

Dinner Dialogue

ALLEN COUNTY DRUG AND ALCOHOL CONSORTIUM



In This Edition

THEME OF THE MONTH

DINNER DISCUSSION IDEAS

ATOD TOPIC

WHY DINNER DIALOGUES

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

Alcohol has been classified as a Group 1 carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer.

Group 1 is the highest risk group which also includes asbestos, radiation, and tobacco.

DINNER DISCUSSION IDEAS

Tips for Talking About Politics (And How It Helps)

Half of American parents don't discuss politics with their children. But research suggests parenting plays a crucial role in political views and participation.

While most caregivers may not directly be teaching their politics to their children, research says that parenting has lasting effects on a child's future politics and participation.

Studies suggest that children primarily turn to their primary caregivers for guidance on how to assess news and that volatile politics, as we are experiencing now, are an opportunity to enhance youth political participation (since 1964, American voters in the 18-to-24 age bracket have traditionally had the lowest turnout rates).

If you find yourself discussing politics with your kids, whether initiated by you or not, here are seven tips for doing so:

1. **Center your why.** Talk about the civic values that guide your political thinking: Explain how what and who you vote for connects to these principles.
2. **Nurture critical thinking around media.** Here are some questions you could ask your kids after they see one-sided political news:
 - a. Who created this message?
 - b. Are they using facts, fear, or stereotypes?
 - c. Whose voices are not being represented?
 - d. What other media can I look to for multiple perspectives?
3. **Use specific, individualizing language, not generalizations.** If you disagree with something a politician or news broadcast says, then point out specifically why to your kids rather than using broad-brush language about a group of people. Finer details can help kids notice that *communities are not monoliths*.
4. **Find common ground.** We have a natural inclination to view ourselves as good and reasonable and others as not. Challenge your kids to ask what others value and how their views lead them to think they are good and reasonable, too.
5. **Reconsider the jokes you tell.** Disparaging humor about whole groups of people can normalize discrimination against them.
6. **Check your body language and tone.** Kids notice our subtle gestures and facial expressions. They'll take cues from how you treat neighbors with differing politics.
7. **Talk about when it's time to take a stand.** We have a responsibility to call out dehumanization by politicians. Talk to your kids about actions we can take to stand up for each other.

Alcohol, Tobacco, & Other Drugs Topic

7-12th Grade Alcohol Use in Indiana

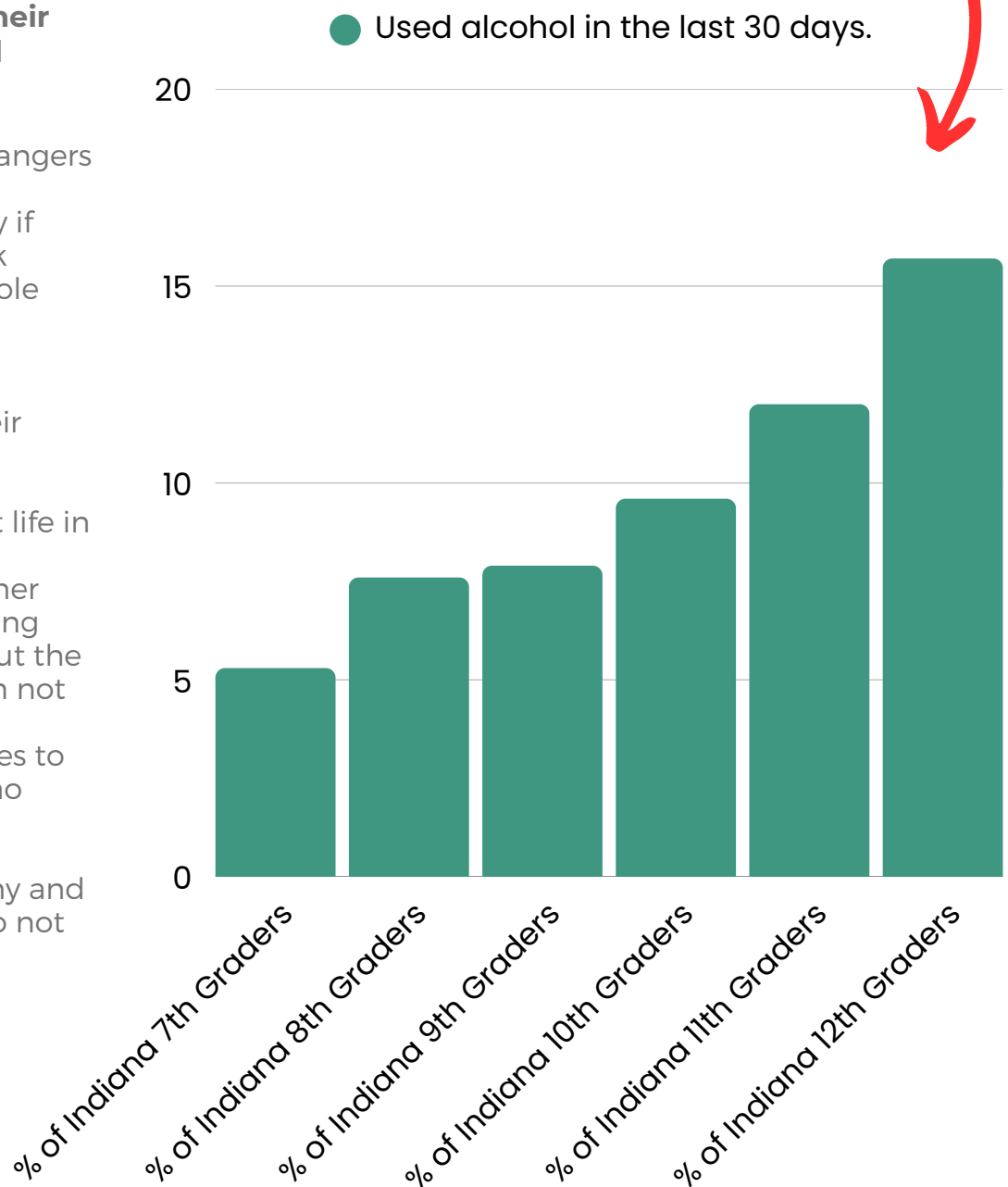
Underage drinking poses a range of risks and negative consequences. It is dangerous because it:

- Causes many deaths and injuries
- Impairs judgement
- Increases the risk of physical and sexual assault
- Can lead to other problems (such as at school or with the law)
- Increases the risk of alcohol problems later in life
- Interferes with brain development

2024 DATA!

Caregivers can help their children avoid alcohol problems by:

- Talking about the dangers of drinking
- Drinking responsibly if they choose to drink
- Serving as positive role models in general
- Not making alcohol available
- Getting to know their children’s friends
- Having regular conversations about life in general
- Connecting with other parents about sending clear messages about the importance of youth not drinking alcohol
- Supervising all parties to make sure there is no alcohol
- Encouraging kids to participate in healthy and fun activities that do not involve alcohol



Warning Signs of Underage Drinking

Adolescence is a time of change and growth, including behavior changes. These changes usually are a normal part of growing up but sometimes can point to an alcohol problem. Parents, families, and teachers should pay close attention to the following warning signs that may indicate underage drinking:

- Changes in mood, including anger and irritability
- Academic or behavioral problems in school
- Rebelliousness
- Changing groups of friends
- Low energy level
- Less interest in activities or care in appearance
- Finding alcohol among an adolescent's belongings
- Smelling alcohol on an adolescent's breath
- Problems concentrating or remembering
- Slurred speech
- Coordination problems

For more information, please visit: niaaa.nih.gov

Why Dinner Dialogues?

Consistent and open communication with your children will boost their self-esteem, improve their self-image, and empower them to make long term healthy decisions.

When they begin to feel heard and understood by the most important people in their life, they will be less likely adhere to the voice of other influences.

Youth who eat dinner with their family are less likely to:

- Use tobacco/nicotine
- Use alcohol
- Use marijuana
- Have friends that use tobacco/nicotine, alcohol, or marijuana
- Plan to use drugs in the future
- Feel depressed
- Think about suicide
- Have sex early
- Engage in risky behaviors
- Make poor decisions

Have an idea for a topic, issue, or something else you'd like to see in a future edition of Dinner Dialogues?

Please submit your anonymous feedback by scanning this QR code with your phone's camera! Alternatively, visit www.dacac.org to find the survey.

