

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT TEAM UPDATE

Saint Vincent College
Prevention Projects is
funded by the
Westmoreland Drug and
Alcohol Commission, Inc.
through a grant from the
Pennsylvania Department of
Drug and Alcohol
Programs.



SAINT VINCENT COLLEGE PREVENTION PROJECTS NEWSLETTER

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2026

VOLUME 3: ISSUE 1

K-12 SAP Trainings & SAP Thematic Workshops

K-12 SAP TRAINING Dates: September 10&11, 2026; October 22&23, 2026; November 12&13, 2026; February 11&12, 2027; April 1&2, 2027.

Trainings are held at the Fred Rogers Conference Center, Saint Vincent College. The Training is designed for new members of either a secondary or elementary S.A.P. team. This is also appropriate for Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Liaisons, Treatment Staff, and School-Based Probation Officers who have been assigned the role of "ad hoc" S.A.P. team members. Those individuals needing to make up a training session from a prior training will be able to complete those requirements at these trainings. For additional information or to register, please call Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects at 724-805-2050.

SAP Thematic Workshops: October 6, 2026; December 3, 2026; March 9, 2027. **Workshops are held at the Fred Rogers Conference Center, Saint Vincent College.** Training announcements will be emailed and also posted in the newsletter. For additional information or to register, please call Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects at 724-805-2050.

Awareness Days

You can easily take advantage of special events to raise awareness of an important issue or cause.
Here are a few up-coming events for the next several months:

International Overdose Awareness Day, August 31st: <http://www.overdoseday.com/>

National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month-September:
<https://www.naadac.org/national-recovery-month>

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Day, September 9: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/facts.html>

World Suicide Prevention Day September 10: <https://www.iasp.info/resources/>

SVCPP mailing
Address:

300 Fraser
Purchase Road,
Latrobe, PA
15650

Phone:
724-805-2050
Fax:
724-420-5930



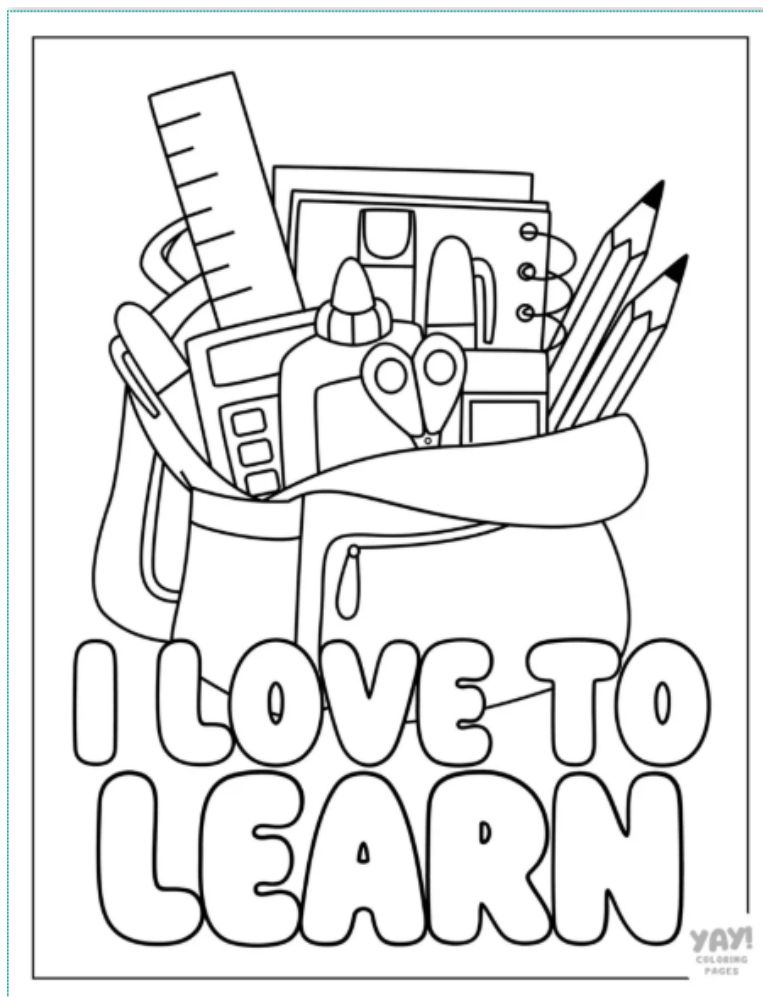
Trainings, Workshops, Events, & more...



Thematic Workshops— **October 6, 2026; December 3, 2026; March 9, 2027.** The training announcements will go to your email address and appear when appropriate in our monthly newsletter. For more information or to register, please call the Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects at 724-805-2050. The cost of the training is \$40.00, and this includes continental breakfast and lunch in the cafeteria. Act 48 credits will be given.

K-12 SAP TRAINING— **September 10&11, 2026; October 22&23, 2026; November 12&13, 2026; February 11&12, 2027; April 1&2, 2027.** Training is designed for new members of either a secondary or elementary S.A.P. team who have not completed the initial training with their team. This is also appropriate for Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Liaison, Treatment staff and school-based probation officers who have been assigned the role of "ad hoc" S.A.P. team members. Those individuals needing to make up a training session from a prior training will be able to complete those requirements at this training. For information or to register, please call the Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects at 724-805-2050. The cost of the training is \$360 which includes training materials, lunch and continental breakfast both days. SAP Training for all school district employees is \$0 until December 31, 2026.

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SVCPP Announces NEW Intervention Group



The poster features a vibrant, colorful background with a space-themed galaxy pattern. Various gaming peripherals are scattered around the text, including a black and green game controller, a backlit keyboard, a gaming mouse, and headphones. The title 'LEVEL UP' is prominently displayed in large, stylized letters with a green and blue gradient. Below it, the subtitle 'Finding Balance with Gaming' is written in a smaller font. The main text 'READY TO RESET YOUR GAME?' is enclosed in a yellow banner. The description of the group is followed by a section titled 'WHO IS THIS GROUP FOR?' which lists four key areas of focus: understanding gaming and the brain, managing emotions, building better routines, and strengthening social skills. Each area is accompanied by a circular icon. The 'WHY JOIN?' section is also highlighted with a yellow banner and lists four benefits with checkmarks. The poster concludes with a call to action to ask the school counselor for more information.

LEVEL UP

Finding Balance with Gaming

READY TO RESET YOUR GAME?

Gaming should be fun — not something that controls your sleep, grades, or mood.
LEVEL UP is a group for students who want to find balance and stay in control.

WHO IS THIS GROUP FOR?

- Understand Gaming & the Brain**
 - How gaming impacts focus, mood, and motivation
 - Healthy vs. unhealthy gaming habits
- Manage Emotions**
 - Recognize triggers
 - Learn coping strategies that actually work
- Build Better Routines**
 - Time management skills
 - Balancing gaming with school and life
- Strengthen Social Skills**
 - Effective communication
 - Building stronger peer connections

WHY JOIN?

- ✓ Improve focus and school performance
- ✓ Sleep better
- ✓ Feel more in control
- ✓ Connect with other students

Ask your school counselor for more information.



You're Invited

Monday, September 21, 2026

YOUTH ADVOCACY DAY

WCCC, STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT CENTER, EVENT CENTER ROOM

10:00AM-2:00PM

Connect....Listen and Make an Impact!

Meet with students from

- DERRY AREA HS
- HEMPFIELD AREA HS
- GREATER LATROBE HS



Meet with students from

- JEANNETTE CITY HS
- MONESSEN CITY HS
- MOUNT PLEASANT AREA HS

Meet the students participating from across Westmoreland County in Youth Advocacy Day and hear directly from them about the issues that matter most—from substance use to mental health.

Come listen, connect, and be part of the conversation!

Register at: www.surveymonkey.com/r/YAD2026



Westmoreland
Drug & Alcohol Commission, Inc.



Lunch is Provided

Questions: sopalinski@wedacinc.org



CSAY



2026



PREVENTION CONFERENCE



Westmoreland
Drug & Alcohol Commission, Inc.

VENDOR TABLES
AVAILABLE
\$30 DONATION



TOPICS INCLUDE:

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL FAMILY
THERAPY/COA

PANEL OF 1ST RESPONDERS
FOR AN OVERDOSE

GAMING AND SPORTS
BETTING

CHILDLINE PROCESS
WHEN ATOD IS INVOLVED

WHO AM I? IN PROFESSIONAL
& PERSONAL LIFE

CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST
&
LUNCH PROVIDED

Questions contact:
sopalinski@wedacinc.org

Social Work and ACT 48 Credits pending

SEPTEMBER 25, 2026
9:00AM--3:30PM

WESTMORELAND COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT CENTER
YOUNGWOOD, PA 15697

REGISTRATION FOR VENDORS

www.surveymonkey.com/r/2026PrevConfVendor

REGISTRATION FOR ATTENDEES

www.surveymonkey.com/r/2026PrevConfParticipant



Awareness Month Information



International OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

AUGUST 31, 2026



Every August 31, International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD) brings a global community together to take action on overdose. Hold an event, spread the message, take action today.

This year the theme for IOAD is 25 Years On. Still Needed.

For 25 years, International Overdose Awareness Day has brought people together to remember those we've lost and to take action to save lives.

The truth is, we shouldn't still need this day. But we do.

Overdose continues to affect every community. Yet it can be prevented. We know how to reduce risk and keep people safe. By speaking openly, learning from one another, and treating each other with care and respect, we build a world where fewer lives are lost.

Because while this day is still needed, it doesn't have to be forever.

#IOAD2026 #OverdoseAware #EndOverdose

Info from: <https://www.samhsa.gov/about/digital-toolkits/recovery-month>





Awareness Month Information



In 2024, we developed a set of principles for International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD) to guide our collective efforts in addressing the overdose crisis:

By establishing this set of six clear, compassionate principles, we aim to motivate meaningful change in policies, practices, and attitudes towards overdose and overdose prevention within and beyond our community.

These principles will serve as a foundation for advocacy, education and community action, supporting us to work together towards our common goal: to end overdose.

1. Overdose can and must be prevented.

Overdose is a global crisis—one that can feel overwhelming and impossible to solve at times—but it's important to remember that this crisis is preventable.

Our first principle of International Overdose Awareness Day reinforces the fundamental belief that overdose can be prevented, and together, we can end this crisis. Even in moments of doubt, we should remember that we are taking useful steps to reduce harm and save lives.

Let's commit to raising awareness, sharing knowledge, and taking action to prevent overdose and end this tragedy.

2. Overdose prevention solutions exist – let's use them.

Overdose prevention solutions exist—yet putting them into action remains a challenge.

Our second principle of International Overdose Awareness Day reminds us that we have the tools to prevent overdose and save lives. Evidence-based solutions like naloxone, harm reduction services, and safe consumption spaces are proven to work.

However, implementing these initiatives can be challenging, as it takes courage to adopt new approaches and an open mind to explore how these solutions can be adapted to different contexts.

Let's commit to learning all we can about the various overdose prevention strategies and advocating for broader access to these solutions. By embracing innovative thinking and working together, we can overcome these challenges and make a real impact.



3. Criminalizing drug use hasn't worked. Compassionate alternatives must be pursued.

Our third principle of International Overdose Awareness Day acknowledges that criminalizing drug use has often caused more harm than good.

It can be difficult to see through the pain of losing someone to overdose, and in those moments, blame and punishment may seem like the best solutions. But to truly address this crisis, we need to look beyond criminalization and embrace compassionate, evidence-based alternatives that focus on health and dignity.

This International Overdose Awareness Day, let's advocate for policies that prioritize care over criminalization. By pushing for approaches that support rather than punish, we can build a system that truly addresses the needs of those affected by substance use.



4. Policy and legislation must exist to protect individuals and communities, and ensure basic human rights and needs are met.

Our fourth principle of International Overdose Awareness Day underscores the need for strong, compassionate policies that prevent overdose and truly safeguard our communities. Laws should protect people, not punish them unnecessarily or hinder their access to support. Too often, drug-related laws are punitive rather than focused on what's best for the rights and needs of individuals.

Through this principle, we aim to inspire the community to learn more about how policy and legislation can prioritize health, dignity, and human rights for all, while still enforcing necessary punitive measures against those who harm others.

Balancing protection and compassion is key to creating laws that truly safeguard our communities.



Awareness Month Information



5. Everyone has a right to respectful and comprehensive health care.

Our fifth new principle of International Overdose Awareness Day emphasizes that health care is a fundamental human right. Yet, too many people are denied the care they need due to stigma, discrimination, or lack of resources.

We believe that overdose prevention must be rooted in human rights-based advocacy, ensuring that everyone, especially those struggling with addiction, receives respectful and comprehensive care that is relevant to their individual, unique needs.

We encourage the community to take a stand for health equity. Support organizations that provide stigma-free care and advocate for policies that uphold the dignity and rights of all individuals. No one should be denied the health services that others enjoy, especially those most vulnerable.

6. Only a community-wide effort can end overdose.

Mobilizing community action and supporting local advocacy are at the core of what International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD) is all about. This is what our sixth and final principle for IOAD highlights.

We believe that change of this magnitude must come from the people—those who are directly impacted and understand what their communities need. This issue often remains hidden because it's a complex problem that can be challenging or politically risky for leaders to address. But the voices of the community can shine a light on this crisis and drive the solutions necessary to end overdose.

IOAD is about saying that lives lost to something that is preventable is not ok. Join us in this effort—get educated, get involved, and help your community advocate for the change needed to end overdose.

Info from: <https://www.overdoseday.com/news/our-guiding-principles-what-we-stand-for/>

Drug Overdose Death Rates by States

- **Ohio:** 37.0 deaths per 100,000 people (9% of total U.S. overdose deaths)
- **Pennsylvania:** 35.3 deaths per 100,000 people (6.8% of total U.S. overdose deaths)
- **New Jersey:** 30.2 deaths per 100,000 people (3 % of total U.S. overdose death rates)
- **Illinois:** 28.2 deaths per 100,000 people (5% of total U.S. overdose deaths)
- **Michigan:** 25.1 deaths per 100,000 people (4% of total U.S. overdose death rates)
- **Florida:** 23.7 deaths per 100,000 people (14.6% of total U.S. overdose deaths)

Info from: <https://www.urbanrecovery.com/blog/how-many-people-died-from-drugs>



Awareness Month Information



NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH

Recovery is transforming lives in every community across America. Through the Great American Recovery, SAMHSA is working alongside states, tribes, territories, local governments, faith organizations, employers, families, recovery community organizations, treatment providers, and people with lived experience to strengthen the systems that make recovery possible for everyone. National Recovery Month is an opportunity to celebrate that progress, recognize those who make recovery possible, and invite every American to be part of building recovery-ready communities.

NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

recovery happens together.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
Call or Text 988
Chat 988Lifeline.org

Veterans Crisis Line
Dial 988 (Press 1) Text 838255

Disaster Distress Helpline
1-800-985-5990

SAMHSA's National Helpline
1-800-662-HELP (4357)

FindTreatment.gov
FindSupport.gov

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Info from: <https://www.samhsa.gov/about/digital-toolkits/recovery-month>



Awareness Month Information



What Everyone Should Know about FASD

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs) are a group of conditions that can occur in a person exposed to alcohol before birth. These neurodevelopmental conditions can affect each person in different ways. People with FASDs can have lifelong effects, including challenges with behavior and learning as well as physical problems.¹ Individuals with FASD also show a wide range of strengths.²



FASDs are described as a spectrum because prenatal alcohol exposure affects each person differently. Every individual has a unique combination of strengths, challenges, and support needs, so no two people with FASD have the same experience.



1 in 20 children in the US has an FASD.³



There is **no known safe amount, no safe time, and no safe type of alcohol** to consume during pregnancy. Not all babies will be affected by prenatal alcohol exposure. However, it is impossible to know which babies will be affected or what the specific effects will be.⁴

If you had alcohol while you were pregnant, even before you knew you were pregnant, talk with your child's healthcare provider as soon as possible. They can help check for any effects that might appear over time and connect you with resources and supports. Families affected by FASD can thrive!



Awareness Month Information



FASD Across the Lifespan

Prenatal alcohol exposure can affect how the brain and body develop, with lifelong impacts.⁵ This can include things like: physical health concerns, developmental delays, behavioral challenges, difficulty with school or employment, mental health struggles, and more.⁶ Symptoms and support needs can change throughout the lifespan.⁷ Every person with FASD is impacted differently and has both unique strengths and support needs.⁸



There are 428 identified co-occurring conditions associated with FASD, including conditions like ADHD, cardiovascular and gastrointestinal problems, and anxiety disorders.⁹ Congenital heart defects (CHDs) are 5 times as common among children with FASD than those without FASD.¹⁰



Many behaviors associated with FASD are often misunderstood as intentional defiance or misbehavior. Instead, it is recommended to consider an FASD-informed approach that recognizes brain-based differences and focuses on understanding support needs rather than assuming intentional behavior.

Learn about FASD directly from people with FASD: scan the QR code for the "Glimpses of FASD" series.



Sources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2025). About fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs). <https://www.cdc.gov/fasd/about/index.html>
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- Rutman, D. (2016). *Becoming FASD Informed: Strengthening Practice and Programs Working with Women with FASD*. Substance abuse : research and treatment, 10(Suppl 1), 13–20.
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Published 7/2026

1054 31st Street NW #204 ▪ Washington, DC 20007 ▪ (202) 785-4585 ▪ FASDUnited.org



Available Services Through SVCPP:



LOOK FOR THE SAINT VINCENT COLLEGE PREVENTION PROJECTS AT MANY SCHOOL EVENTS THROUGHOUT WESTMORELAND COUNTY

Special Speaker Presentations

Presentations are available to your community group, business or organization at minimal cost or FREE. Topics include: Current Drug Trends, Power of Parents, Gambling/Gaming Awareness, Responsible Gambling, Talking with your Kids and The Dangers of Underage Drinking, Mobile Bedroom, Social Media, Click-Bait and Other On-Line Potholes, and more.

RADAR (Free Materials)

Regional Alcohol/Drug Awareness Resource, Information Center

The Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects provides free materials (pamphlets, brochures, posters, etc.) to schools, organizations, community groups, and to the general public on various topics that include: alcohol, tobacco, drugs, violence prevention, child guidance, and medications and the elderly.

To schedule a program for your business, school or organization, please contact Beth Potochnik, Prevention Education & Community Outreach Services Manager at Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects at 724-805-2050 or email beth.potochnik@stvincent.edu





Available Intervention Services Through SVCPP:



**The following Tier II Intervention Programs are offered to all
Westmoreland County Secondary Schools
at NO cost to the school districts:**



N.O.T. (Not on Tobacco) Program

SVCPP Intervention Specialists deliver 6 sessions covering facts vs. myths, triggers and advertising nicotine products, identifying support strategies, benefits to quitting nicotine use and how your body responds, creating healthy habits, and ways to stay nicotine free. N.O.T. explores the various delivery systems, i.e. vape devices, chewing, smoking, etc. N.O.T. is an American Lung Association program aimed to recognize dependence on nicotine and to identify replacement strategies to restore health.

The Blues Program

SVCPP Intervention Specialists provide early intervention service groups for adolescents with observable behaviors displaying depressive symptoms or are at-risk for depression. These are 6 session groups provided weekly within your school.

Marijuana Brief Intervention Program

SVCPP Intervention Specialists use this evidence-based program for early intervention with students who may be experimenting with marijuana in its various forms. During the 6 weekly sessions, students will identify triggers, how their environment can contribute to usage, and practical evidence-based ways to reduce/eliminate marijuana use.

In-Depth Program

The American Lung Association's INDEPTH® (Intervention for Nicotine Dependence: Education, Prevention, Tobacco and Health) program is an alternative to suspension or citation program that is offered as an option to students who face suspension for violation of school tobacco or e-cigarette use policies. This program is administered by a trained adult facilitator in either a one-on-one or group format and can be offered in a school or community-based setting. The program consists of four sessions of approximately 50 minutes geared toward youth and focused on tobacco use, including e-cigarettes, nicotine dependence, establishing healthy alternatives and making the change to be free of all tobacco products. Because the program is offered as an alternative to suspension or citation, attendance is mandatory to fulfill the obligation for the infraction. While INDEPTH is not a cessation program, steps toward cessation are strongly encouraged. Students may decide to quit or reduce their tobacco/nicotine use as result of their participation in the program.

If your school district can benefit from these services, please email: Christina Weimer, SAP
Coordinator and Intervention Services Manager, Christina.weimer@stvincent.edu



Westmoreland County Information



1200 Maronda Way, Suite 300, Monessen, PA
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

724-243-2220

<http://wedacinc.org>



Southwestern Pennsylvania Human Services, Inc.

203 S Maple Ave, Greensburg, PA 15601

724-834-0420

Hours: Monday-Thursday 8:30am-9:00pm

<http://www.sphs.org>

Friday 8:30am-5:00pm

Outside In

To the Fullest...

Outpatient Services
PHONE 724-837-1518

Residential Programs
PHONE 724-238-8441

PO Box 639
Greensburg, PA 15601



First Floor Suite 110, 40 N Pennsylvania Avenue, Greensburg, PA 15601
(724-830-3617)

<http://www.co.westmoreland.pa.us/>



SVC Prevention Projects

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Map from: <https://www.city2map.com/en/us/pa/westmoreland-county.html>



From the Desk of Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects: Parent Tips & Resources



CHECK OUT THESE TWO AMAZING PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT HEALTHY PREGNANCIES



FASD United

Family Navigator



NIAAA ALCOHOL TREATMENT

NAVIGATOR

Pointing the way to evidence-based care



What they do:

The FASD United Family Navigator program provides individuals living with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD), their family members, caregivers and supporters with expert, confidential support and referrals.

Who they help:

Our Navigators serve members of the FASD community and anyone in need of one-on-one peer support, referrals to resources and services, information about prenatal alcohol exposure, or with a question about any facet of FASD.

How to access services:

A FASD Family Navigator can be reached from 9am-10pm Eastern Time, Monday-Friday via phone at **800-666-6327** or by completing the form on our website under the Family Navigator page under "Help and Information" section.

What they do:

The Navigator helps people find alcohol treatment through step-by-step processes. The NIAAA is the lead U.S. research agency studying the causes, outcomes, prevention, and treatment of alcohol-related problems.

Who they help:

The Navigator will steer you or an adult loved one toward evidence-based treatment, which applies knowledge gained through decades of carefully designed scientific research.

How to access services:

The Navigator's 3-step "road map" offers expert guidance to focus and support your efforts. Go to AlcoholTreatment.niaaa.nih.gov and look at the "How to Find Quality Alcohol Treatment" section.

1054 31st Street NW #204 Washington, DC 20007 (202) 785-4585 FASDUnited.org



From the Desk of Saint Vincent College Prevention Projects: Parent Tips & Resources



School Readiness Tip Sheet

Routines

A routine is a regular way of doing things in a particular order. Routines are important because they can help organize life and reduce stress in the family. Every family needs routines. Routines give children a sense of security and help them develop self-regulation.

Here are some benefits you will see when you put routines in place in your home:

- Children feel more in control when they know what to expect. Children who know what to expect are more confident in themselves and the world around them.
- Routines help children learn to trust that others will take care of them and meet their needs. There will be less need for them to seek attention with negative behaviors.
- Routines help children develop self-control because they learn they have to wait until a certain time to do a particular activity.
- Routines develop responsibility and independence because children will be able to do more things on their own since they know what comes next.
- Routines help take away power struggles between parent and child. When there is a routine in place, there will be fewer arguments about what is expected.
- Routines at home help prepare children for the routines of the school day.
- Routines help adults manage the stress that comes from handling all the tasks during a busy day. When parents are less stressed, children get more positive attention from them.

How to establish a routine:

- Start by planning a routine for a difficult time of the day.
- Plan with your child so he or she can have a say in some parts of the routine.
- Write down the steps of the routine or make pictures of each step and post it so everyone can see it.
- Be patient and follow the routine as posted every day because it may take some time for your family to learn the new routine.
- Let your child know ahead of time if there will be a change in a routine. Talk about why a change is needed and if it is a one-time change or if the routine will be different in some way from now on.

