Why do they do that? Teen Decision Making  
2011 Minnesota Financial Fitness Conference

Multidimensional Approach to Teen’s Risk-Taking  
Resources & Take Home Messages  
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Extension Families with Teens Resources - www.extension.umn.edu/FamilieswithTeens/

- *Teen Decision Making about Risky Behaviors - Take and Teach* lesson; CD-08210. All the materials needed to facilitate a parent group or a parent/teen group are on one CD: facilitator guide, research background, handouts and activities, resource lists, presentation. Click on “Teen Talk Resources” for ordering information.
- “Understanding Adolescent Risk-taking Behavior: Online Research Update for Professionals” is a short term, non-credit professional development opportunity offering four clock hours. It was developed by Jodi Dworkin, Ph.D. and Colleen Gengler, M.Ed. through University of Minnesota Extension & Family Social Science. The course will be open for enrollment August 15, 2010. Look for details on the website.

Teen Brain Resources for Professionals and Families

**Articles**

**Books**

**Websites**
- A Parent’s Guide to the Teen Brain – Partnership for a Drug Free America;  
  [www.drugfree.org/teenbrain](http://www.drugfree.org/teenbrain) -- Click on “WHY DO TEENS ACT THIS WAY? The science in a nutshell.”
- Inside the Teenage Brain;  
  [www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/teenbrain/interviews/todd.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/teenbrain/interviews/todd.html) -- An interview with researcher Deborah Yurgelun-Todd
- The Secret Life of the Brain;  
  [www.brainconnection.com](http://www.brainconnection.com) -- Connecting brain development to education
Take Home Messages – Brain Development

Although brain development is very complex, there are some key points that are helpful and useful to keep in mind.

- The brain isn’t fully developed until the mid-twenties. We used to think the brain was fully functioning by the teen years; all that needed to happen was the teen acquiring more knowledge and experience. Now we know this just isn’t so. The brain structure isn’t yet complete.
- Teen brain development is closely linked with all the other changes going on for teens: puberty, social & emotional changes, changes in thinking. But, all of these things are on a little different timetable making how teens grow and develop even more complex and a little confusing for parents, teens, and professionals alike.
- Knowing that the teen brain isn’t fully developed is no excuse for a parent or teacher to say “I can’t do anything about that”. Rather, it is all the more reason for a parent to say “I have to make sure I give my teen reminders of the rules. I’m going to have to repeat those often.” Teachers and other professionals working with teens may also need to give teens reminders.
- The key area that is still under construction in the teen brain is the pre-frontal cortex. Sometimes adults need to be that “pre-frontal cortex” for teens. That means having structure through rules plus good communication.
- Knowing some basics about brain development helps adults work with and understand teens better.
- Knowing some basics about brain development helps teens understand themselves better.

Additional Consumer Decision Making Resources

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Articles:

Websites:
- University of MN Extension Youth & Money - http://www.extension.umn.edu/Youth&Money/
- MN 4-H Consumer Decision Making program – sample classes to practice decision making skills: http://www1.extension.umn.edu/youth/mn4-H/events/ConsumerDecMaking/index.html