

# Family Tips # 1

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The latest research on family studies has provided great resources for the ways family members can support and nurture each other. There are also some new recommendations on how organizations can become more effective when assisting parents and legal guardians. Here are some of the latest findings:

1. **Family** continues to be the most important social system in the life of an individual regardless of age across specialized literature (psychology, psychiatry, and neuroscience). No matter how the family unit is structured (single mother, traditional family, children raised by grandparents, etc.), most individuals feel the strongest emotional and cognitive connections with those who are part of their family.
2. **Dinner time and family meetings:** Eating together at the end of the day enhances communication and makes children and teenagers feel safe and connected to the adults of the family unit. This is a great time to ask children and teenagers to help prepare dinner, clean up, and discuss how their day went. Most authors currently suggest that families should eat together every day. This should be a time in which all members of the family know that dinner time is important, and no one is allowed to skip it unless facing relevant circumstances (illness, homework, work, etc.). Some families also spend time together after brushing teeth and right before going to bed, in an area such as the living or dining rooms, discussing how the day went and planning the next day. These activities are intentional and are developed every day, led by the adults in the home.
3. Several authors suggest that all family members (both young and adults) **should avoid interacting with cellphones** while participating in dinner and family meetings.
4. **Connecting with parents:** Most studies suggest that when connecting with parents, avoid treating them like children. Organizations that serve families should know how to connect with adult parents and legal guardians, always helping them understand the importance of the monthly programs, meetings, and activities offered by the organization. Parents who do not participate in organization activities are generally those who are not able to connect with the agency at an adult and cognitive level.

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