15%	13%	11%
Somewhere else	5%	4%	4%	5%	7%

And thinking about yourself, as an adult or parent, which of the following would be effective ways to communicate useful and accurate information to you about marijuana? (Select all that apply)

Conclusions and Implications:

1. Support for medicalization and – to a lesser extent – for decriminalization and legalization of marijuana is widespread. The challenge now is:
 - a. to determine how each of these scenarios will be implemented and regulated in the affected states, and
 - b. how children can be most effectively protected in these states and throughout the rest of the country as further relaxation of marijuana laws is considered.
2. Parents, including parents who have smoked marijuana themselves, believe that marijuana can be harmful to the developing brains and futures of their children.

3. Parents – indeed adults in general – expect strict regulation of the consumption, sale and marketing of marijuana, even if they are in favor of legalization.
4. Parents have a critical role to play – *the* critical role, they believe – in the education of their children on the risks of marijuana use.
5. Medical professionals also have a critical role to play as the most trusted source of information *for parents* about the health risks to children of marijuana use.