



Did You Know?

September 2017

Family Day (September 25th): Family Day was created by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse and is held on the fourth Monday in September. The goal of this special day is for families to understand the benefits of having meaningful conversations together, specifically during mealtimes. These conversations can aid in the prevention of risky behaviors and substance use by children, teenagers and young adults. **Teens who have fewer than 3 family meals per week are 4 times more likely to use tobacco, 2 times more likely to use alcohol and 2.5 times more likely to use marijuana than those who have 5-7 family dinners per week.**

What You Should Know:

- 33% of adolescents have had at least one alcoholic drink by the time they are 15 years old and 14% of 10th graders have used marijuana in the past month.
- There are many opportunities to connect and communicate with children throughout the day. A car ride, a chat before bed or a family dinner are all perfect places to talk with children and adolescents about issues going on in their lives.
- The involvement of a caregiver in a child's life has been proven to increase self-esteem, self-control, and resilience. It is also associated with better social skills and improved performance in school.

What You Can Do:

- Have conversations early and often about the dangers of alcohol and other drug use. Establish clear expectations, but also make children feel comfortable talking to you about difficult topics.
- If it feels difficult to start a conversation, use an icebreaker. For example, ask "If you won the lottery, what would you do with the money?"
- Plan ahead to have sit-down meals together as a family, even if you can only do so a few times a week. The more involved you can get children the better, so try making the meals as a team!
- Practice active listening skills such as maintaining eye contact and repeating back the main points. Put away cell phones and other distractions. A child who feels that they are being heard is more likely to open up and share what's really going on.
- Know the signs of alcohol and other drug use: problems in school, changing friend groups, changes in mood, isolation, loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities and changes in sleep and eating habits are just a few.
- For more information, visit www.casafamilyday.org or www.eccpasa.org.

Sources: www.casafamilyday.org; www.niaaa.nih.gov; www.teens.drugabuse.gov; www.centeronaddiction.org

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