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Evidence-based Prevention Programs



Violence Prevention News



Hazelden Publishing Announces a Strategic Alliance with the National Association of Elementary School Principals Foundation

Hazelden Publishing, the leading publisher of evidence-based programs and curricula for youth substance use prevention and violence prevention, announces a strategic alliance with the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) Foundation.

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Substance Abuse Prevention News

Drinking by Young Teens may set the Stage for Addiction

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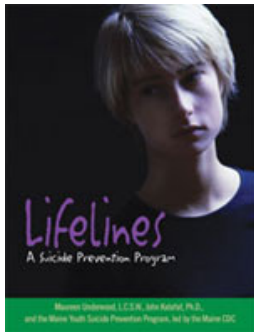
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CASA Report: Teens Who Have Infrequent Family Dinners Are More Likely to Drink, Smoke, and Use Drugs

Compared to teens who have frequent family dinners (five or more per week), those who have infrequent family dinners (fewer than three per week) are twice as likely to use tobacco or marijuana; more than one and a half times likelier to use alcohol; and twice as likely to expect to try drugs in the future, according to *The Importance of Family Dinners V*, a report by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University.

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Product Highlight



Lifelines: A Suicide Prevention Program

According to the Centers for Disease Control, suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people ages 15-24. Lifelines is a whole-school program that addresses this important issue by providing suicide awareness resources for administrators, faculty and staff, parents, and students.

Program components include materials for administrative consultation, faculty and staff training, a parent workshop, and a student curriculum. Videos depict scenarios of student responses to a suicidal peer, as well as an actual response by students who had participated in *Lifelines*.

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The World's
Foremost
Bullying
Prevention
Program

Reduce bullying
by 50% or more.

Upcoming Events

6th Annual IBPA Conference: Best Practices for Bullying Prevention and School Violence

Date: November 16-18, 2009

Location: Omni William Penn Hotel – Pittsburgh, PA

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News and Notes

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To purchase these and other prevention products, visit hazelden.org/bookstore or call 800-328-9000.

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Established in 1921, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) serves more than 25,000 elementary and middle school principals in the United States, Canada, and overseas. NAESP leads in the advocacy and support for elementary and middle-level principals and other education leaders in their commitment to all children.

Through this unique collaboration, Hazelden Publishing and the NAESP Foundation will be working together to address major issues that affect children's social and emotional well-being and academic achievement, including bullying and other violence, mental health issues, and substance abuse. The two organizations will be hosting Webinars, developing joint publications, and working with NAESP affiliate offices to bring needed resources to state education leaders.

"This is the right idea at the right time with the right partners," said Ernest Mannino, executive director of the NAESP Foundation. "The necessary focus on educating the whole child requires collaboration between established leaders in the field. The NAESP Foundation and Hazelden will bring contemporary evidence-based resources to the entire education community."

"We are pleased to be working with the NAESP Foundation to bring high-quality, evidence-based programs to schools across the country, addressing some of the key issues affecting children and teens today," said Sue Thomas, manager of Business Development at Hazelden Publishing.

Hazelden Publishing has a number of evidence-based programs that address key issues facing children and teens today. These resources will be distributed through NAESP's online resource center and through special arrangements with interested state affiliate offices. These programs include the award-winning *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program*, the *Peaceful School Bus Program*, and other resources.



For more information about the *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* as well as other violence and substance use prevention resources, [visit us online](#) or call 800-328-9000.

[return to top](#)

Drinking by Young Teens may set the Stage for Addiction

The age at which a person takes a first drink may influence genes linked to alcoholism, making the youngest drinkers the most susceptible to severe problems.

A team of researchers, led by scientists at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, studied 6,257 adult twins from Australia. They wanted to learn whether twins who start drinking at an early age are more likely to develop a more heritable form of alcohol dependence than those who begin drinking later in life. The researchers found that the younger an individual was at first drink, the greater the risk for alcohol dependence and the more prominent the role played by genetic factors.

"There seemed to be a greater genetic influence in those who took their first full drink at a younger age," says first author Arpana Agrawal, Ph.D. "That's very consistent with what has been predicted in the literature and in the classification of types of alcohol dependence, but we present a unique test of the hypothesis."

Agrawal and her colleagues examined previously collected data from identical and fraternal, male and female twins, using statistical methods to measure the extent to which age at first drink changed the role of heritable influences on symptoms of alcohol dependence. Using the twin model, they were able to tease out genetic influences, shared environmental influences and non-shared environmental factors.

Agrawal's team found that when twins started drinking early, genetic factors contributed greatly to risk for alcohol dependence, at rates as high as 90 percent in the youngest drinkers. For those who started drinking at older ages, genes explained much less, and environmental factors that make twins different from each other, such as unique life events, gained prominence.

The twins in the study were 24 to 36 years old when they were interviewed, but some reported taking their first drink as young as age 5 or 6. The researchers found that those who were 15 or younger when they started drinking tended to have a greater genetic risk for alcohol dependence. Some who were 16 or older before they took their first drink later became alcohol dependent, but their dependence was related more to environmental factors.

"We don't have actual gene expression data in this study, but we could hypothesize that exposure to early-onset drinking somehow modifies the developing brain," Agrawal says. "Particularly frequent or heavy early drinking may influence gene expression and contribute to more severe outcomes. Our research cannot prove that, but it's something that neuro-imaging and gene expression studies certainly should investigate."

Another possibility is that early drinking exposes adolescents to certain environment influences, such as their peer groups, that somehow enhance genetic influences that contribute to risk for alcohol dependence.

"Something about starting to drink at an early age puts young people at risk for later problems associated with drinking," Agrawal says. "We continue to investigate the mechanisms, but encouraging youth to delay their drinking debut may help."

"Some early-onset drinkers do not develop alcohol problems and some late-onset drinkers do--we are working on why that is the case, but it is important to note that this is one risk factor among many and does not determine whether a person will, or will not, develop alcohol dependence," says Agrawal, an assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry. "But age at first drink is a well-known risk factor, and there have been two main hypotheses about why: One has been that common genetic and environmental factors contribute both to the risk for alcohol dependence and to the likelihood a person will be younger when consuming their first drink. A second hypothesis suggests starting to drink at a younger age exerts an influence on alcohol dependence that is independent of these shared factors. Our findings suggest there may be some truth to both hypotheses."

Agrawal says studying twins offers advantages when attempting to learn about genetic and environmental influences on alcohol dependence. Since identical twins share 100 percent of their DNA, differences in drinking behavior between a pair of twins must come from environmental factors. Similarities between identical twins tend to be influenced by genes and family environment.

"Particularly identical twins offer us the opportunity to study the perfect natural experiment of genetically identical individuals whose drinking trajectories are modified by their shared and unique life experiences," she explains. "They are important assets in the study of complex behaviors, such as alcohol consumption."

Hazelden offers a comprehensive line of prevention programs that address the importance of preventing and treating adolescent alcohol and drug use. Visit the Hazelden [Bookstore Web site](#) to learn more.

SOURCE: Washington University in St. Louis, School of Medicine

[return to top](#)

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Compared to teens who have frequent family dinners (five or more per week), those who have infrequent family dinners (fewer than three per week) are twice as likely to use tobacco or marijuana; more than one and a half times likelier to use alcohol; and twice as likely to expect to try drugs in the future, according to *The Importance of Family Dinners V*, a report by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University.

The CASA report also found that compared to teens who have frequent family dinners, those who have infrequent family dinners are more than twice as likely to be able to get marijuana in an hour and one and a half times likelier to be able to get prescription drugs to get high within an hour.

The report reveals that compared to teens who have frequent family dinners without distractions at the table (talking or texting on a cell phone, using a Blackberry, laptop or Game Boy), those who have infrequent family dinners and say there are distractions at the table are three times likelier to use marijuana and tobacco, and two and a half times likelier to use alcohol.

The report also found that compared to teens who have five to seven family dinners per week, those who have fewer than three family dinners per week are:

- Twice as likely to have friends who use marijuana and Ecstasy;
- More than one and a half times likelier to have friends who drink, abuse prescription drugs, and use meth; and
- Almost one and a half times likelier to have friends who use illegal drugs like cocaine, acid and heroin.

"The magic of the family dinner comes not from the food on the plate but from who's at the table and what's happening there. The emotional and social benefits that come from family dinners are priceless," said Elizabeth Planet, CASA's Vice President and Director of Special Projects. "We know that teens who have frequent family dinners are likelier to get A's and B's in school and have excellent relationships with their parents. Having dinner as a family is one of the easiest ways to create routine opportunities for parental engagement and communication, two keys to raising drug-free children."

This year, 59 percent of teens report having dinner with their families at least five times a week. Consistent with what teens report, 62 percent of parents say they have frequent family dinners. Findings in *The Importance of Family Dinners V* come from CASA's 14th annual back to school survey, National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse XIV: Teens and Parents.

Family Dinners and Parental Attitudes and Behaviors on Alcohol

The report found that compared to teens who have five to seven family dinners per week, those who have fewer than three family dinners per week are more than one and a half times likelier to have seen their parent(s) drunk and to think their father is okay with them drinking.

Teens who think their fathers are okay with their drinking are likelier to drink and get drunk than teens who believe their fathers are against their drinking. Teens who have seen their parent(s) drunk are likelier to drink, get drunk, and try cigarettes and marijuana, compared to teens who have not seen their parent(s) drunk.

The Family Dinner

The average family dinner lasts about 35 minutes. Twenty-eight percent of teens say their family dinners usually last less than half an hour, 34 percent say they last half an hour, and 35 percent of teens say their family dinners usually last more than half an hour.

"The bad news in this year's survey is that work and other activities keep many families from getting to the table for frequent family dinners. But the good news is that most of these teens and parents would be willing to give up a weeknight activity to have dinner with their family," said Joseph A. Califano, Jr., CASA's founder and chairman and former U.S. Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. "Over the past decade and a half of surveying thousands of American teens and their parents, we've learned that the more often children have dinner with their parents, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use drugs. I urge parents to arrange their schedules and the outside activities so that they can have frequent family dinners. If they do so, they'll discover what a difference dinner makes."

Other Notable Findings

- Compared to 12- and 13-year olds who have frequent family dinners, those who have infrequent family dinners are six times likelier to use marijuana, four times likelier to use tobacco, and three times likelier to use alcohol.
- Compared to teens who attend religious services at least weekly, those who never attend services are more than twice as likely to try cigarettes, and twice as likely to try marijuana and alcohol.
- Compared to teens who have frequent family dinners, those who have infrequent family dinners are one and a half times likelier to report getting grades of C or lower in school...

"Of course there are no silver bullets; teen substance abuse can strike any family. But with everyone living such busy lives these days, the family dinner becomes an important tool to raising drug-free children because gathering around the table as a family shows kids just how much their parents care about them and sends a message that their parents are there for them," noted Califano.

SOURCE: The National Center on Addiction and Substance

[return to top](#)

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