



July 2015 | A Special Supplement to
Urbana Daily Citizen



Family & Parenting

Managing Money
How to build your household budget

Mastering the Balancing Act
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**The Family That
Plays Together**
Weeknight activities the
whole family can enjoy



Weeknight activities the whole family can enjoy



Many families have their own routines on weeknights. Kids may tackle their homework before dinner, and once everyone's plate is clean, family members may spend time together or go their separate ways, spending time online with friends or watching their favorite television programs on the couch.

Parents who feel their weeknights don't include enough family time are often on the hunt for more family-friendly activities the whole family can enjoy even if everyone has to go to work or school the next day. The following are a handful of family-friendly weeknight activities that can bring families closer together.

Movie night: Family movie night is a tradition for many families, and parents who want to spend more time together as families may find that movie night is a great way to share a few laughs or even facilitate discussions about important topics broached in certain films. Each week let a different family member pick that week's movie and ask him or her to explain his or her choice and why they think it's a film the whole family will enjoy. Let the kids join you as you get the popcorn ready or make special treats to enjoy while the movie is playing.

Family walk: Walking is a great way for parents to instill a love of physical activity in their children, and nightly walks also make great opportunities for families to leave their devices behind and discuss the goings-on in their lives. Weather permitting, take a family walk after dinner each night, which can help make your family healthier and strengthen the bonds between family

members.

Writing activities: Another way families can escape their devices and resist the temptation of social media on weeknights is to get together for weekly writing sessions. Ask each family member to create brief lists on a range of topics, whether it's a list of favorite books or countries each person wants to visit or a bucket list of things each family member wants to do at one point in their lives. Allow about 15 minutes for each person to write his or her lists, and then discuss each person's list, including the inspiration behind each item that made it onto the lists.

Game night: Classic board games or games like checkers might not be as popular today as they were prior to the advent of the Internet, but that does not mean a night centered around such games does not still make for a very family-friendly evening. Stock up on some classic board games and share the responsibility of choosing which game to play each week. Board games can take up to a few hours to play, and that's a great opportunity for families to share some laughs without being interrupted by their devices.

Crafts night: Arts and crafts night is another great way for families to spend time together. Parents can choose age-appropriate projects that can help kids and adults alike tap into their creative sides. Solicit ideas when planning crafts night so everyone feels like they played their part. Nights together as a family do not need to be limited to weekends. Parents willing to get a little creative can enjoy family-friendly evenings no matter what day it happens to be.

Encourage a love of physical activity in youngsters



Parents who resolve to exercise with their children may find their youngsters more receptive to the daily physical activity they need to promote long-term health.

According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, children and adolescents should engage in physical activity for 60 minutes or more each day. While fulfilling those requirements might not have been a problem for kids who grew up before the dawn of the Internet, nowadays kids are spending less time playing outside and more time on their computers or other devices.

That reality is problematic for parents who want their kids to embrace physical activity thanks to the positive impact that exercise can have on kids' physical and mental well-being. Parents hoping to instill a love of physical activity in their youngsters may find that taking a more active role by exercising with their kids is an effective way to get them off the couch and away from their computer screens.

Turn errands into exercise opportunities. Many parents take their children along with them when running errands. When such errands don't necessarily require the use of a car, consider riding bicycles instead. Kids who otherwise

don't enjoy errands may now find them more fun, all the while fulfilling their daily recommended quotas for exercise and spending quality time with their parents.

Include kids in your own athletic pursuits. Parents might not be able to take younger kids along with them to the gym, but that does not mean your youngsters must be excluded from all of your athletic pursuits. If you have any upcoming athletic activities or challenges on your schedule, such as a new recreational sports season or community fun run or 5K, let kids tag along as you train or practice. Parents of adolescents can inquire at their local gyms if they offer discounted memberships to teens. If so, take kids along with you on trips to the gym so they learn the value and benefits of daily strength and conditioning exercises.

Make more time to play. Parents may already have busy schedules, but finding time to play with their kids is a great way to get youngsters to embrace physical activity. Kids might be reluctant to shoot hoops in the driveway if no one is willing to join them,

but they will likely be far more willing to do so if mom and dad are willing to play with them. This is not only a good way for parents to ensure their kids get enough exercise, but also a great and fun way for moms and dads to make time for physical activity.

Recognize that physical activity does not have to mean organized sports. Some kids have no interest in team sports while others do not have the athletic ability to compete after a certain age. Parents who want their kids to exercise more should recognize that there are plenty of ways to be physically active that do not involve organized team sports. Hiking; riding bicycles; swimming at a nearby pool, lake or ocean; and even going for nightly walks are all physical activities that people of all ages and athletic abilities can enjoy.

Physical activity is an important component of a healthy lifestyle. While getting kids to put down their tablets and gaming system remote controls may not be easy, parents who resolve to exercise with their children might find their youngsters more receptive to regular physical activity.

Tips for grandparents helping to raise children

As retirement age approaches, many older adults envision themselves downsizing and moving to a quaint community to enjoy their golden years in as relaxing a fashion as possible. However, for a growing number of seniors, their retirement years are being spent helping to raise grandchildren.

United States Census data from 2010 indicates 4.9 million American children are being raised solely by their grandparents. CanGrads, a National Kinship Support organization, says approximately 62,500 children are being raised by grandparents and other family in Canada. Many grandparents provide part-time care when their older children have to move back home with their families, as roughly 13 million children are now living in homes with their grandparents. Although being raised by grandparents may not be the ideal situation for all parties involved, such situations are a necessity for many families. Seniors who are once again thrown into the caregiver arena may need a crash course in childcare or a few pointers on parenting in the modern age.

Get the right equipment. Children certainly require a lot of gear, more than grandparents likely used when raising their own children. Certain safety requirements are in place to safeguard young children, and that often means investing in new cribs, car seats, high chairs, and other items. Grandparents should resist the temptation to use old items they may have kept in storage, as such items may no longer be safe and could put grandchildren at risk for injury.

Gather important documents. Grandparents should keep pertinent documents in one easily accessible place in their homes should an emergency arise. These include birth certificates, health immunization records, death certificates (if the child's parents are deceased), dental records, school papers, citizenship papers, and proof of income and assets.

Speak with an attorney. Lawyers can help grandparents wade through legal arrangements, such as filing for custody, guardianship or adoption. Options vary depending on where petitioners live, but lawyers can provide peace of mind to grandparents concerned about their grandkids' futures.

Investigate financial assistance. Seniors may not earn the income they once did and may be on assistance programs or living off of retirement savings. Grandparents who find themselves caring for a child may be eligible for financial assistance. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families is a joint federal and state program that can provide need-based financial assistance. The AARP or the organization GrandFamilies may be able to put grandparents in touch with financial advisors in their areas.

Contact schools and daycare centers. School-aged children will need to be enrolled in school. Grandparents should contact the department of education where they live to learn about local school systems, especially when grandkids are moving in with their grandparents. Some grandparents can qualify for free or low-cost daycare, and such programs can be discussed with local Social Services offices. Enrollment in school or daycare can provide grandparents with much-needed free time during the day.



Find emotional support. Taking care of grandchildren is a full-time job. At times, grandparents may feel stressed or out of sorts. Having a strong support system available can help grandparents work through the peaks and valleys of this new and unexpected stage in life. Church- or community center-based counseling services may be available. Grandparents also can check with their healthcare providers to determine if counseling or therapy sessions are covered under their plans. Caring for grandchildren is a life-changing event. Although it can be fulfilling, it also requires a lot of energy and commitment. But grandparents needn't go it alone, as there are numerous resources available to seniors who suddenly find themselves caring for their grandchildren.

Understanding gestational diabetes



Many people are familiar with type 1 and type 2 diabetes, both of which are characterized by high blood glucose levels that can lead to additional health problems. Insulin injections, dietary changes, exercise, and medication may be needed to correct the ratio of sugar to insulin in the body. Another common form of diabetes may not

be as well-known as the others but can be a concern for expecting parents. Gestational diabetes, according to the American Diabetes Association, refers to the appearance of high blood sugar levels during pregnancy. Women who have never before been diagnosed with diabetes can experience elevated sugar levels while carrying a child. A 2014 analysis by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates the prevalence of gestational diabetes can be as high as 9 percent among pregnant women in the United States.

While doctors are not completely certain why gestational diabetes occurs, the National Institutes of Health notes that some doctors suspect pregnancy hormones produced in the placenta block naturally-occurring insulin from working effectively. When this occurs, glucose levels can spike. This problem is called insulin resistance, and women may need three times as much insulin at this time. Blood sugar usually returns to normal after delivery, but treatment may be necessary during pregnancy.

Certain women are at a higher risk of

developing gestational diabetes than others. These include women older than 25 and those with a family history of diabetes. Excess weight or diabetes during a previous pregnancy also increases risk. Women who have delivered babies who weighed more than 9 pounds also have an elevated chance of gestational diabetes.

Although many women deliver healthy babies while dealing with gestational diabetes, poorly controlled gestational diabetes can hurt the unborn child. The ADA says extra blood glucose goes through the placenta, giving the baby high blood glucose levels and causing the baby's pancreas to make extra insulin to get rid of the blood glucose. Since the baby is getting more energy than it needs to grow and develop, the extra energy is stored as fat. An overweight baby may have difficulty exiting the birth canal, and a C-section may be necessary. Newborns with very low blood glucose levels at birth due to high insulin production are at a greater risk for breathing problems. Some babies born to mothers with gestational diabetes develop type 2 diabetes later in life. Gestational diabetes also can affect the

mother, who is at greater risk for high blood pressure and preeclampsia, a serious complication of pregnancy. Risk of diabetes in subsequent pregnancies or later in life also is greater among women who have had gestational diabetes. Symptoms of gestational diabetes are not always noticeable. Because gestational diabetes can occur midway through a pregnancy, women are usually advised to take an oral glucose tolerance test between the 24th and 28th week of pregnancy to screen for diabetes. If diabetes is detected, a strict diet that's low in fat and sugar will be advised. Carbohydrates should be consumed through complex grains and vegetables. If dietary changes do not work, diabetes medication or insulin therapy may be prescribed. Women concerned about gestational diabetes should speak with their obstetricians or midwives about their potential risk, as these medical professionals may be able to test earlier for gestational diabetes or begin on healthcare regimens to help prevent high blood sugar levels.

Questions to ask when looking for an afterschool program



mom and dad are still at work. Choosing an afterschool program is a decision many parents find difficult, but there are some questions parents can ask during their searches for programs that should make those decisions easier.

Can I tour and observe the facility?

When considering a particular afterschool program for their children, parents should ask to tour the facility, paying specific attention to the areas of the facility where their youngsters will spend the bulk of their time. Do the classrooms look clean? Are the materials up-to-date? Is the playground equipment safe and well-maintained? Well-maintained facilities with new supplies and equipment can make the program more enjoyable and safer for kids.

Parents also should ask to spend some time observing the facility when it is abuzz with activity. Such observation can give parents an idea of what their kids' afternoons will be like should they enroll in the program. Stay out of the way, but watch to see how engaged kids and staff members are and how conducive to doing homework the environment is.

Many of today's working professionals grew up in single-income households where only one of their parents went to work each day. But that once-common dynamic is now largely a thing of the past, as economic necessity has driven both moms and dads to continue their careers even after they have had children. That reality has led many working parents to lean heavily on afterschool programs to serve as safe havens that provide structure for their kids while

What is the program schedule?

Schedule is a significant issue for working parents, many of whom want a program that is open on holidays when schools are closed. Flexibility also is a concern for working parents, some of whom may need a facility that is open before school starts. Parents also may want a facility that allows youngsters to attend just a few days a week, which might make certain programs that require parents to commit to full weeks less enticing. When discussing the facility schedule with staff members, be sure to get as specific a schedule as possible, inquiring about any additional costs associated with extending the typical schedule as well.

What are the activities available to the kids?

Many afterschool programs provide more than just a place for kids to sit and do their homework until their folks come to pick them up. Ask staff members at the facility how big a role activities play in their programs. Many programs try to offer an array of activities that range from academic programs to athletic events and more. A wide

range of programs can increase the chances that youngsters will find activities that pique their interests and make the afterschool program more enjoyable.

How are staff members vetted?

Parents also may want to ask about the program's hiring practices. Ask about the background checks performed on staff members and if the facility requires any specific certifications for staff who will be dealing directly with children.

When asking about hiring practices, parents also may want to inquire about the ratio of staff members to children. The smaller the ratio, the more attention youngsters will receive. Facilities with an especially high ratio of staff to children may not be able to provide the type of environment parents want for their children.

Finding an afterschool program requires parents to exercise their due diligence. Parents who can be patient and learn as much about facilities as possible are more likely to find the right fit for their children.

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How families can cut vacation costs

costs without sacrificing the quality of their vacations.

Stay closer to home. It may sound simple, but vacationing closer to home is perhaps the best way for families to save a substantial amount of money on their vacations. Airline tickets can take up a sizable portion of a family vacation budget, and once the plane touches down families may need to add the additional expense of rental cars so they can get around their destination and enjoy all its sights and sounds. But families who choose to vacation closer to home can take their own vehicles, paying only for gas instead of airline tickets, car rentals (including rental insurance) and gas. Find a location close to home that still offers everyone an escape, but one that's not far enough away that car travel will prove burdensome and exhausting.

Plan to make some of your own meals. Dining out is another considerable expense for families on vacation. Depending on the size of their families, parents may find

that their dining budgets will approach or even exceed the cost of air travel by the end of a single week. But parents can drastically reduce those costs by planning to make some their own meals while away on vacation. Bring along a couple of cereal boxes so breakfast is simple and inexpensive, and try to book accommodations equipped with kitchens or outdoor areas where the family can fire up a grill a few times during the week to save on costly dinner tabs.

Travel light. Families who must travel by air can trim some of the cost of flying by traveling light. Many airlines now charge fees for bags that exceed preestablished weight limits and may charge for additional baggage as well. Leave hefty jackets and extra footwear behind when traveling during the warmer months, as everyone can likely get by with just some lighter summer attire and less formal footwear. If traveling to a ski resort in

the winter, consider renting bulky skiing attire, including boots, so baggage limits are not exceeded.

Work with a travel agency that specializes in your locale. Many families may feel they can now plan their own vacations and save money, but planning through a travel agency may still be a family's best bet. When booking trips via a travel agency, families can often negotiate with a representative, who can work to tailor a vacation that fits families' budgets. Such negotiation is much more difficult when going it alone or working through a travel website. In addition, many travel agencies include tours and other attractions in the price of their packages, and that can be a great way to earn discounts to local sights and activities.

Travel is expensive, especially for parents traveling with kids in tow. But cost-conscious moms and dads can still plan relaxing and enjoyable vacations without breaking the bank.

Family vacations are the one time each year when all members of the family get to leave the daily grind behind to enjoy a little R&R together. Such excursions often strengthen family bonds and help to create lasting memories that parents and kids will cherish for years to come. Families planning this summer's annual getaway may already know that the cost of travel is on the rise. While there are always deals to be had, budget-conscious parents may still find themselves looking for ways to cut their travel costs so more of their money can be spent on having fun instead of financing trips. The following are a handful of ways parents can trim their families' travel



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Household budget building how-to



The majority of families must live on budgets. Heads of households where money is no object may be able to spend at will, but many men and women must develop budgets so their families' everyday needs are fulfilled and so there is a safety net should an unforeseen situation arise and threaten family stability.

Building a budget can be a significant undertaking, but there is a method men and women can employ when developing a family budget to make that process go as smoothly as possible.

Gather pertinent documents. The first step toward building a household budget is to gather pertinent documents, such as earnings statements, utility bills, mortgage documents, and any other documents that can help you figure out your earnings and expenses.

Determine what's coming in and what's going out. When building a budget, you must determine how much income your household is generating and how much of that income is already earmarked for necessities like mortgage payments, car payments, etc. Make a list that includes an incoming and outgoing category for expenses, and make a separate category for outgoing expenses that are not necessities, such as the amount of money you spend each month on dining out. Peruse past bank statements to determine those discretionary expenses.

Determine which discretionary expenses

can be trimmed. Certain expenses, such as mortgage and car payments, are likely fixed. Unless you can refinance your mortgage to earn a lower monthly payment or pay off your car loan so you no longer have to make monthly payments, you probably need to examine your discretionary spending to find opportunities to save money. It's best that men and women working together to build a household budget come to a consensus on where to make cutbacks, as you don't want any resentment to build because one person was forced to sacrifice something important while the other was not. Be respectful of each other's concerns and plan on each of you making a sacrifice so resentment does not develop. Agree to make initial cutbacks a trial run that you will revisit in the near future to determine how the sacrifices are affecting your quality of life.

Prioritize paying down debt. One of the best ways to clear up money long-term is to eradicate debt, and consumer debt in particular. It is unrealistic to eradicate certain debts, like a mortgage, in the short-term. But consumer debt, which includes credit cards, tends to come with high interest rates, and carrying substantial consumer debt can negatively affect your credit rating. When attempting to pay off consumer debt, resolve to avoid using credit cards unless it's a genuine emergency and you don't have the cash to cover the associated expenses.

Periodically revisit your budget. Men and women should periodically revisit their household budgets to determine if their budgets



are effective and how those budgets are impacting life at home. Expect to make some minor tweaks whenever revisiting your budget, and don't be averse to making more significant changes if the budget is proving especially difficult on certain members of your household. Building a household budget is no small task. Men and women willing to work together and revisit their budgets every so often may find that such an approach eventually creates a more financially stable and enjoyable situation at home.

Safety guidelines for new parents

Welcoming a new child into a family dynamic requires certain adjustments on the part of family members. New parents have come to expect shortened sleep schedules as they handle early-morning feedings and babies who haven't quite adjusted to their parents' sleep/wake schedules.

Parents soon learn another aspect of childcare that fills their days is safety. Keeping little ones safe, whether at home or on the go, becomes the utmost priority.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's "Childhood Injury Report" indicates more than 12,000 children die each year in the United States from an unintentional injury. Injuries involving transportation, drowning and suffocation account for the largest number of accidental deaths among young children.

One of the first safety steps parents can take is to become informed about common childhood injuries and statistics. Educating oneself about the potential for injury is the key to preventing accidents from occurring.

The next step is to take measures to childproof areas in and around the home. Various organizations, including Kids Health, the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the National Safety Council, recommend caregivers take the following safety measures.

- Use safety latches and locks for cabinets and drawers to keep children away from potentially harmful poisons and household items.
 - Employ safety gates to prevent falls down stairs and to keep children from entering rooms that are not supervised or contain possible dangers.
 - Keep track of baby's milestones, including when infants learn to pull themselves up in the crib. The crib mattress should be set to the lowest position and items removed so curious kids cannot climb out of the crib.
 - Bathtubs are a common location for injury. Never leave a child unattended in a bath — even for a minute. Bathrooms can be made safer by installing a soft cover on the bath faucet head, using a secure and non-skid bath seat for the child and relying on a thermometer to check the temperature of the bath water.
 - Use knob covers to prevent access to the stove. Always supervise children in and around the kitchen, where there are many hazards and hot surfaces.
 - Use bolts or anchors to secure items like televisions, bookcases or dressers to the wall to prevent them from tipping over.
 - Getting a shock is easy when babies with saliva-drenched fingers touch electrical outlets. Use safety plugs or special covers to prevent access.
 - Make sure area rugs are secured with a nonskid backing and repair any tripping hazards so children do not fall while learning to walk.
 - Drapery and blinds cords should be kept out of youngsters' reach. Window coverings that are cord-free are safer options.
 - Parents can benefit by learning CPR and other first aid techniques. You never know when they might come in handy.
 - Window guards and safety netting can prevent falls from windows, balconies, landings, and decks. Check these safety devices frequently to make sure they are still secure.
 - Be sure to check that smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are functioning as they should and have fresh batteries.
 - Create layers of protection around a swimming pool, which includes installing self-latching fences, alarms and safety covers.
 - Make a first aid kit and store emergency instructions inside. Post important phone numbers close to a land line phone or program them into a mobile phone.
 - Use corner guards to protect young heads from falls against furniture or fireplace hearths.
- These are just some of the safety measures parents can take to safeguard their young children from injury at home. Kids' pediatricians also may have other information that can help prevent accidents and save lives.

Tips for juggling work and family

Balancing work and family is a juggling act faced by many working parents. Responsibilities to work and family often overlap, and that can make solving the riddle of balancing work and family that much more difficult.

Single-income households have decreased dramatically over the last several decades, as escalating costs of living have made it difficult for many families to get by on just one income. But working parents can employ several strategies, both at the office and at home, as they attempt to make the job of juggling commitments to work and family a little less difficult.

Around the office

A major concern many parents have as they attempt to balance work and family is that they are not spending enough time at home with their children or not paying enough attention to their kids or even their spouses when they are home. One way to find more time at home is to inquire about the possibility of working remotely. Advancements in technology that have made it easier to remotely communicate with clients and coworkers has led to an influx of work-from-home employees. While working from home does not mean workloads will diminish, it does save men and women the time they would spend commuting to and from work, and that translates to more time at home with the family. If working remotely full-time is not a possibility, men and women can ask if it's possible to do so one or two days a week, as such a schedule will still provide more time at home.

Another avenue men and women can explore as they attempt to achieve a better balance between work and family concerns how efficiently they do their jobs. Chatting with coworkers about issues that do not pertain to work can be a great way to reduce work-related stress, but professionals who feel as if they never have enough time to get their jobs done in a typical work day should determine if they are working as efficiently as possible. Avoid too much water cooler chitchat and resist the temptation to check personal emails or text messages while at work. Such distractions can eat up a considerable amount of time over the course of a workday, making it harder for men and women to get their jobs done in a typical workday and forcing them to stay late or bring work home.

Men and women working to achieve a greater balance between work and family also can examine how willing they are to take on additional work. While coworkers love a team player willing to pitch in, routinely accepting extra work can drastically cut into the time men and women have to do their own jobs as well as the time they have to spend with their families. Helping coworkers out in a pinch is fine, but



men and women should resist any urges to take on more than they can reasonably handle.

At home

Men and women also can take steps at home to create a better balance between work and family. Working parents who want the time they have with their children each night to be more substantive can turn off their devices upon arriving home from work. Devices such as smartphones and tablets keep working professionals attached to their offices, and many men and women are tempted to check work emails or answer phone calls and voicemails even when they have left the office for the day. Parents should resist that temptation so their families know their focus is on them and not back at the office.

Another way to create a greater balance between work and family life is to make more efficient use of time at home. For example, rather than spending an hour each night making dinner, working parents can use a slow cooker so family meals are ready the moment everyone arrives home at night. That frees up time the family can spend together and gives working parents one less thing to do when they arrive home.

Working parents looking get more quality time with their families also can cut back on the time families spend watching television each night. Limit television time to an hour or two each night, using the extra time to connect with one another.

Many working parents strive to create a greater balance between work and family. While doing so is not always easy, men and women can employ strategies at work and at home to make the challenge a little less complicated.

Finding the right family car

Parents have a host of options at their disposal when the time comes to buy new cars for their families. While dad might have long dreamed of driving the fastest sports car on the market, such a vehicle does not make much practical sense when car trips figure to be made with kids in tow. Finding the right car for a family depends on a host of factors, as what makes a good vehicle for one family will not always make a great choice for another family right down the street. When choosing a car for their families, parents can consider the following factors to ensure they choose the vehicles that best suit the needs of their broods.

Cost

While cost should not be the only consideration when choosing a family vehicle, parents must determine their budget before beginning their search for a new ride. Aside from a home, cars are the most expensive purchase many people will ever make, which only highlights the importance parents must place on finding the right vehicles for their families. Luxury cars, SUVs and sports cars tend to be the most expensive vehicles on the market, and young parents just starting out or parents of school-aged kids with college educations to consider might find that less expensive vehicles make the most practical sense for their families. Parents also must determine if they are financing or leasing their vehicles or buying them outright. Financing and leasing often requires full insurance coverage, which can be pricey, while buying outright affords vehicle owners to choose the level of coverage they are most comfortable with. Determine insurance costs on a given model before driving off the lot with the pedal to the metal.

Family size

The size and potential size of the family also must be considered before buying a new car. Kids grow up and get bigger, and parents who want to have more children down the road should consider just how big they want their family to be before buying a new car. Look for a car that not only suits your family now, but one that will cater to your family's needs down the road as well. Overlooking this important factor now may force you to replace the car



you ultimately buy sooner than you had hoped.

Safety

Safety is the top priority for many parents as they purchase new cars for their families. Look for a car with a high safety rating and a proven track record of ensuring passengers survive accidents. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (www.iihs.org) as well as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (www.nhtsa.gov) test and rate new vehicles for safety, and parents should look up the results of these tests and ratings on any vehicle they are considering purchasing for their families.

Use

Family cars are rarely limited to getting mom or dad to and from work and for trips to the grocery store. Today's kids are more active than ever before, and chances are their schedules are as packed as their parents'. Consider the many chauffeuring trips you will have to make in the years to come, and choose a car that is equipped to handle those trips. Parents who double as soccer coaches may benefit from buying minivans that can easily store all that sports equipment, while those whose children participate in activities that take them far and wide may want a car that's especially fuel efficient.

Comfort

Luxury vehicles may provide the most comfortable ride, but parents who are not yet ready to go that route need not sacrifice comfort in favor of practicality. Families spend lots of time in their vehicles, and summer vacations or winter holiday road trips are that much more enjoyable when everyone is riding in comfort. While comfort might not be the foremost priority for parents, it is something to consider when buying new family vehicles.

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TOOLS to Start Talking!

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Know! provides parents (or grandparents and other caregivers) with twice monthly, FREE Know! Parent Tips via email that contain current facts about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, as well as action steps they can take to help children resist using. We've asked schools around the state to share these messages with you, but parents, grandparents and other caregivers can also sign up below to receive these messages directly.

Parents make a difference.

Long term research shows clearly, without a doubt, that parents can have the greatest influence on their child's decision whether or not to use alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that adolescents who reported feeling close to their families were the least likely to engage in drinking, smoking or taking drugs. The study supports what parents should know: that they can teach their children to view alcohol, tobacco and other drugs as a serious concern and that they can influence their children's decision about whether or not to use these substances. Talk Early and often about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Even when it gets tough. Send clear and consistent messages that you don't want them using.

The Champaign County Drug Free Youth Coalition and Family and Children First Council have been working to create a substance abuse free environment for the youth of Champaign County. Over the past 4 years, we have made great strides to keep young people healthy.

Shared Outcome: Youth Choose Healthy Behaviors

Indicator(s):	Baseline:	Current Year Data:	Direction of Change (+, -, NC)
Non-compliant alcohol vendors during spring Compliance Checks	Data: 25% Year of Data: 2011	Data: 12% Year of Data: 2015	Decrease
Number of age scanning/valid identification devices being utilized by alcohol vendors	Data: 0 Year of Data: 2011	Data: 23 Year of Data: 2015	Increase
Percentage of 8th grade students reporting binge drinking on Search Institute Survey	Data: 15% Year of Data: 2007	Data: 9% Year of Data: 2015	Decrease
Percentage of 8th grade students reporting drinking in the previous 30 days on Search Institute Survey	Data: 20% Year of Data: 2007	Data: 12% Year of Data: 2015	Decrease
Percentage of youth indicating that adults host underage drinking parties.	Data: 24% Year of Data: 2010	Data: 3% Year of Data: 2015	Decrease
Number of schools implementing evidenced-based prevention in middle school.	Data: 0 Year of Data: 2011	Data: 4 of 5 districts Year of Data: 2015	Increase

Data Sources:

Law enforcement (Champaign County Sheriff's Dept. and Urbana Police Division) spring 2015 compliance check data; Coalition records (2015) of businesses utilizing age scanning technology; Search Institute Survey (2015) of county 8th graders reporting getting drunk once or more in the previous two weeks; Search Institute Survey (2015) of county 8th graders reporting drinking alcohol once or more in the previous 30 days; Youth Survey of youth perception of percentage of adults hosting underage drinking parties; and Coalition records (2015) of local school districts implementing Botvin LifeSkills at the middle school level.