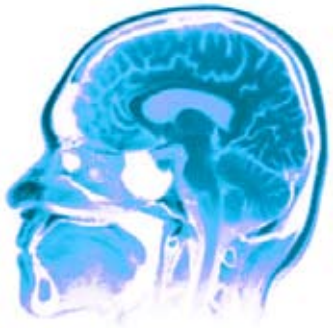
HAS YOUR TEENAGE BOY LOST HIS BRAIN?

If you have recently considered that your adolescent boy has lost all reason you may be right. Despite the brain being 90 to 95 percent of its adult size by the age of six, gigantic changes continue to take place well into adulthood, especially during the adolescent years.

The part of the brain that alerts your son to risky behaviours, such as to STD's and crystal meth, is undergoing major renovations. The prefrontal cortex is responsible for executive decisions – like reasoning and impulse control – and it needs a lot of friendly support from adults if it is to survive the teenage years.



...adolescents bypass their prefrontal cortex when processing emotionally charged stimulus...

MRI scan evidence shows that adolescents often ignore their prefrontal cortex when processing emotionally charged stimuli, such as gyrating rock video dancers, internet chat rooms or internet pornography. Recent studies indicate that when teens process emotional and pleasurable stimuli it bypasses their prefrontal cortex and they are at the mercy of their reactivity. Adults, on the other hand, are better able to filter their emotional reactions with reason and impulse control – and do the right thing.

It also seems that adults are better at staying on task while teens are more easily distracted by their passion. A teen's prefrontal cortex is on vacation during these years and it can lead them to inadequately consider the consequences of their behaviour.

While some might use this information to let teens off the hook for poor judgment, many parents and teachers utilize this brain research as a basis to become more actively involved in a teenager's life. A male teen might not appear too excited about increased adult presence in his world but he will thank you – when he's 25!

So parents…keep actively involved in your son's life - especially school - despite his proclamation that you are the only parent on the planet who regularly visits teachers.

Teachers…recognize the power of your presence in the hallway between classes and during other breaks to encourage respectful behaviour.

For detailed explanation: **http://www.duke.edu/~amwhite/Adolescence/adolescent3.html**