

Helping Boys & Girls Learn

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Parenting for Success in High School



9th Grade Attendance Rates Predict High School Graduation!

What are the best predictors of whether a ninth-grader will graduate from high school on time? According to current research: attendance and grade point average. Students who miss less than a week (5 days) per semester were much more likely to graduate in four years. **Students who miss 10 days per semester were less than half as likely to graduate on time, and missing 20 or more days dropped the chance of graduating to less than 10%!** When you aren't at school, your grades will suffer.

How can parents support their 9th graders? Remember that your 9th graders need nearly as much supervision and monitoring as your 8th grader did! Just because he or she is in "high school" now doesn't change the need for parents to keep an eye on homework, friends, a healthy diet, good sleep patterns—all the things you monitored with your middle school child.

Be involved in your 9th grader's school—high school parents tend to volunteer less, attend activities less, generally just aren't around as much as when kids are younger—**be one of the exceptions**. Showing interest in your child's school life may increase your child's interest.

And get to know your child's teachers and administrators—they will be your biggest allies when you and your child need help navigating the wonderful and challenging new world of high school. They share your dream of seeing your child in a cap and gown on graduation day.



Research supports what parents have long suspected—the teenager's brain is different than the adult brain.

Researchers once thought that the brain was fully formed by age 12, but research has shown that adolescence is a time of profound brain growth and change. We now know between childhood and adulthood the brain's "wiring" becomes more complex and more efficient, especially in the brain's prefrontal cortex.

The greatest changes to the parts of the brain that are responsible for **impulse-control, judgement, decision-making, planning, organization** and involvement in other functions like **emotion**, occur in adolescence. This area of the brain (prefrontal cortex) does not reach full maturity until the early 20s for females and around age 30 for males!

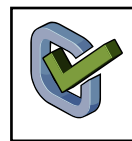
Adult response to stimuli tends to be more intellectual, while teens' is often more "from the gut."

The fastest growing group for suicide is youth aged 10 to 14.

Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death of adolescents.

What's REALLY important: 1) your relationship with your kids, 2) the BIG stuff (not the small stuff).

The Adolescent Brain: A Work in Progress by Weinberger, Elvevag and Giedd.



Check This Out

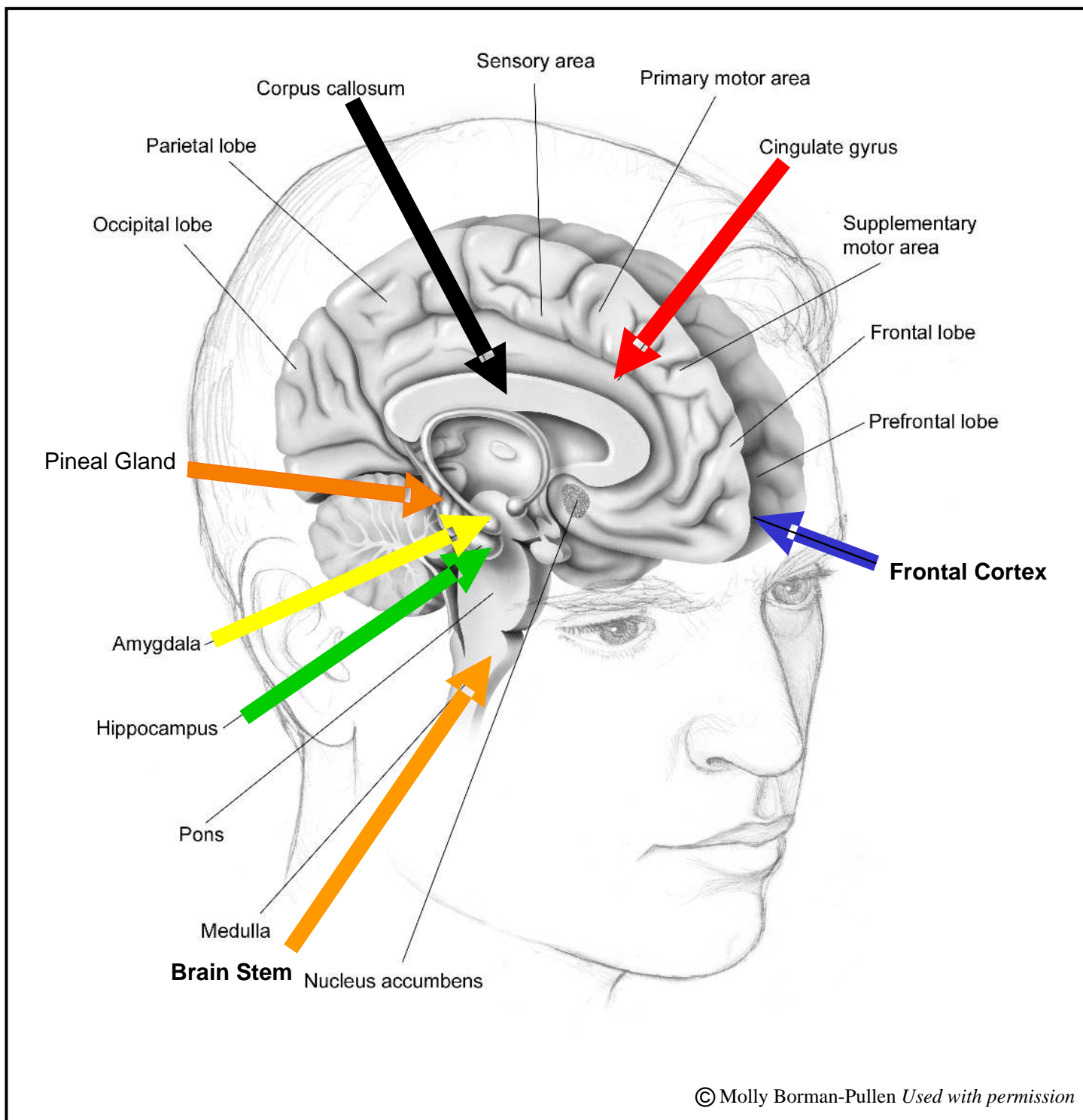
Resources for Parents

Books for Parents:

[How Can We Talk About That? Overcoming Personal Hang-ups So We Can Teach Kids The Right Stuff About Sex and Morality](#)
Jane DiVita Woody

Your Brain and It's Parts...an annual article.

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



Research indicates that adolescents aged 13 to 22 need just over nine hours of sleep each night. When puberty

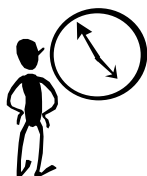
hits, the body's production of sleep-inducing melatonin is delayed, making an early bedtime biologically impossible for most teens. At the same time, after-school sports and jobs and early school start times put the squeeze on a full night's sleep (*Brown Medical School, Rhode Island*).

Given this research, what can parents do to help sleep-deprived teens??



Eliminate sleep-stealing caffeinated drinks in the fridge. The best bedtime snack is one that has both complex carbohydrates and protein, and perhaps some calcium. Calcium helps the brain use the snack to produce melatonin which helps the body calm down for sleep. Dairy products like milk & cheese are good choices, as are peanuts or sunflower seeds!

The body's circadian system is sensitive to light, so remove TVs or computers from the teen's bedroom and curtail their use at least an hour before bedtime.



Have a reasonable curfew for phone calls on school nights.

Try to help your teen maintain a consistent sleep cycle by not encouraging excessive late nights on the weekends just because they don't have to get up for school – the body's system needs a consistent routine.

The influence of peers — whether positive or negative — is of critical importance in your adolescent's life. Whether you like it or not, the opinions of your child's peers often carry more weight than yours. A boy's academic performance can be negatively affected if he finds himself an outsider and low in the pecking order of his peers.

At its best, peer pressure can

- focus your teen's energy
- provide motivation for success
- encourage healthy behavior

Peers can and do

- act as positive role models
- demonstrate appropriate social behaviors
- listen and understand the frustrations, challenges, and concerns associated with being a teenager



Parents can support positive peer relationships by giving their teenagers their love, time, boundaries, and encouragement to think for themselves.

Have a positive relationship with your teen.

Be genuinely interested in your teen's activities.

Encourage independent thought and expression.

Get to know the friends of your teen and get to know their parents.

Make sure that your teen knows that he or she is loved and valued as an individual at home.

