

• *Communicate*

• *Role Model*

• *Become Involved*

Give the Gift of Time

The holidays are associated with fun and excitement and it is a perfect opportunity to spend time with family. Give the priceless gift of time to your children this season - involve them in your holiday cooking, watch a movie together, volunteer as a family, go tobogganing, have a family game night. Spending time together is one of the most important things you can do to safeguard your children. Many studies have found that positive relationships or connectedness between parents and adolescents is linked to avoidance or lower use of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs.

As you celebrate the holidays with family and friends be sure to keep safety in mind. Although a joyful season, this time of year is among the most dangerous seasons with the widespread availability of alcohol at holiday parties and the increase in impaired driving. Pay attention to your teen's activities - Are they heading to a friend's holiday party? Verify. If you've set a curfew, be sure to enforce it. Restrict driving in bad weather. If you host a party for adults that involves alcohol, be sure that your teenagers and younger children know the rules about alcohol and eliminate opportunities for them to have access to alcohol.



Make the holidays about ensuring a safe environment for your family and being aware of the example you are setting. Spend time with your children and make family activities that you enjoy during the holidays a regular pastime. It can sometimes be difficult to find time in our busy schedules, but it is well worth it!



Have a safe and happy holiday season!

PREVENTION TIPS

For the Holidays and Year Round

If you are hosting a party for adults and serving alcohol:

- **Serve food and a variety of alcohol-free beverages.** Many guests will prefer to drink alcohol-free drinks. Others might decide to start with alcoholic drinks but switch to alcohol-free drinks to make sure they will be able to drive safely.
- **Have only one person serve alcohol.** The server will be more aware of how much alcohol people are drinking. Tell this person not to serve to anyone under the age of 19.
- **Serve coffee, tea, and desserts during the last hour of the party.** This will encourage people who have had too much to drink to stay longer. Only time can reduce the effects of alcohol.
- **Have arrangements for your guests who decide to drink alcohol.** If you think your guests might drink alcohol at the party, make arrangements with them so they won't be tempted to drive after drinking. They can ride with someone else, take a taxi, or spend the night at your house.
- **Talk to your children.** If your children will be home during the party, remind them that some adults at the party may choose to have a drink of alcohol, but that underage drinking isn't accepted by you. If someone at your party drinks too much, talk to your children the next day about that person's behaviour and the altering effects of alcohol.

"Each day of our lives we make deposits in the memory banks of our children"

Charles R. Swindoll



Adapted from: Party Tips For Parents, West Vancouver Substance Abuse Prevention Initiative

[Click here for Alcohol Free Drink Recipes](#)

In This Issue:

Share with Family	1	Ask an Expert	2
Prevention Tips	1	Resources	2
Community Corner	2		

ASK AN EXPERT

How important is family connectedness in the prevention of substance use and other risky behaviour?

It is important to remember that parents and family members are the most powerful influence in a child's life. The family is the place where children learn who they are and how they relate to the world. It is in the context of the family that expectations and rules are communicated. It is where children develop a value system. Most of all, healthy families provide the love and support that nurtures children as they move towards adulthood.

Strong family connection provides opportunity for open communication between parent and child. A close relationship with your children encourages them to come to you for help in making decisions that impact their well-being. Today, youth are bombarded with unhealthy and confusing messages about drugs, alcohol, sexuality, and violence. Healthy family communication creates dialogue about these confusing messages and then helps youth make positive choices.

A family that develops caring and supportive relationships can also lessen the risk of their children being swept along by a strong peer culture that often promotes substance abuse and risky behaviour. Unsupervised children have more opportunities to experiment with risky behaviours, including the use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. They are also at risk for starting substance abuse at earlier ages.

Lorinda Strang, the Director of the Orchard Recovery Center, offers an important message about family connection. "Letting your children know what your family values are, is vital. The message must be consistent and they need to know that you care if they falter. Lead by example. Getting to know their friends, talking, laughing and listening help you to stay connected through the teen years."

Carrie De Jong, M.C.
Addiction Counsellor
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RESOURCES

1. Search Institute, 2006, [Parenting with a Purpose: A Positive Approach for Raising Confident, Caring Youth](#)

For synopsis and to order: searchinstitute.org

2. Jolene L. Roehlkepartain, [Parenting Preschoolers with a Purpose: Caring for Your Kids & Yourself](#)

For synopsis and to order: searchinstitute.org

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COMMUNITY CORNER

Campbell River Family Dinners Project

Do you eat dinner together? That is the question the Community Alcohol and Drug Action Committee (CADAC) is asking the community of Campbell River.

CADAC developed *The Family Dinners Project* which is funded by Success by 6. It is based on research that indicates that family dinners can make a big difference in the lives of teenagers and the choices they make relating to substance use. The project is two fold. The first component is the Community Education portion. Through posters, articles and presentations, the community is given information on the importance of eating dinner together as a family as a way to connect with their children and also build resiliency. We encourage them to start young and make dinners a part of their family routine.

The Second component of the project is the Community Kitchen. The kitchen coordinator, along with a volunteer prepares and eats dinner with a couple of families. The program runs for about 8 weeks. Most of the families referred into this program are at high risk for substance abuse issues and have little experience eating dinner as a family. Our main goal is to model for families the dynamics of sitting down, eating and connecting as a family over dinner. The families also learn about buying and preparing nutritious, affordable meals.

For more information on this project contact Denise at the John Howard Society North Island at 250-286-0611 or e-mail crcadac@yahoo.ca. For more information on The Importance of Family Dinners go to www.casacolumbia.org

If your community has a substance abuse prevention event or activity you'd like to share with our readers, please contact Cathy Mah at cathymah@ades.bc.ca © 2007



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