



NATIONAL FAMILIES IN ACTION

Parent Corps



Responsibility and Privilege go Together

It's amazing that parents sometimes move too quickly to give their children privileges that they can't sufficiently handle. Remember that the definition of "overindulgence" doesn't have to be with quantity. It has to do with giving children more than their character can handle.

Privileges include:

Privacy, staying home alone, going to the mall alone, email address, Internet access, cell phone, using the car, going to a friend's house, having friends over, and having spending money

Responsibility is demonstrated by:

Honesty, admitting mistakes instead of blaming or making excuses, reporting in, coming home on time, anger control, saying no to temptation when alone, taking a stand for right-

eousness with friends, completing a job without needing to be checked up on continually

Giving a child his own phone isn't wrong but a child who is not responsible may have just received easier access to friends who are a bad influence. Unmonitored Internet access can be dangerous for some since there is a lot of bad stuff out there. Chat rooms and email accounts require character or teens get into trouble. Allowing a teenage guy to go over to a girl's house when parents aren't home can be a problem.

Teens may say, "You don't trust me." And the answer is, "Trust is something you earn by being responsible. It has to do with wisdom. Show me that you're responsible with checking in, doing your jobs around the house without being reminded, and taking a stand for righteous-

ness when you're in a difficult situation; then we can talk about you having some of these privileges that you're requesting." We can't just assume a child knows how to withstand negative peer pressures. Children need to learn responsibility and as parents we need to teach them.

It's similar to a young person learning how to swim. He or she is out there treading water and trying to learn to be a responsible, mature adult. Parents are in the boat tossing toys out to the child. Of course the kid loves the toys and then doesn't learn how to swim. Some parents give their children privileges before they're ready and in doing so, inadvertently contribute to their child's drowning.

Taken from "Say Goodbye to Whining, Complaining and Bad Attitudes

Parents Advocating Make A Difference

Three of the nation's largest retailers have halted sales of board games that encourage players to drink alcohol, less than a month after drug prevention groups launched letter-writing campaigns that accused the retailers of promoting binge drinking by selling *Drinko*, *Shots and Ladders*, and *Beer Pong*.

Within three days of Join Together sending out its first message about Kohl's selling these drinking game they were pulled from the stores shelves and website. Attention then shifted to Target and after 2,100 emails were received they also pulled the drinking games. With two victories in hand, advocates turned to a third retailer, Linens

'n Things. Within eight hours the store received 1,600 letters from prevention advocates and pulled the items from their stores.

This is a terrific example of how parents networking together can bring about change. You don't have to go to court. It didn't take years; it happened rather quickly.

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Special points of interest:

• **Join Parent Corps TO-DAY contact Pat Giuliani to become a member. Tell your friends about Parent Corps and get them to join. IT IS FREE!!!!!!**

Caffeine Culture Can Lead to ER visit

Caffeine has become the drug of choice among today's teens. But if you're thinking it's the coffee outlets that must be cleaning up, think again. Nearly one-third of U.S. teenagers say they consume energy drinks—those, sweet, highly-caffeinated canned beverages with names like Red Bull, Cocaine, Full Throttle, Monster and Rockstar. Along with a boost, some of these potions promise weight loss, increased endurance—if you down several in a row—a legal buzz.

This trend is rocketing, with no signs of slowing down. The energy drink industry grew by 80 percent last year—bringing in nearly three and a half billion dollars.

But nutritionists caution that energy drinks, with all their caffeine and sugar, can put teens on a harmful “jolt-and-



crash” cycle. A recent study found that some of these drinks, which come in eight ounce cans, contain up to four times the amount of caffeine found in a standard 12-ounce can of Coca Cola.

And all that caffeine is apparently taking its toll on teens. A survey of a poison control center in Chicago found a high number of youths reporting caffeine overdoses. While doctors say drinking coffee or tea is a relatively safe habit, too much caffeine can cause nausea, chest pains or panic attacks.

Caffeine Energy Drinks

Dr. Stephen Roy Pitts, from Emory Crawford Long Hospital, strongly discourages

kids with anxiety problems away from caffeine. He also says that many teens are taking caffeine pills which could lead to insomnia, heart palpitations, tremors, sweating, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, chest pains and neurological symptoms. Caffeine is a drug not a food product.

“Ghost-Riding” the New “Trunking”

Teens have been doing crazy—some would say stupid—stunts with their cars for decades. Recently there was concern over “trunking” - teens riding in the trunks of their friends’ cars.

But a newer trend called “ghost-riding” or “ghost riding the whip” is when the driver of a car puts the car in neutral and then the driver and/or passengers exit the vehicle while it’s moving at a low speed—and then dance on or around the car while

music pumps out from the dashboard.

Homemade videos of teen “ghost-riding” have been popping up all over the Internet. Many shows the cars involved crashing into stationary objects like hydrants and telephone poles— or going up onto sidewalks. There have been several lethal accidents connected with ghost-riding incidents—along with numerous injuries.



Identity Thieves Target Children

According to the Federal Trade Commission, identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in America. And experts say, increasingly, kids are the victims.

With your child’s social security number, a thief can get a credit card—and run up a mountain of debt in your child’s name. And most kids don’t realize identity thieves target them.

According to the Federal Trade Com-

mission, 400-thousand kids have their identities stolen every year. Some are only infants.

Since parents almost never check their kids’ credit reports, thieves can run up debt in your child’s name—and go for years without being caught. The most

common way to find out if your child has been the victim of identity theft is if your child starts getting pre-approved credit card offers in the mail. It is important for parents to guard their child’s social security number and personal papers. Don’t leave bills with personal information around. You need to be shredding those

items for fear of dumpster divers.



Schools Sell Home Drug-Testing Kits to Parents

Marietta High School is one of the many schools selling home drug-testing kits to parents. Schools can buy home drug-testing kits through the L.E.A.D. program—or Law Enforcement/Local Educator Against Drugs. A corporation provided seed money for Marietta High School to purchase the first shipment of drug kits. The school is selling the drug kits for \$12 and the proceeds will be used to replenish the supply.

Tips for Parents:

The warning signs for teenager drug abuse includes a change in friends, a drop in grades, increased secrecy about possessions or activities; use of perfume or incense to hide the smell of smoke; an increase in borrowing money; new use of eye drops, breath mints or mouthwash

and evidence of inhalant products like hairspray, nail polish or correction fluid.

Parents who suspect their child is using drugs should first talk privately with each other. It's important to get on the same page before confronting the child.

Use checklist to record all behaviors that concern you. Documenting your observations is important because your child will work hard to convince you that things did not happen the way you remember it.

Prepare what you want to say to your child. Describe specific behaviors you and others have observed and when they occurred. The more specific you are, especially if you have written your observation down, the harder it will be for your

child to deny, disagree, or argue.

It is not useful simply to ask if your child if he or she is using drugs. Almost always, children will deny using. But it's not a bad idea to voice your suspicions at some point.

If you'd like to use a drug screen, inform your teen that you will be giving a random test to find out if he or she is getting high. When you administer the test, don't give advance notice. Watch them closely to make sure they don't swap their urine for a clean sample from a friend.

When giving the test, emphasize that your motivation is caring. If teens refuse to take the test, tell them you will assume they are using, and proceed accordingly.

Brain Realities-What's the Cost ?

1. What is a drug and can all drugs get in your brain?

A drug is any substance a person puts into his/her body with the intent of changing how it works. The blood vessels in our brain are different from those in the rest of our body. The walls of the blood vessels in our brain are capable of screening out larger molecules. This screening process is known as the "blood-brain barrier". This barrier protects our brain from medications that don't belong in the brain. The molecules of psychoactive drugs are small enough to get through the blood-brain-barrier. This can be good or bad. Pharmacists create man made psychoactive drugs to substitute for many of our brain-made psychoactive chemicals to help our brain function better. Unless our brain is malfunctioning, the presence of man-made chemicals can interfere with neural messages and change us in harmful ways.

2. What causes side effects?

When drugs enter the blood stream, they cannot be controlled. They have access to any and all receptors in the body that match their molecule's size and shape.

3. Which man-made psychoactive drug disrupts the brain more than cocaine, heroin and nicotine and why?

ALCOHOL. Most man-made psychoactive drugs affect only one type of receptor in the brain so we can predict where they will show up in the brain. We can also predict what reactions they will cause to happen in the brain and the rest of the body when they interfere with our brain's natural messages. Alcohol is different. It has a "passkey" to the brain, affecting receptors throughout the brain. In addition to interfering with our neurons' messages, alcohol can switch off brain cells. This is not like killing them, this is simply turning them off. The brain cells of the mature brain can recover within a day or so; unfortunately, immature brains (brains of person under age 21-24) take several days to recover fully. The unfinished brain is affected far more by alcohol exposure.

4. Can adolescents become addicted faster than adults?

YES. Four times faster. In fact, all problems that adults can have from alcohol affect adolescents four times faster. In addition, repeated exposure to alcohol can produce long lasting changes in adolescent brain function. Cognitive impairments can continue for weeks after exposure. Repeated exposure can even shrink the size of the hippocampus, affecting memory on a permanent basis.

Are you planning on hosting a teen party in the future? What's it going to cost you????? Come to the Walton PTSA/Parent Corps educational program Monday night, February 26th at 7 PM in the Walton Media Center to get information about a new ordinance being created in regards to underage drinking in Cobb County. Bring a friend and your neighbors so they will be up to date on these new issues.



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The 9/11 Generation of Giving

The number of teens involved in volunteer work has risen sharply in the aftermath of the 9/11 terror attack. And while some kids say they volunteer to improve their chances on a college application, analysts believe this trend among teens suggests the possible emergence of a new civic generation.

Eastern Cobb County Council PTA will be hosting a Teen Job/Volunteer fair on Saturday, March 10 at the Northeast YMCA from 11-3. All teens are encouraged to stop in a pick up applications from major grocery stores, restaurants, clothing stores, life guarding companies and many more. We will also have churches, hospitals, and community service organizations on hand with summer volunteer or paid position available. More information contact Pat Giuliani.

MADD Announces National Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving

In a bold new effort designed to eradicate one of the nation's deadliest crimes, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) has launched its national *Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving*, which aims to literally wipe out drunk driving in the United States.

There has been a decline in alcohol-related traffic fatalities by 40 percent since MADD was founded in 1980, but the threat still remains. Every year, nearly 13,000 people are killed by drunk drivers with an illegal blood alcohol concentration of .08 or above and countless other are injured.

Research shows that the overwhelming majority of people arrested for drunk driving have driven drunk more than 50 times before their first arrest. Two-thirds of those whose licenses are suspended for DUI drive anyway.

As a nation, our efforts to prevent drunk driving fatalities have stalled. MADD's plan to eliminate this public health threat

requires new strategies to complement current methods. MADD is announcing a 4-point plan to lead the nation toward the goals of eliminating drunk driving:

- Intensive high-visibility law enforcement—including twice-yearly crackdowns and frequent enforcement efforts that include sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrol in all 50 states;
- Full implementation of current alcohol ignition interlock technologies, including efforts to require alcohol ignition interlock devices for all convicted drunk drivers. Interlocks are proven to be up to 90 percent effective while on the vehicle, yet it is estimated that only one in eight convicted drunk drivers each year currently get the device, and most of those are repeated offenders. Sixty-five percent of the public support mandatory interlocks for first time offenders, and 85 percent of the pub-

lic support mandatory interlocks for repeat offenders.

- Exploration of advance vehicle technologies through the establishment of a Blue Ribbon panel of International Safety Experts to assess the feasibility of a range of technologies that would prevent drunk driving—these technologies must be moderately priced, absolutely reliable, set at the legal BAC limit and unobtrusive to the sober driver
- Mobilization of grassroots support, led by MADD and its 400+ affiliates, to make the elimination of drunk driving a reality. MADD intends to work with law enforcement agencies, judicial organizations, auto manufacturers, insurers, distilled spirits companies, technology companies, safety advocates, health care professionals, and emergency technicians to abolish drunk driving in the United States.