FAMILY MEALS CHALLENGE

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Second Edition
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WEEK 1

The Family Mealtime Challenge

Benefits of Family Meals

A Place to Belong

Sharing meals as a family fosters a strong sense of belonging and enhances self-esteem. It also deepens emotional connections and reinforces the value of each family member. It ensures that every child and teen feels seen, heard, and has a meaningful "place at the table."

A Habit for Health

Eating together as a family promotes healthier eating habits, improves children's health, and encourages meal planning skills.

A Way to Connect

In a world full of distractions, the family table creates a space to reconnect, relax, and boost meaningful conversations that bring us closer.

The Power to Protect

Sharing meals together is more than just a routine; it serves as a powerful protective shield against addiction. The more often families eat together, the less likely teens are to fall into harmful habits.

A Recipe for School Success

Teens and kids who share five or more family meals a week are 40% more likely to achieve A's and B's, showing a strong link between family mealtime and academic success.

WEEK 2

The Tech Balance Challenge

Impact of Screen Time & Social Media

Impact on Teen Mental Health

Screen time and social media are affecting our teens' mental health more than ever. Reducing their exposure is vital to protect their well-being and self-worth.

Effects of Social Media

Research shows that social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok are negatively impacting our teens. Instagram is linked to worsening body image issues and feelings of inadequacy, while TikTok's addictive nature harms attention spans.

A Source of Disconnection

Despite their intent to connect people, social media often leaves teens feeling isolated. Social media often acts as a happiness killer, driving us toward superficial goals that leave us feeling less fulfilled and more disconnected.

Ways to Manage Technology

Foster Real Connection

While screens can entertain and provide a sense of connection, they can never replace the depth of human interaction that takes place in real life. True connection happens in the moments we share face-to-face—whether it's around the dinner table, during a family walk, or while engaging in a meaningful conversation.

Grow Minds Through Play, Not Screens

Young minds don't develop through passive scrolling—they grow through active, unstructured play and face-to-face connection. Give them room to explore and you'll watch them thrive.

WEEK 3

The Healthier Meals Challenge

Family Health Challenges

Understanding and Addressing Common Issues

Modern family life is busier than ever, bringing health challenges for both parents and children. Identifying these obstacles can be the first step toward improving family well-being. Below is a checklist of common health challenges that many families face.

Lifestyle and Time Pressures

- ☐ Are you working long hours, leaving less time for meal prep and family time?
- ☐ Are work or school commitments limiting the time you spend together as a family?
- ☐ Do you or your kids often feel stressed or overwhelmed by daily demands?

Activity and Movement

- ☐ Do your kids spend more time on screens than being physically active?
- ☐ Are sports or outdoor play less frequent in your family's routine?
- ☐ Do you feel your family's activity levels have decreased over time?

Meals and Nutrition

- ☐ Do you find it hard to cook meals at home regularly?
- ☐ Are processed or fast foods a frequent part of your family's diet due to convenience or cost?
- ☐ Is fresh, healthy food hard to access or afford in your community?
- ☐ Do your kids request unhealthy snacks or meals they see in ads or on social media?

Sleep Habits

- ☐ Are late-night screens or busy schedules cutting into your family's sleep?
- ☐ Does anyone in your family regularly feel tired or sluggish due to poor sleep?

You're Not Alone in Facing These Health Challenges

Our fast-paced culture, combined with challenges like the convenience of unhealthy foods, makes it harder for families to stay healthy. Rates of childhood diabetes and obesity have increased rapidly. Type 1 diabetes, once rare in children, has risen by 21%, and type 2 diabetes has grown by 30% among children and teens in recent years.

The Healthier Meals Challenge: Pushing Back Against Diabetes

1. **Eat Together, Not On the Go**

   Make family meals a priority. Sit at the table instead of in front of screens, and plan meals ahead to avoid fast-food fixes.

2. **Build Healthy Mealtime Habits**

   Slow down, enjoy the meal, and serve small portions—don't push kids to clean their plates. Let them ask for seconds if they're still hungry.

3. **Choose Healthier Foods**

   Drink water instead of sugary or energy drinks, eat more fruits and veggies, and get your kids involved in making meals.

4. **Shop Smart Together**

   Grocery shop with your kids, teach them to read labels, choose nutritious foods, and help them become aware of how food companies market to them.

By making these small changes as a family, you can create a lasting foundation of health and help your children thrive!

Want to see full workbook?

This is just a sample of the Family Meals Challenge workbook.

We'd love to show you the full version and how this resource can strengthen your family engagement efforts.

Scan the QR code to schedule a quick meeting and explore how to bring this workshop to your district.

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