

# School Social Work Newsletter

## HEALTHY SUMMER VACATIONS

With summertime quickly approaching, we need to recognize that unless we plan activities that stimulate, challenge and support new learning, we can be setting older children up for engaging in unhealthy experimentation or use of alcohol, drugs and or other unhealthy behaviors. It is best to structure vacation time in a way that will enhance new learning, increase the amount and quality of family time, offer a sense of adventure and provide appropriate supervision. This will help ensure their summer promotes mental, physical and emotional health.

For all children, summer vacation does not mean learning stops. In fact, summer vacation is a prime opportunity to step up the educational process in unique and interesting ways.

## Ideas to promote safe and healthy summers

We can give our youth novel experiences that generate protective factors such as life satisfaction, personal growth and self-acceptance as well as self-worth.

- ◆ Organize summertime reading on a daily basis.
- ◆ Challenge your children to achieve age-appropriate autonomy by letting them manage their own activities of daily living. This is an opportunity for them to develop better judgement.
- ◆ Camps, concerts, festivals, carnivals and fairs are a rich source of entertainment and provide enriching experiences. Summertime travel provides educational opportunities and adventures for all ages. Family time together builds bonds, security and roots from which our children can sprout wings.



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### COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Long Island Crisis Center  
516 679 1111

Nassau County Chemical Dependency  
516 227 TALK

Youth and Family Counseling  
516 922 6867

Long Island Council of Alcoholism  
and Drug Dependence - LICADD  
516 747 2606

# ALCOHOL FAST FACTS

- ◆ In New York State, if you are under the age of 21, alcohol is illegal to purchase and consume.
- ◆ Because the brain does not fully mature until the age of 25, consuming alcohol can have devastating effects. Specifically, it interferes with executive functioning; areas such as impulse control, maintaining attention and judgement to name a few.
- ◆ Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug among youth in the United States.
- ◆ Excessive drinking is responsible for more than 4,300 deaths among underage youth each year.
- ◆ Although drinking by persons under the age of 21 is illegal, people aged 12 to 20 years drink 11% of all alcohol consumed in the United States. More than 90% of this alcohol is consumed in the form of binge drinks.
- ◆ On average, underage drinkers consume more drinks per drinking occasion than adult drinkers.
- ◆ In 2010, there were approximately 189,000 emergency room visits by persons under age 21 for injuries and other conditions linked to alcohol.

## Consequences of underage drinking

- ◇ School problems, such as higher absence and poor or failing grades.
- ◇ Social problems, such as fighting and lack of participation in youth activities.
- ◇ Legal problems, such as arrest for driving or physically hurting someone while drunk.
- ◇ Physical problems, such as hangovers or illnesses.
- ◇ Unwanted, unplanned, and unprotected sexual activity.
- ◇ Disruption of normal growth and sexual development.
- ◇ Physical and sexual assault.
- ◇ Higher risk for suicide and homicide.
- ◇ Alcohol-related car crashes and other unintentional injuries, such as burns, falls, and drowning.
- ◇ Memory problems.
- ◇ Abuse of other drugs.
- ◇ Alcohol and/or drug addiction.

**IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR CHILD IS ABUSING ALCOHOL  
YOU ARE PROBABLY RIGHT**

### PREVENTING TEEN ALCOHOL USE/ABUSE

- ⇒ Discuss as a family things to do together on the weekend or make plans for a family summer vacation.
- ⇒ Learn the names and background of all your teen's friends.
- ⇒ Communicate with the parents of your teen's friends and make sure they know your wishes about not allowing alcohol and drug use.
- ⇒ Set clear rules, including rules about alcohol and drug use. Enforce the rules you set.
- ⇒ Know where your children are, what they are doing, whom they are with, and whom they are friends with.
- ⇒ Research activities together that your teen can participate in – hopefully, pertaining to his or her interests, but also encouraging them to discover new ones.
- ⇒ Have family meals together – no eating on the run or skipping meals. Use this time to discuss what everyone did today and what plans are for tomorrow and later on in the week.
- ⇒ Check in during the day with your teen using social media, instant message, texting or a quick phone call.
- ⇒ Make time for one-on-one talks with your teen about anything or if it seems something is bothering him or her .

