

FACT SHEET • SECONDARY

Understanding Your Young Person's Brain

Adolescence rebuilds the brain. The parts that feel, want and react are running at full speed while the part that plans, weighs risk and applies the brakes is still being wired, and that gap is why a sensible child can make a baffling decision. These five tips work with the brain your young person actually has.



TIP 1

Expect the feeling first

An adolescent child reads a situation with the emotional part of the brain before the thinking part catches up. Give it a minute before you expect reason.

TIP 2

Say less, and say it later

Long explanations in the heat of the moment go nowhere. Make your point in a sentence, then come back to it when things have cooled.

TIP 3

Protect the sleep

The adolescent body clock genuinely shifts later. Sleep is when the rewiring happens, so guarding it does more than any amount of nagging.

TIP 4

Let them practise deciding

Judgement is built by making choices and living with them. Give real decisions where the stakes are small, and let the learning happen.

TIP 5

Stay the safe place

Young people pull away at the same time as still needing you close. Keep the door open, keep the routines, and keep talking about ordinary things.