



CENTRE COUNTY PREVENTION COALITION
A SAMHSA Funded Drug-Free Community Coalition
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With fall just around the corner, kids are trying to squeeze out every last minute of sunshine, because they know the days are getting shorter. Adults are ready for the weather to get just a little colder, so the grass doesn't grow quite so much, so there are more days between mowing.

As the lazy days of summer draw to a close, the pace seems to pick up for everyone in the family. School, homework, sports, music lessons—the list goes on and on. Do you ever feel like you're so busy preparing your kids, your family, yourself for the future that you've lost the present?

Many of the articles in this series talk about spending time with your kids. The following ideas come from a community group out of Wazyata, Minnesota called "Family Life First."

- Limit your kids' activities. Never have there been so many options to keep our kids busy! Have your child select one activity per season or per year and perhaps something different next year. There's less pressure on them and the family can spend more time together.
- Limit yourself! Not only does this set a good example for your children, but allows you to have more time with your family. You can't be there for your kids, if you're not even there.
- Kill the TV. Turn the TV off during meals and enjoy your time together without the background noise. Take one or two nights per week and turn it off. Enjoy reading, talking, listening to music, or other activities that you don't normally get to do together.
- Sunday brunch. Plan a fancy spread for this once a week occasion. Attendance is mandatory and everyone gets a chance to share the events of their week.
- Get your sleep. Most research recommends 7 to 8 hours per night. If you are well rested, you'll feel calm and relaxed – and ready to do things with your family.
- Family fun night. Watch a movie together, and then discuss the characters and messages. Play board games or create your own, like a scavenger hunt where you have to find specific items around the house. Games that require you to work together will build relationships and open the lines of communication.
- Your time together as a family is precious. As you prepare for the upcoming school year, give your family a "time-out" and enjoy each other! You'll appreciate it in the long run.

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