

# PARENT GUIDE

## What this video teaches

This video introduces prevention through a **brain-based, non-fear approach**:

- The brain is the “boss” that controls thinking, feelings, and behavior
  - The brain sends messages that help kids function and thrive
  - Some substances interfere with those messages and can trick the brain
  - Kids’ brains are still developing and need extra protection
  - Clear rules help kids protect their brain and ask for help
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## Before Watching (ages 6–9)

Ask:

- “What does your brain help you do?”
- “What does a boss do?”
- “How do we protect important things while they’re growing?”

Keep it light and curious.

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## During Watching

Point out:

- The Brain Boss character
- The message pathways
- The “building in progress” sign

You can quietly say:

- “Your brain is still growing.”
  - “That’s why we protect it.”
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## After Watching

Discuss:

- “What jobs does the Brain Boss have?”
- “What can confuse the Brain Boss?”
- “What are the Brain Boss rules?”

### Brain Boss Rules (repeat together)

Have your child finish these sentences:

- “I only take medicine from \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - “I never take pills, gummies, or drinks from \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - “If I don’t know what something is, I \_\_\_\_\_.”
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## Optional Family Activity – Brain Protection Shield

Draw a brain together.  
Around it, draw a shield.

Inside the shield, add:

- Safe grown-ups
- Asking for help
- Healthy choices

Explain:

“These are the things that protect your Brain Boss.”

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## Ages 10–13 (use without the video)

### What to focus on

- The brain controls emotions, judgment, and impulse control
- These systems are still developing in middle school
- Some substances interfere with that development



**Conversation starter:**

“Your brain is still under construction. Some things help it build stronger. Some things slow it down. Our job is to protect it.”

Ask:

- “What kinds of pressure do kids your age face?”
  - “What would make it harder to make a good decision?”
  - “Who could you go to if you needed help?”
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## **Ages 13+ (use without the video)**

### **Talking about a parent’s own past substance use**

*(casual use or recovery)*

**Core message:**

This conversation is about **learning and protection**, not comparison.

**If your past use was casual or didn’t escalate**

What to say:

- “When I was younger, people didn’t understand brain development the way we do now.”
- “What was available then is very different from what exists today.”
- “Even if nothing bad happened to me, I wouldn’t make the same choices knowing what I know now.”

Avoid:

- “I did it and turned out fine.”
- Funny or reckless stories
- Comparing your teen’s situation to yours

Reframe:

“This isn’t about my past — it’s about protecting your brain.”

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**If there is a family history of substance use or addiction**

What to say:

- “In our family, substance use has caused real harm.”
- “That doesn’t mean it will happen to you.”
- “It does mean we’re more careful.”

Normalize:

“Every family has health risks they watch out for — this is one of ours.”

Avoid:

- Fear-based warnings
- Fatalism (“It’s genetic anyway”)
- Oversharing details

Anchor the message:

“Knowing this gives you more power, not less.”

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## Parent framing that builds trust

Use language like:

- “My job is to protect your brain while it’s still building.”
- “These rules aren’t about control — they’re about care.”
- “I trust you, and I’m responsible for your safety.”

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## Why this matters (parent-only note)

What parents learned from this episode:

- Sharing past use should **avoid glamorization** and focus on learning
- Family history is **information, not destiny**
- Clear expectations and calm boundaries are protective
- Prevention works best when kids understand *why* rules exist

You’re not saying:

“Don’t do this because it’s bad.”



You're saying:

**“Your brain matters, and I’m here to protect it.”**

