

Dinner Dialogue

ALLEN COUNTY DRUG AND ALCOHOL CONSORTIUM



In This Edition

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WHY DINNER DIALOGUES

Fast Facts on Alcohol:

Alcohol is 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.

A 2025 Gallup poll showed only 54% of U.S. adults drink alcohol (the lowest in nearly 90 years) with a significant drop since 2022.

DINNER DISCUSSION TOPICS

Decision-Making: How to Build This Skill in Youth

All of us make decisions. *Adult* decisions may involve things like where to live, what job to have, where to shop for groceries, the best route when driving from point A to B, and how to get everyone where they need to be in the morning.

Decisions for *young children* may involve what toys to play with, what to eat first during a meal, or what friends to spend time with at school or on the playground. *Teenagers and adolescents* face decisions about what classes to take, how to spend their free time, whether or not to try drugs and alcohol, who to consider romantic relationships with, and more.

The earlier we can help our children be thoughtful about their decisions, the better! Trusting children and adolescents with decisions builds both skills and self-confidence. When they're young, less consequential decisions can help prepare them for the more significant decisions that come with the transition to adulthood. Part of making decisions is, at some point, making a decision that has negative outcomes. Learning from mistakes (without blame) and refining the decision-making process collaboratively can set them up for success and build trust in a family!

How:

- Start early; toddlers can make small decisions! Set up boundaries that build in success such as allowing them to choose what kind of fruit they have for a snack (which allows for choice but doesn't end with them eating candy all day).
- Involve your children in a dialogue about the decisions you make that affect them. Deciding whether or not to attend a classmate's birthday party? Model your decision-making process by talking with them about this decision!
- Questions many of us ask when making a decision (that you can begin asking your children):
 - What is the decision that needs to be made?
 - What are the options, including less-preferable ones?
 - What are the pros and cons of each choice?
 - Are there any rules (school policy, curfew, etc.) that need considered when making this decision?
 - How will this decision impact others?
 - What is my gut telling me to do?
 - How does that decision make me feel?
 - What is my backup plan?
- Ideas for decisions your child can begin making:
 - Allow them to pick their own clothes (as long as they are weather appropriate). This may look like selecting from two outfit options at first, then eventually may mean free-reign of the closet.
 - Allow them to choose what books they read.
 - Ask them how they'd like to celebrate their birthday. Providing ideas or options for them to decide between can help keep the celebration in budget while also providing them choice.
- Let them make- and learn from- bad decisions!
 - Don't rescue them if they wear a silly outfit, want to spend their allowance money on a toy that breaks easily or will quickly become boring, or spend their time talking to friends instead of studying for a test. These outcomes of these decisions may help them learn and refine their decision-making process.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Topic

Many Beverages You are Likely Familiar with for Their Non-Alcoholic Drinks Have Alcoholic Versions



It's Important to Keep Up

With the Ever-Evolving Markets of Alcohol, Tobacco, & Other Drugs

The drinks on the page above all have two things in common: they are brands many of us are familiar with as non-alcoholic drinks **and yet**, they all contain alcohol.

It's important to know that this category of *flavored malt beverages* is still a relatively new, yet quickly growing, category of alcoholic drinks. Millennials and Gen Z (ages 21-34) are major drivers of flavored malt beverage spending and "hard tea" specifically saw the largest growth in 2025.

Seeing a Dunkin Donuts coffee, Lipton tea, Jarritos bottle, Minute Maid juice, Jones soda, or Welch's juice in your teen's hand has historically been a normal thing that hasn't required a second-glance. These days, it's important to pay close attention to these brightly colored cans to ensure they aren't a 'spiked,' 'hard,' 'twisted,' 'seltzer,' or 'mixed' version.

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 Dialogue?

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