



# Research Week 2022

## Parental cannabis use, negative parenting, and behavior problems in young children

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Cannabis, Early childhood, Parenting, Child development

### Abstract

#### Introduction

Medical and recreational cannabis use in the United States is increasingly accepted and legal. Rise in use among childbearing aged adults is potentially concerning, as the impacts of parental cannabis use on children are largely unknown, especially for young children. This study examined whether cannabis use is associated with increased risk for negative parenting and child emotional and behavioral problems amongst the parents of young children.

#### Methods

We conducted a cross-sectional survey of parents and child behavior, recruited through five primary care practices. Parents reported demographics, cannabis use (last 6 months), negative and positive parenting, parenting confidence, mental health, adverse childhood experience, and child behavioral/emotional problems. We used a hierarchical regression to determine if negative parenting was significantly associated with cannabis use. An exploratory mediation was conducted to test whether negative parenting mediates the relationship between cannabis use and child behavioral/emotional problems.

#### Results

Of 266 responding parents, 34 (13%) reported cannabis use in the last 6 months. Cannabis use significantly predicted negative parenting after including the effects of other risk factors. The positive relationship between cannabis use and child emotional/behavioral problems was partially mediated by negative parenting.

## Conclusion

Parental cannabis use is associated with negative parenting, which in turn is associated with early childhood behavior problems. Further research is needed to elucidate the nature and direction of relationships between parent cannabis use, negative parenting, child psychological outcomes, and other risk factors.