

End-of-School-Year Stress

As the end of the school year approaches, it is not uncommon to see a range of emotions among kids and teens. While many students are feeling the anticipation and excitement that summer brings, for some students the last few weeks of school can bring up feelings of fear, uncertainty, and increases in stress and anxiety. Increases in stress and anxiety can result for a variety of reasons. This can include the anticipation of a new routine, loss of predictability, saying goodbye to teachers and friends, concern over the loss of social connections that school offers, worry about end-of-year exams, concerns over the upcoming transitions to new schools or grade levels, and the expectations that come with graduation and taking on more adult responsibilities.



As caring adults, we can offer support, guidance, and resources to better equip students to cope with and manage upcoming changes, transitions, and stress that can come with the end of the school year. It should be noted that stress can manifest in a variety of emotions and behaviors. For example, youth may become irritable, impatient, angry, or begin acting out when they are feeling stressed. Others may become anxious, scared, withdrawn, or complain of physical symptoms like headaches or stomachaches.

A key factor in helping our youth manage stress is open communication. Adults can help youth communicate what they are feeling by offering a safe space to share what's on their minds. If you are worried about a student who is struggling, check in with them. Ask, "Can you help me understand how you are feeling?" or "What might be helpful to you right now?" Understanding what a young person is feeling and experiencing through their eyes allows adults to show greater empathy and validate their concerns. When adults can acknowledge a young person's feelings, they may feel better just knowing that there is someone else who understands how they feel. Additionally, by finding out what is causing youth distress, adults are more capable of helping them find ways to cope.

While teachers and caring adults within the environment of school can play a supportive role, parents and guardians also play a significant role. Below are ways that parents/guardians can help kids manage end-of-school-year stress.

- 1.) Pay attention to your own stress levels and model good stress-management behaviors.
- 2.) Talk to your child/teen about stress and identify a list of positive ways to cope. This might include mindful exercises, listening to music, journaling, going for a walk, spending time with friends or making time for relaxation and participating in enjoyable activities.

- 3.) If your child/teen is overwhelmed with end-of-year deadlines and exams, help them engage in time management activities. For example, help teens create an end-of-year checklist and cross off each task as it is completed or help them to break larger projects into smaller, more manageable tasks.
- 4.) Get back to the basics: balanced nutrition, good sleep habits, exercise, and regular periods of downtime and unstructured activities are essential for helping kids thrive during times of transition and stress.
- 5.) Help youth engage in activities that provide meaningful closure at the end of the school year. This can help make transitions and change a little more tolerable. (i.e., goodbye note cards from students to teachers and end-of-year celebrations).
- 6.) Look back and reflect: highlight and honor your child or teen's strengths and accomplishments during the past year.
- 7.) Talk it out: help youth process any fears or concerns that they have as they transition into summer and prepare for new experiences. Remind them that you will be there along the way to offer support.

Every student is going to have different feelings about the end of the school year. Being mindful that some students may be experiencing anxiety and discomfort as the days dwindle down to the last day of school allows us to be more aware of students who may be in need of extra support and/or resources.

References: Childmind Institute; Edutopia; Family Education; National Education Association; Partnership to End Addiction

Keeping Things Substance-Free with End-Of-Year Celebrations

It's that time of year again, the school year is winding down, finals are wrapping up, and Summer is on the way. Of course, this also means graduations and, more pressingly, graduation parties. These are huge occasions in people's lives, but often these festivities can lead to substance misuse, which may endanger those who are celebrating their big day. One study found that although most students don't report drinking during these events, they believe that the average high school student does. This misconception can lead to kids being willing to drink when they otherwise wouldn't, and put them in situations they're not equipped to handle.

If you're holding a graduation party for your child, or if your child is going to other people's graduation parties, follow these helpful tips to keep things alcohol and substance free:

- **Talk to your teenager.** Discuss the fact that alcohol or other substances may be present at other people's parties, and inform them as to your expectations and the consequences of drinking and vaping/smoking marijuana. Having honest discussions can help your teen say no and resist peer pressure when in social settings.
- **Discuss repercussions.** Make sure they know that, aside from parental grounding, there could be legal or physical repercussions from drinking or vaping/smoking marijuana. Make sure they know that addiction can be genetic as well, and it may be harder to stop using something once they start than they initially think.
- **Take inventory on any substances that are in the house, and keep them well out of the party space.** It may be tempting to let them drink during the celebrations. However, it's important to remember not only that it is illegal to provide alcohol to a minor, but also that it can cause negative effects on brain development and increase their risk of alcoholism later in their life.
- **Keep track of who they plan on visiting during this time.** Talk to the parents of those in your teen's social circle and make sure that they're also dedicated to keeping things sober at this time of year. If you aren't familiar with the people they are celebrating with, make sure you

know where things are taking place. If your child's phone supports it, have them enable location sharing with you.

- **Pick them up and drop them off.** Not only will this prevent them from driving drunk, but it also provides them some additional support. Knowing that they will have a parent picking them up will further assist them in resisting peer pressure and avoid being tempted. Ensure they know that if they feel uncomfortable with any situation they're in, you'll come collect them whenever they would like.

While these tips are not all-encompassing, they will help to make sure your teen is prepared for what may arise. Despite your best efforts, your child may still choose to drink. If this does happen, it's important to remember to remain non-judgmental when discussing what happened. While it's important to provide consequences for these behaviors, it's also important that your child knows they can trust you, and that they can openly discuss things with you without facing disappointment or anger.

For more information on keeping end of year festivities substance free, please visit:

<https://rethinkthedrinks.com/prom-graduation-season/>

<https://cadyinc.org/resources/get-the-facts/keeping-your-child-safe-around-prom-and-graduation-time/>

<https://www.lths.net/prom-grad-season-safety>

<https://allianceforsafekids.org/prom-and-graduation-season/>

<https://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/niaacollegematerials/factsheets/highschoolgradfactsheet.aspx>

<https://www.samhsa.gov/data/data-we-collect/nsduh-national-survey-drug-use-and-health>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36495643/>

<https://www.dartmouth-hitchcock.org/stories/article/how-help-your-teen-stay-safe-around-prom-and-graduation-season>

<https://www.scipnebraska.com>

SUMMER-SUMMER-SUMMER!!!

Summer Festivals & Celebrations Happening Around The State!!!!

Summer is right around the corner! While we all look forward to summer where kids can sleep in and have more time to relax, it only takes a short while before kids get bored and families are looking for things to do. Here are some things happening this summer in different regions of Nebraska.

NEBRASKA COUNTY FAIRS:

Nebraska county fairs are often times the highlights of summer for communities/counties throughout Nebraska. County fairs do more than keep kids entertained during the summer...they often promote community growth and create memories that last a lifetime.



Click on the link below for more information on when and where county fairs are held around the state.

<https://www.nebraskafairs.org>

Here are some other festivals and celebrations families can enjoy this summer that are happening around the state. Nebraska has a rich, diverse and historic heritage full of customs and traditions that are celebrated in communities.

Region 1:

Counties- Sheridan, Dawes, Sioux, Box Butte, Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Banner, Cheyenne, Deuel, Garden, and Kimball

SIDNEY GOLD RUSH DAYS

School Community Intervention and Prevention

May 2023

SCIP is funded in part by: Lincoln Public Schools, United Way of Lincoln/Lancaster County, Region V Systems, Nebraska DHHS: Division of Behavioral Health and Region 4 Behavioral Health System

What: Parade, ticket entry concerts, rodeo, food & more
When: June 9-11, 2023
Where: Sidney, Nebraska
More Information: <https://www.sidneygoldrushdays.org/>

POTTER CAR BOWL

What: Car & craft show, BBQ contest, vendors, music, food. Duck pin bowling & more
When: June 24-25, 2023
Where: Potter, Nebraska
More Information: <https://www.facebook.com/pottercarbowl/>

FUR TRADE DAYS

What: Parade, carnival, music, vendors, softball tournament, food & more
When: July 13-16, 2023
Where: Chadron, Nebraska
More Information: <https://furtradedays.com/>

OREGON TRAIL DAYS

What: Parade, carnival, BBQ, street dance, live music, mud volley ball, kiddie parade & more
When: July 13-16, 2023
Where: Gering, Nebraska
More Information: <http://www.oregontraildays.com/#/>

ALLIANCE HERITAGE DAYS

What: Parade, carnival, vendors, food & more
When: July 19-22, 2023
Where: Alliance, Nebraska
More Information: <https://www.facebook.com/AllianceHeritageDays/>

Region 2:

Counties- Arthur, Chase, Dawson, Dundy, Grant, Hayes, Hitchcock, Hooker, Frontier, Gosper, Keith, Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, Perkins, Red Willow and Thomas

NEBRASKA LAND DAYS

What: Parade, ticket entry concerts, rodeo, food & more
When: June 14-17, 2023
Where: North Platte, Nebraska
More Information: <https://nebraskalanddays.com/>

KITES & CASTLES

What: Kite flying, castling building contest, concert, food, prizes & more
When: July 29, 2023

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Where: Ogallala, Nebraska

More Information:

https://www.lasr.net/travel/city.php?Annual+Kites+and+Castles&TravelTo=NE0416023&VE=Y&Event_ID=NE0416023e004

Region 3:

Counties- Buffalo, Furnas, Harlan, Kearney, Phelps, Adams, Clay, Franklin, Nuckolls, Webster Blaine, Custer, Garfield, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton, Howard, Loup, Merrick, Sherman Valley, Wheeler

WAGONS WEST CELEBRATION

What: Pioneer games, crafts, live music, treasure hunt. food & more

When: June 8, 2023

Where: Kearney, Nebraska

More Information: <https://chambermaster.kearneycoc.org/events/details/wagons-west-celebration-06-08-2023-16509>

KOOL-AID DAYS

What: Kool Aid drinking contest, Kool aid stands, , giant inflatables, indoor games, face painting, music, food & more

When: August 18-20, 2023

Where: Hastings, Nebraska

More Information: <https://kool-aiddays.com/>

NEBRASKA STATE FAIR

What: Concerts, carnival, games, contests, vendors, food, music & more

When: August 25-September 4, 2023

Where: Grand Island, Nebraska

More Information: <https://www.statefair.org/>

Region 4:

Counties- Boone, Colfax, Cuming, Madison, Nance, Platte, Stanton Antelope, Boyd, Brown, Cedar, Cherry, Holt, Keya Paha, Knox, Pierce, Rock, Burt, Dakota, Dixon, Thurston, Wayne

FABULOUS ACCORDION FESTIVAL

What: Live accordion/polka music, dance. Local art, food & more

When: May 27, 2023

Where: Ord, Nebraska

More Information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/526035813046749>

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COMSTOCK WINDMILL FESTIVAL

What: Live 3-Day Music Festival

When: June 10, 2023

Where: Comstock, Nebraska

More Information:

<https://www.windmillfestival.com/#:~:text=June%208%20%2D%2010%2C%202023,-Small%20Town%2C%20BIG>

THE GREAT AMERICAN COMEDY FESTIVAL

What: Live magic and comedy shows

When: June 15-17, 2023

Where: Norfolk, Nebraska

More Information: <http://www.greatamericancomedyfestival.com/>

LINDSEY PIVOT DAYS

What: Volleyball, cornhole, inflatables, arts & crafts, vendors, food, music, fireworks & more

When: June 23-24, 2023

Where: Lindsey, Nebraska

More Information: <https://visitnebraska.com/lindsay/events/lindsay-pivot-days>

WAYNE CHICKEN SHOW

What: Parade, petting zoo, inflatables, water-balloon wars, chicken dance, food, music & more

When: July 7-9, 2023

Where: Wayne, Nebraska

More Information: <https://www.cityofwayne.org/455/Wayne-Chicken-Show>

PRAIRIE DAYS

What: Parade, family-friendly event, flower contest, kid tractor pull, antique show, mud volleyball, music, food & more movie in park, food & more

When: July 28-30, 2023

Where: Tilden, Nebraska

More Information: <https://tmgcommunityfoundation.org/page/tilden-prairie-days>

COLUMBUS DAYS

What: Parade, family-friendly event, turtle races, movie in park, food & more

When: August 10-13, 2023

Where: Columbus, Nebraska

More Information: <https://www.facebook.com/ColumbusDays/about>

Region 5:

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Counties- Butler, Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Johnson, Lancaster, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Polk, Richardson, Saline, Saunders, Seward, Thayer, York

MEAD DAYS

What: Street dance, sand volleyball, horseshoes, parade, 5K run & more

When: June 16-18, 2023

Where: Mead, Nebraska

More Information: <https://www.facebook.com/people/Mead-Days/100064696865934/>

JUNETEENTH-LINCOLN

What: Family-friendly event, activities for kids, music, dance and rap contest, health fair

When: June 17, 2023

Where: Malone Clyde Center & Trago Park, Lincoln, Nebraska

More Information: <https://malonecenter.org/>

HOMESTEAD DAYS

What: Parade, car show, craft show, fireworks, horse shoes. Family events, entertainment & more

When: June 21-25, 2023

Where: Beatrice, Nebraska

More Information: <https://beatricechamber.com/homestead-days>

FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION

What: Grand parade, car show, craft show, fireworks, entertainment, food

When: July 4

Where: Seward, Nebraska

More Information: julyfourthseward.com

PAWNEE DAYS

What: Parade, baseball, demolition derby, music, food & more

When: July 4-5, 2023

Where: Genoa, Nebraska

More Information:

https://www.lasr.net/travel/city.php?&TravelTo=NE0112009&VE=Y&Event_ID=NE0112009e001

COMMUNITY DAYS

What: Parade, family-friendly event, activities for kids, music, food & more

When: July 14-16, 2023

Where: Henderson, Nebraska

More Information: <https://www.hendersonnebraska.com/events/community-days/>

COBBLESTONE FESTIVAL

What: Parade, carnival, games, food, music & more

When: August 24-27, 2023

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Where: Falls City Nebraska

More Information: <https://www.facebook.com/CobblestoneFestival/>

Region 6:

Counties- Cass, Dodge, Douglas, Sarpy, Washington

SALUTE TO SUMMER

What: Parade, family activities, free food cookout, fireworks & drone show

When: May 27, 2023

Where: La Vista, Nebraska

More Information: <https://www.cityoflavista.org/987/Schedule-of-Events>

BENNINGTON DAZE

What: Parade, fireworks, music, corn-hole tournament, BBQ & more

When: June 2-4, 2023

Where: Bennington, Nebraska

More Information: [facebook.com/benningtondaze](https://www.facebook.com/benningtondaze)

GATEWAY TO THE WEST DAYS

What: Parade, live music, car show, vendors, craft fair & more

When: June 8-11, 2023

Where: Blair, Nebraska

More Information: [washingtoncountychamberne.com](https://www.washingtoncountychamberne.com)

ELKHORN DAYS

What: Parade, family activities, music festival, car show, booths, food & more

When: June 8-11, 2023

Where: Elkhorn, Nebraska

More Information: [elkhorndays.com](https://www.elkhorndays.com)

OMAHA SUMMER ARTS FESTIVAL

What: Children's fair, performing arts, local art, mural cube, food & more; mixture of outdoor and online activities

When: June 9-11, 2023

Where: Omaha, Nebraska

More Information: [summerarts.org](https://www.summerarts.org)

PAPILLION DAYS

What: Carnival, parade, market, fireworks, live entertainment

When: June 14-18, 2023

Where: Papillion, Nebraska

More Information: <https://www.papillionfoundation.org/papillion-days>

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LIMESTONE DAYS

What: Grand parade, fishing contest, softball, washer tournament, craft show, food, music & more

When: June 24, 2023

Where: Weeping Water, Nebraska

More Information: <https://www.facebook.com/WeepingWaterLimestoneDay/>

Be sure to check for updates and changes that may occur before heading out to any of these events.