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ACPeds Releases New Evidence-Based Position Statement on Teen Brain Development; High Risk Behaviors, Abortion, Gender- Transition Surgeries Can Have Adverse Effects

17 May 2022

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Gainesville, FL— Today, the American College of Pediatricians (ACPeds) announced the publication of its evidence-based Position Statement entitled **“The Teenage Brain: Under Construction”** with research showing that adolescents’ brains are under construction during these formative years, and this should inform parents’ role to protect the best interests of their children.

The evidence-based research on brain development shows that the adolescent brain is under construction and can be adversely affected by high-risk behaviors and by the negative environmental influences the brain experiences. The judgment center is immature, leading to poor decision making. High-risk behaviors and permanent medical decisions such as abortion and gender-transition surgeries that are encountered during these vulnerable years can have lasting adverse consequences. The importance of parental supervision, sound coaching, and assistance in decision making cannot be overstated.

Dr. Jane Anderson, MD, FCP, board member of the ACPeds and retired faculty in Pediatrics at University of California San Francisco released the following statement:

“High-risk, addictive behaviors such as drug use, gambling, video gaming, pornography, sexual experiences and permanent medical decisions such as abortion and gender-transition surgeries can have lasting adverse consequences on the teenager. Parents can positively impact the brain development of adolescents as they assist in sound decision-making, provide structure to the adolescent’s environment, and monitor the adolescent’s activities.”

If you would like to set up an interview with Dr. Jane Anderson, please contact connect@acpeds.org or call (352) 376-1877.

About the American College of Pediatricians

The American College of Pediatricians (ACPeds) is a national medical association of licensed physicians and healthcare professionals who specialize in the care of infants, children, and adolescents. It was founded by a group of concerned physicians who saw the need for a pediatric organization that would not be influenced by the politically driven pronouncements of the day. The mission of the ACPeds is to enable all children to reach their optimal physical and emotional health and well-being. The ACPeds is committed to fulfilling its mission by producing sound policy, based upon the best available research, to assist parents and to influence society in the endeavor of childrearing.

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An Ounce of Prevention for Teen Depression

AUGUST 6, 2018

In its newly released statement, [Decreasing the Risk of Depression in Youth](#), the American College of Pediatricians (ACPed) alerts parents and health professionals to the many protective factors against child and adolescent depression. These include parents maintaining a loving low-conflict marriage (1), practicing authoritative parenting, maintaining [family connectedness](#), discouraging drug use, promoting sexual abstinence (2), restricting and monitoring the use of social media and screen time, attending weekly religious activity as a family (3), encouraging children to keep a gratitude journal, and ensuring that children eat well, exercise regularly and get adequate sleep.

In addition to encouraging the protective factors discussed in the paper, ACPed advises parents to monitor their children for signs of depression. Although moodiness is a feature of normal adolescence, there are signs that should alert parents to the risk of child depression. Prolonged sadness for no apparent reason, withdrawal from family and friends, falling grades, the inability to enjoy activities enjoyed in the past, insomnia or excessive sleeping, anorexia, and drug and alcohol use, may all indicate that a child is depressed and needs help (4).

Dr. Jane Anderson, principal author of the ACPed statement says, "Depression is a growing problem among adolescents today, but there are steps parents can take to help their teens thrive."

While a number of valuable screening tools are available for physicians, ACPed recommends that pediatricians and other child health professionals go further and ask both adolescents and their parents about factors known to be associated with adolescent depression. These factors include a family history of depression, sexual activity (5), the use of hormonal contraceptives (6),

abortion (7), drug use (including tobacco, alcohol and marijuana (8)), falling grades, cohabitation (9), bullying (10), and recent loss, such as breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend, parental separation or divorce (11), and a death in the family. For more information and resources visit www.acpeds.org.

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