

TEEN BRAINOLOGY

APRIL 2019

WEEK 1

Situation: Spring break is in a few weeks and plans for heading AWAY – the beach, mountains, etc are being finalized. Your child has plans to go with a group of “friends”. You ask who the parent is that will be staying with them? And the response is “not really sure. I got invited because someone dropped out at the last minute and I am NOT going to ask any questions –they’ll think I’m a nerd and never ask me again.”

Fact: – Be a parent and know where your child is, who they are with and what their plans are. Preferably lay this groundwork before any plans are made, but if not – there is no time like the present. Start now. Names/numbers/contact information on where they are should be a normal part of life. Amazing, once you begin this routine, it will become the norm. You may hear, “I can take care of myself”, “you are the only parent asking these questions”, “you always embarrass me”. Stay the course and be strong. Talk to other parents and make sure they know what you expect of your child while he/she is staying with them and let them know you do not allow or condone underage drinking, vaping or other drug use.

Solution: Supporting research shows

- children of hands-on parents are far less likely to smoke, drink, or use drugs
- parents are the single greatest influence on their child’s decision of whether to experiment with alcohol or other drugs
- alcohol and drug use can interfere with your child’s physical, emotional, and cognitive development
- Youth who vape are 4 times more likely to start smoking cigarettes within the year.

WEEK 2

SITUATION You have discovered that your child, while spending last Saturday night with a friend, attended a field party, an unsupervised gathering of high school students at a designated vacant, open piece of property with someone providing tunes or music. Alcohol, marijuana, vaping devices and other drugs ARE likely a part of this party. They are not school specific – everyone that has a ride is welcome to come. Usually attended by 10th, 11th & 12th graders. Since it is after the fact, should you just not worry about it?

FACT The risk-taking part of the brain is developed around the age of 13, which means your child registers pleasure when taking risks. Research shows the greater the number of times your child is asked to experiment with alcohol/drugs the more likely that he will try it. Underage drinking is illegal; it compromises judgment and compromises the perfect growth of the brain. There is also a direct correlation between underage drinking and violence. Vaping is also illegal until the age of 19 and research shows it is an introduction for many youth to traditional smoking. Many vaping devices contain nicotine and for the developing brain can compromise learning, concentration and an ability to control emotions.

SOLUTION Have a very serious conversation with your child today and set firm consequences. Unsupervised gatherings at home, the beach, and field parties are off limits.

Just think if everyone says they are not going to let their child attend field parties --- there would be NO more field parties.

WEEK 3

SITUATION 60 people were arrested one April evening at Orange Beach for Underage Drinking. They were charged with Minor in Possession. Your child is one of those arrested. You are shocked, devastated, mad, sad and every other emotion on the list. But what do you do?

FACT During emotional times – always go back to the facts. In addition to the monetary fines, there may be sanctions for community service and required substance abuse education programs. Weave the facts learned in these education sessions into your life. Sealing a juvenile record does not guarantee that it can never be viewed. In our internet world today, juvenile records do not disappear when a child becomes an adult. This can and has played a negative factor in the future plans of young people both in college and employment.

SOLUTION Before Spring Break – Before Summer – Even Before they leave for a loosely supervised gathering have a conversation with your child, explain the facts and the negative results of participating in illegal activities. Set strong consequences and be prepared to impose them. Remember one of the parts of their brain that is not developed is the planning part of the brain. Give them the words to say so they are comfortable and prepared to say NO.

WEEK4

Vaping Facts Every Parent Should Know

1. No regulation over device or juice. Some vape juices list no nicotine and when liquid is tested – nicotine is found. Also the amount of nicotine on bottle label is not always the amount in bottle.
2. No water in vape juice, 95 to 98% is vegetable glycerin (VG) and propylene glycol(PG). PG is a synthetic organic compound used to lower the freezing point of water and is used to de-ice airplanes and airplane runways, used in the production of plastics, polyurethane and some anti-freeze.
3. Studies show the combination of VG and chemicals used for flavoring can cause softening of tooth enamel and lead to tooth decay.
4. Youth who vape are 4 times more likely to smoke traditional cigarettes.
5. Juul, a popular vaping device has as much nicotine in one pod (container holding vape liquid) as in a pack of cigarettes.
6. Nicotine has been described as one of the most addictive legal substances we have in our world today. It registers stronger in the teenage brain – primarily because it is not developed.
7. Nicotine compromises the immune system and negatively effects the teen brain's ability to concentrate, learn and control impulses.
8. Nicotine creates addictive pathways in the undeveloped brain.
9. Recent study shows vaping causes an increase in heart attacks and cardiovascular disease as well as an increase in depression in young adults.
10. Illegal for anyone under the age of 19 to buy, sell, use or possession.