

Helping Boys & Girls Learn

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Parenting for Success in High School

Boys & Girls In A Scary World

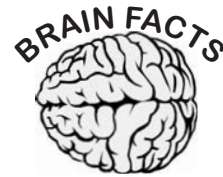
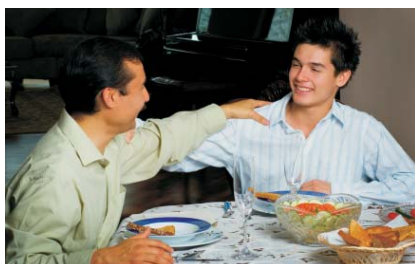
Most children, many teenagers and even many young adults have never lived through a national economic downturn such as we have been experiencing. Many have lived through a time of great economic growth, years of consumer excess and easy credit. For them, this crisis is a rude awakening.

The New York Times recently had a story about how teenagers are coping with the economic downturn. While some are extremely concerned about the situation and are trying to help their families come up with solutions to save money, many seemed offended that they could no longer have as many new clothes, gadgets or restaurant meals as they had previously enjoyed.

Many people in their early 20s or under have grown up in the recent boom times and are having difficulty adjusting to a more frugal way of life. Meanwhile, the pressure on teenagers to have name-brand clothes and shoes, an iPod, cell phone and video game system has probably never been greater.

Teens who were allowed to be a part of family discussions about finances feel better about the situation because they are kept in the know. Showing kids the monthly bills can be shock to them. Many teens lack the knowledge about bills, check writing and life after living at home and this can be a way to get them thinking about how to develop a healthy sense about money.

One good thing that may come out of the current crisis is that kids today might be more prepared to deal with tomorrow as a result of the conversations parents are having with them about saving, not overextending credit and living within their means.



The human brain is a marvelous organ, but there are some things it can not do. The brain's response to stress can't tell the difference between a true physical danger and a perception of danger. If parents are discussing loss of a job, and one parent says, "We'll end up with no home, nowhere to live!" the child may well believe the family is in danger of being homeless. So be very careful about adult discussions held in hearing distance of your children. Stress response in the brain involves an increase in the hormone cortisol, and elevated cortisol levels can make it hard for children to learn or even pay attention to school. Use discretion around your children and help keep their brain in a healthy state, with a minimum of stress.



Check This Out

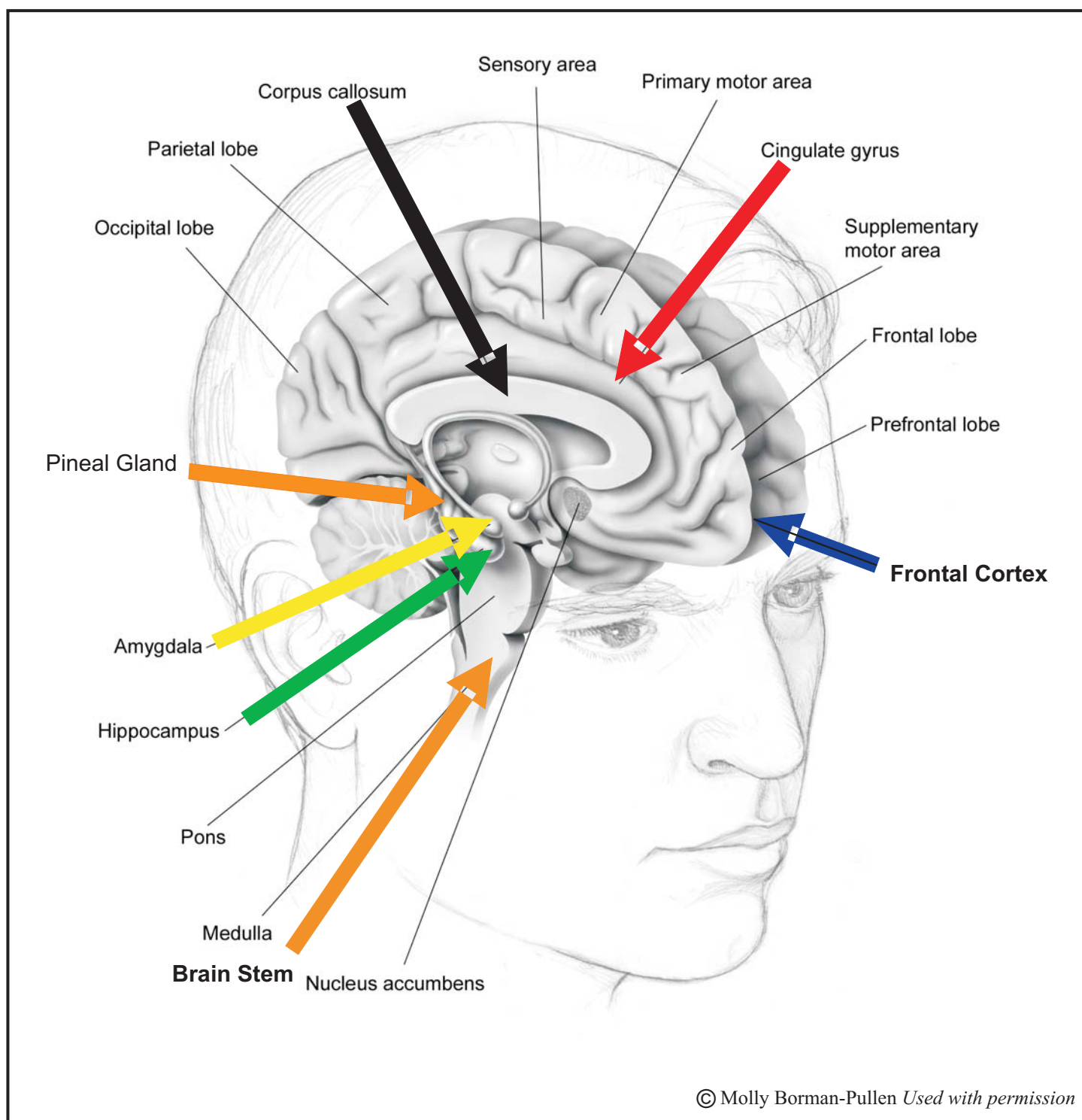
Resources for Parents

Where Can Parents and Teachers Obtain More Information About Middle Schools, Adolescence, and Parent Involvement?

The ASPIRA Association, Inc.
1112 16th Street NW, Suite 340
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 835-3600 (English and Spanish)

Your Brain and It's Parts...an annual reminder!

Each month in our newsletters we talk about different parts of the brain and how they work--and how the male and female brain tend to work differently. The diagram below shows you where different parts of the brain are located, so when you read about the "corpus callosum" or the "pineal gland" you can look at the diagram and locate that part of the brain. Save this page and refer to it when you read about parts of the brain so that the terms will make more sense!



Issues in Adolescent Development

Teen parties seem to be a taboo subject for many parents. With out-of-control parties happening and some parents feeling it's okay to allow teens to drink as long as they are at their home, it isn't any wonder. But there are very good reasons to host a holiday teen party with your teenager. Consider:

Throwing a party with your teen will help strengthen the bond in your relationship. The two of you will be working together to put on this event. You'll both need to have give and take on the rules, the food, the invitees, etc. Parties are also a great way to share family holiday traditions or let your teen start new ones. Sharing family traditions give teens a sense of belonging. Sharing that with their peers will extend the sense belonging to their youth community.

During a party, you will get to know your teen's friends. Will you like all of your teen's friends? Maybe not, but you will get to know who is who, which is a real leg up. You may find that you hear more about what goes on in school or elsewhere when your teen knows you know who he/she is talking about.

Your teen will appreciate your wanting to do something for them. It feels good to teens to know that their parents care about their social life, as it is a big part of their life. Having good friends helps your teen create a strong identity and self confidence. You helping your teen by creating fun times with their friends makes it easier for him/her to reach that goal.

You will be able to laugh in the face of adversity. Okay, this may not seem like really a great reason, but it is true. There is so much taboo surrounding teen parties that it isn't any wonder parents shy away from this activity. It is almost as if the alcohol and drug using youth community has put a stop to young people who want to get together to have some fun without illegal goings-on. If you follow rules for a safe teen party, you won't have to worry.

Giving a teen party is an activity that will teach your teen many needed skills. Having a party for your friends is a big endeavor. It will show him/her how to entertain and be a gracious host/hostess. If your teen uses his/her friends as a decorating crew and/or clean up crew, he/she will learn to delegate. There are many skills your teen will be able to hone while planning and giving a party.

A successful teen party needs to be fun and safe for all involved. You, as the parent, can insure this by following these simple rules:

Make each rule clear to your teen. Write them down in black and white so that there can be no disagreement on what has been decided.

Split the workload and write up a list for each of you. Be sure your teen knows what he/she is responsible for getting done for the party. You should not be doing all of the work.

Keep the number of teens invited manageable. Smaller parties are much easier to manage and tend to be more fun.

Set the time for the party and stick with it. Three hours from start to finish seems to work well.

Do not allow any illegal substances, including, but not limited to: alcohol, drugs of any kind, firearms, porn, etc. Place a 'there will be no drinking or drugs allowed' on the back of the invitations. This rule needs to be made very clear to all attendees before the day of the party.

Do not have an open house. Tell your teen that he/she needs to stick to the invitation list. Should you have crashers to your teen's party, do not allow them in.

Do not be the only chaperone. There needs to be adequate adult presence.

Mark off an area in your home for the party. Party goers shouldn't be in any other area of your home.

Do not allow teens to leave the party and come back. This is a recipe for trouble.

During the party, 'be around'. While you do not need to be right there, front and center, all the time, you do need to be visible. Staying in your bedroom is not chaperoning a party. Refill the food, help start activities and/or just walk through every 15 minutes or so.

If you plan carefully and work with your teen, you can help your teen have a successful social experience and build a stronger relationship.

