

September 14, 2012

Living Well

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Celebrate Family Day

As many American families have become busier and busier, the tradition of eating a family meal together is often put on the back burner. I would encourage you to celebrate Family Day on Monday, September 24th, by eating dinner together as a family.

Family Day was launched in 2001 by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University as a national effort to remind parents that the parental engagement fostered during frequent family dinners is a simple, yet effective way to help keep kids substance free. A decade of research conducted by CASA has found that the more often kids eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink, or use drugs. Additionally, children and youth who eat dinner with their families 5 to 7 times a week are more likely to do well in school, have positive peer relationships, have lower levels of stress, be bored less often, and be at a lower risk for thoughts of suicide.

The conversations and interactions that go hand-in-hand with family dinner will help parents learn more about their children's lives and help them to better understand the challenges they face. Do you need conversation starters to use at the dinner table? Consider these ideas:

*What is the best and worst thing that happened today?

*If you could have any superpower, what would it be?

*What is your favorite thing you learned today?

*If you could live in any time period, which one would it be?

*What is one thing you want to accomplish in your lifetime?

*What book are you reading right now? What do you like about it? What do you dislike about it?

Because family dinners do make a difference, I would encourage you to eat dinner together as a family on Monday, September 24th. For more information or other ideas for celebrating Family Day, visit CASAFamilyDay.org or contact the Flint Hills Extension District office in Council Grove at (620) 767-5136 or the office in Cottonwood Falls at (620) 273-6491.

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