



Dear Educators:

Believe it or not, we are beyond the middle of December. This means the holiday season is moving into high gear. Remember that, no matter one's faith, the holiday season represents an opportunity to spend time together and reflect on the past year. My girls are three and are extremely excited about the holidays. My wife and I are attempting to fight the commercialism that pervades the holiday season; this is a difficult task and requires a daily conversation. Thus, we are using props related to our Christian faith, such as an advent wreath, a stocking for baby Jesus, and readings that are focused on the meaning of the season.

Regardless of your faith, take time to set reminders about what matters most for your family values.

Sincerely,

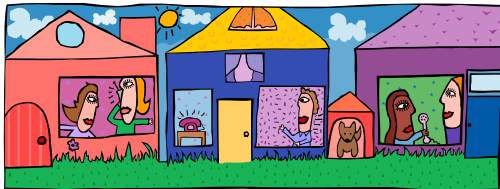
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FAMILY ACTIVITY

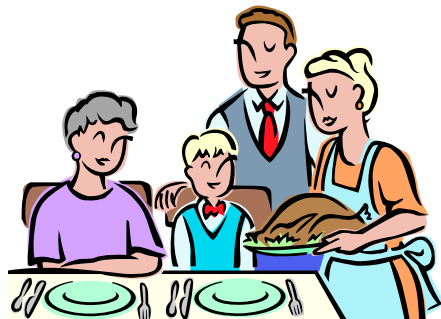
Take time to do something special for your neighbors. Whether it is cooking, creating, or visiting, take time to strengthen your relationships among your neighbors is one way to foster good will.



RESEARCH BRIEFS

Family Dining Matters

One opportunity for families to build strong parent-child relationships and family connectedness is through family meals. Indeed, there is a link between frequent family dinners and positive teen outcomes. Youth who eat meals with their family on a regular basis are less likely to get into fights, think about suicide, smoke, drink, use drugs, and are likely to initiate sexual activity at a later age, and have better academic performance than teens that do not. Many scholars theorize that families eating together are indicative of parents being involved in their children's lives.



In 2003, less than half (42%) of youth ages 12 to 17 ate a meal as a family six to seven days a week. Moreover, 27% percent ate a meal as a family four to five days a week. Almost a third (31%) of youth reported eating meals as a family zero to three days a week. For children, ages 6 to 11, the number that ate family meals was higher with 56% eating a meal as a family six to seven days a week. This was followed by 25% eating a meal as a family four to five days a week, and 20% eating a meal as a family zero to three days a week.

According Child Trends, a number of factors affect whether or not families dine together: where you are born, race/ethnicity, ages, and poverty.

Found in: Child Trends (2005). *Family Meals*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved 11/11/05 at: http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/pdf/96_PDF.pdf. The data are 2003 state estimates for number of days family members in a household ate a meal together. These are available through the National Survey of Children's Health.

What Teens Really Think

According to a recent poll of youth from Washington DC, youth view the future as a mixed bag, positive and negative, and very concerned about the direction of the country and the world. Indeed most youth believe there will be another terrorist attack as big as or bigger than September 11 sometime in their life and a quarter believes that a nuclear war will take place. The poll of 800 young people and their parents was conducted by The Washington Post, the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard University.

The majority of Washington youth say pollution, AIDS, drug abuse, immorality and divorce will be worse by the time they are middle-aged. Simultaneously, they are high on optimism and self-confidence about their own future in the dangerous world they will inherit. Most of their beliefs are realistic; that is, most youth expect that just about everything, from a new house to a college education, will cost more when they are their parents' age.

Youth believe the country's best years lie ahead with the world being more racially and sexually tolerant and accepting when they are in charge. The views found in this poll are very similar to other polls conducted across the country. This finding is so surprising because youth from this region are richer, better educated and more diverse than the country as a whole. Similar majorities of youth believe the country is headed in the wrong direction, yet over 60% believe this is a good time to be growing up.

Regardless of who they are, most youth do not view their race or gender as a roadblock to success. Approximately 75% of white youth report that now is a good time to be growing up, compared to 54% blacks. Another noted difference is that black youth are far less trusting of major institutions than white teens, with one notable exception: organized religion. The vast majority of black youth say they have great confidence in religious institutions while slightly more than one-third of whites are equally enthusiastic.

Found in: Morin (2005, October 23). *What Teens Really Think*. Washington, DC: Washington Post (page W14). Retrieved 11/03/05 at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/18/AR2005101801698_pf.html

WEB RESOURCES

Resources for Educators

NIDA Goes Back to School

www.BacktoSchool.drugabuse.gov

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has launched a campaign entitled, NIDA Goes Back to School. This campaign was created for children, teens, and the adults who influence them, including science/health teachers, curriculum developers, science chairpersons, school nurses/counselors, and youth-health advocates. The campaign is a source for free science-based publications and teaching materials for grades K-12. The materials emphasize the consequences of drug abuse on the brain and the body, and aim to increase scientific literacy.



Better Safe Than Sorry--Preventing a Tragedy: A Science and Health Curriculum

<http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/Science/curriculum.html>

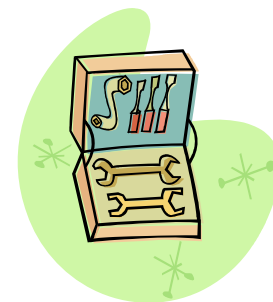
This highly engaging, flexible (1-4 class periods), inquiry-based curriculum module was developed by researchers at UNC-Chapel Hill as well as teachers and other educational consultants. Materials and lessons are adapted for use in a middle school science classroom, aligned with the National Science Education Standards (NSES) and are based on current research relevant to a life-science curriculum. All kits are FREE and include guided teacher instructions for implementation, data tables and background materials, a video with guided lab instruction and background on FAS, a CD-ROM with all hardcopy materials and a post-assessment game, color transparencies, brochures, and ordering information for an accompanying hands-on experiment involving varying concentration levels of ethanol and the growth and development of brine shrimp. All components are available for current download, and will soon be made available for shipment through Carolina Biological Supply Company.

Activities and Resources Relate to Adolescent Health

http://nahic.ucsf.edu/index.php/partner_resources/

The *National Initiative to Improve Adolescent Health by the Year 2010* has developed an online tool that provides a comprehensive listing of activities and resources from NIAAH partner organizations. It is designed to help users locate the many adolescent health resources available from NIAAH partners. The resources are organized in three ways: by Activity Category, by Topic Area and by Organization.

Throughout the Partner Resources pages, we include "jump to" menus to help users locate resources more quickly. Please contact NAHIC (phone: 415-502-4856; email: nahic@itsa.ucsf.edu) with any questions about using this tool.



New Online Youth Program Planning Tool

<http://ag.arizona.edu/fcs/bpy/assessment.html>

The Building Partnerships for Youth Project has developed an assessment tool to help administrators and program personnel assess their program's ability to address each of the 21 elements of youth development. They can then use this information to make informed decision about the direction of youth program content. This short on-line self-assessment provides an immediate feedback report. Access to resources that address the 21 elements are on the site and include: fact sheets, e-bulletins, and training archives. By early 2006, each report will include:

- Sample lesson plans
- Helpful web links
- Relevant research
- Suggested curricula



Complementary Learning

<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/issue29>

The new issue of Harvard Family Research Project's periodical, "The Evaluation Exchange," introduces "complementary learning." This is the idea that narrowing the achievement gap requires solid and sustained investments in non-school learning supports, such as early care and education, families, after school programs, libraries, museums, and other community-based supports. Complementary learning also calls for school and non-school supports to link and align so they complement one another as well as schools and no longer operate in isolation. The issue delves into the evidence base behind complementary learning and then examines mechanisms that can create effective linkages between learning contexts--mechanisms such as family involvement, technology, professional development, and diverse funding streams. Articles in this issue also highlight promising approaches for evaluating complementary learning practices and programs, both in terms of what outcomes to focus on and what methodologies to use.



Youth development: Strengthening prevention strategies

<http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/iag/ythdevelop.htm>

This is a document that highlights how prevention and positive youth development strategies can work together. This is a useful article that would help in writing grants where you are linking your youth development programming with prevention.

New Tools for Frontline Youth Workers

<http://www.nydic.org/nydic/documents/Tool%20FINAL.pdf> (Longer Tool)

<http://www.nydic.org/nydic/documents/CompetCards%20for%20webNCY.pdf> (shorter Tool)

National Collaboration for Youth is pleased to release two new assessment tools to accompany the ten competencies for front line youth workers adopted by members of the in 2004. The [longer tool](#) can be used in multiple ways, for example, as a training outline to assist trainers in describing an organization's expectations for youth worker behavior and attitudes. The [shorter tool](#) is designed to be carried around and used on the job.

Adolescents are Dropping Out

http://www.csos.jhu.edu/tdhs/rsch/Locating_Dropouts.pdf

New research on graduation rates finds serious cracks in "the only real and lasting pipeline out of poverty in modern America--a solid high school education followed by post secondary schooling or training." At roughly 900 to 1,000 high schools in the country, graduating is at best a 50/50 proposition, according to researchers at Johns Hopkins University. Most are high-poverty schools in northern or western cities and in areas throughout the south. While nearly half of the country's African American students and two out of five Latino students attend one of these schools, high dropout rates do not appear to be race-related. Schools with a "minority majority" and resources graduate students at rates comparable to white majority schools.

POLICY BRIEF

<http://www.nassembly.org/fspc/practice/practices.html>

The Family Strengthening Policy Center aims to make family strengthening a priority by mainstreaming neighborhood-based, family-centered practices, programs and policy. A central information tool of the Center is policy briefs. Titles of briefs include: Introduction to Family Strengthening, Connecting Families, Schools and Community Resources, Parental Involvement in Education, Community Violence Prevention as a Family Strengthening Strategy, and Family Strengthening in Youth Development. These practice-driven policy briefs highlight emerging, promising, and proven practices in the field of family strengthening.

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

Max and Anna Levinson Foundation

http://www.levinsonfoundation.org/?How_to_Apply

They fund social programming in areas including: protection of civil rights and immigrants' rights; local economic development and responses to globalization; empowerment of youth; and community health and violence prevention. Need to be a 501(c)(3) to apply for funding. Grants are currently awarded once a year and are mostly in the \$10,000 to \$20,000 range. The deadline is April 1st of each year.



Harry Chapin Foundation

<http://fdncenter.org/grantmaker/harrychapin/>

Harry Chapin Foundation addresses the problems of the disadvantaged and promotes educational programs that lead to a greater understanding of human suffering. The Foundation focuses its funding program in the following areas:

- Community education, programs to identify community needs and mobilize resources to meet them, fostering social and economic justice;
- Arts in education programs and other approaches to educating young people; to create a healthier and more peaceful world;
- Agricultural programs that support the preservation of individually-owned farms; support for citizen organizations that promote equitable food production and distribution;
- Environmental programs that promote a safe and sustainable environment.



Please check out the FYRP website:

<http://resiliency.cas.psu.edu>



This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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