

# THE NEST

A CCS Resource for Discipleship in the Home

## Togetherhness & Tethering . . .

"Can we eat as a family?"

More than I wish to admit, this is the question asked by my 8 year old as we fill up our plates and often have to grab-and-go dinner as we manage schedules and commitments. Her question convicts me and causes me to rethink how important the next 45 minutes are for her.

Staggeringly, 2019 Research in Canada indicates that 98% of Canadians believe in the value of eating together. However, 65% indicate they wish they did so more often. 27% said they're just too busy to eat together regularly. If we struggle to eat together as a family, we're in good company.

The reason togetherhness is significant, even just for meals, is because it strengthens the tether of parent and child attachment. This tether is meant to describe the strength and priority of influence (sometimes called power) between parents and children. The key factor in nurturing its strength is consistency.

Neufeld writes, "The secret of parenting is not in what a parent does but rather who the parent is to the child . . . All the parenting skills in the world cannot compensate for a lack of attachment relationship."

**AGES 1-5**

**BENEFITS OF FAMILY DINNERS**

Conversation at the dinner table is even better than reading to children in boosting their vocabulary, and helping them to read.

Kids who start eating dinners now are less likely to be overweight later.

New parents who develop a dinnertime ritual feel more satisfied with marriages.

**THE FAMILY DINNER PROJECT.ORG**

## Key Thoughts:

98% of Canadians believe in the value of eating together. 65% wish they did it more often.

The secret of parenting is not what a parent does but rather who the parent is to the child.

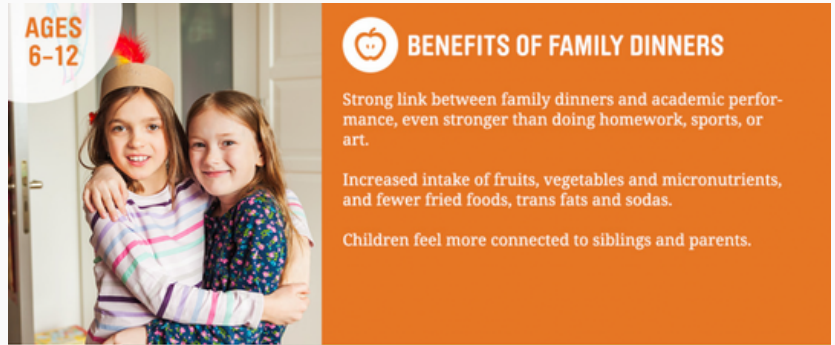
Peer bonds are increasingly the primary orientation, replacing the parent/child attachment.

Two resources highlighted in this issue:

"Hold Onto Your Kids" by Gordon Neufeld

The Family Dinner Project:  
[www.thefamilydinnerproject.com](http://www.thefamilydinnerproject.com)

Neufeld continues: "Parenting requires a context to be effective . . . Children do not automatically grant us the authority to parent them because we are adults, or just because we love them or think we know what is good for them or have their best interests at heart." What is the context of parenting? It is the relationship that you share with your child.



**AGES 6-12**

**BENEFITS OF FAMILY DINNERS**

- Strong link between family dinners and academic performance, even stronger than doing homework, sports, or art.
- Increased intake of fruits, vegetables and micronutrients, and fewer fried foods, trans fats and sodas.
- Children feel more connected to siblings and parents.

Parenting happens all the time and in every place. When there is a strong tether, your parental influence doesn't end when you're not in the room. While there are other influences present, the power of your voice continues to be impactful. The children views themselves in relationship to you first, then to others.

**"Power means the spontaneous authority to parent."**

GORDON NEUFELD

"Power" Neufeld comments "means the spontaneous authority to parent. That authority flows not from coercion or force but from an appropriate aligned relationship with the child." The tether is strong.

As parents, this means we want to be mindful of the relationship that we're nurturing and reinforcing with our children. Back to our first issue, the question we must ask: "Is this going to move me closer to or further from my desired destination?" A destination I'm sure we share is a strong and loyal relationship between parent and child.

However, Neufeld reflects that what is often the case, picking up on the conversation from Turkle, that students cannot endure what he calls an "orientation void". They latch on to someone.

Neufeld comments "Peer bonds have come to replace relationships with adults as children's primary sources of orientation. What is unnatural is not peer contact, but that children should have become the dominant influence on one another's development."

The question isn't how many friends or even how much time they spend with their friends - it's the kind of influence their peers have.

So, as you sit together this thanksgiving - it's more than meal. It's strengthening the bond in the family unit and nurturing the tether of love and influence. Happy Thanksgiving from all the family here at CCS.

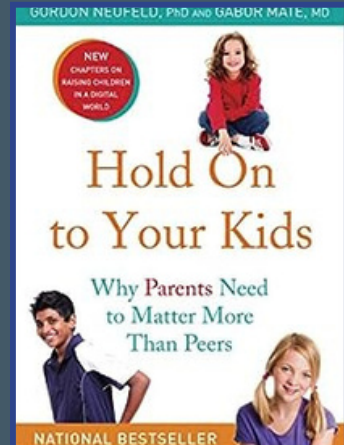


**AGES 13-18**

**BENEFITS OF FAMILY DINNERS**

- Teens who eat regular family dinners are more likely to get A's in school.
- Reduces high risk teenage behaviors like smoking, substance abuse, eating disorders, teenage pregnancy and violence.
- Reduces depression and anxiety and increases self-esteem.
- Opportunity to check in with kids to find out how they're doing.

**Resource for the shelf:**



**Hold On to Your Kids**

Why Parents Need to Matter More Than Peers

GORDON NEUFELD, PHD AND GABRIK MATE, MD

NEW CHAPTERS ON RAISING CHILDREN IN A DIGITAL WORLD

NATIONAL BESTSELLER