

# Marshall County Family Resource Network, Inc.



www.marshallcountyfrn.com

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## **Eat Dinner with Your Kids, Help Them Stay Off Drugs**

MOUNDSVILLE – Want to know a good way to reduce your kids’ chances of using drugs? Eat dinner with them frequently.

The Marshall County Family Resource Network wants to remind parents that Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children is Monday, Sept. 28.

Family Day is a national movement sponsored by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University, now in its eighth year. It encourages parents to keep engaged with their children – and substance free – by having frequent dinners where the whole family eats with each other. CASA research shows that frequent family dining – whether it’s at home or at a restaurant – is associated with lower rates of teen smoking, drinking, illegal drug use and prescription drug abuse. Just dining with your kids five times a week makes it:

- three and a half times likelier to have abused prescription drugs
- three and a half times likelier to have used an illegal drug other than marijuana or prescription drugs
- three times likelier to have used marijuana
- more than two and a half times likely to have used tobacco
- one and a half times likelier to have used alcohol

“If I could wave a magic wand to make a dent in our nation’s substance abuse problem, I would make sure that every child in America had dinner with his or her parents at least five times a week,” said CASA’s Joseph A. Califano Jr.

CASA suggests the following seven steps to jump start your Family Dinner Day, not just on Sept. 28 but always:

1. Start the pattern of family dinners when children are young.
2. Encourage your children to create menu ideas and participate in meal preparation.

3. Turn off the TV and let your answering machine answer calls during dinnertime.
4. Talk about what happened in everyone's day: school, work, extracurricular activities or current events.
5. Establish a routine to start and end each meal. Light candles or tell a story.
6. After dinner play a board game or serve dessert to encourage the family to continue the conversation.
7. Keep conversation positive and make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.

The idea is not just to have dinner together on Sept. 28 but to make it a family habit. Your children will thank you for it.

You can pledge to do your part at [casafamilyday.org](http://casafamilyday.org).