



# NEWSLETTER

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SEPTEMBER 2025

## SEPTEMBER CONNECTIONS: STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND SUPPORTING YOUTH

### FAMILY DAY: STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS - SEPT. 22

On September 22nd, we celebrate Family Day, a reminder of the powerful role families play in shaping healthy choices and well-being.

Youth who have regular family meals are less likely to engage in risky behaviors and more likely to do well in school. Even simple activities — like cooking together, playing a board game, or going for a walk — can strengthen family bonds.

Try this activity: Set aside one night a week for "Family Fun Night." Let each family member take turns choosing the activity to build connection and joy.



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As the school year gets underway, September offers us important reminders: the power of community support, the importance of mental health awareness, and the everyday steps we can take to strengthen families. This month, we are highlighting Project FRONTIER, Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, Family Day, and tips on supporting children's social development.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Project FRONTIER, led by the Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center (NKESC) in Oakley, works to increase the capacity of 18 school districts across 12 counties (12,000 square miles) to provide trauma-support services and mental health care. The goal: break cycles of violence and trauma in families and communities throughout northwest Kansas.

This initiative has measurable targets:

- Increase the number of students receiving mental health services
- Boost staff confidence in identifying and reporting student mental health needs
- Improve parent engagement with community-based organizations
- Enhance community satisfaction with school-based services

Our district liaisons are available to provide presentations to communities, parents, schools, student events, staff—you name it! We're always researching new topics and would love to create a presentation that best fits your community's needs. Just reach out to [projectfrontier@nkesc.org](mailto:projectfrontier@nkesc.org) and a member of our team will be in contact with you.

By supporting students and families, Project FRONTIER helps build resilience and strengthen communities.





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## SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and share resources that can save lives. Suicide is a leading cause of death among youth, particularly for those ages 10-24, and many young people experiencing mental health challenges do not receive the support they need. Certain groups, including LGBTQ+ youth, those who have experienced trauma, and students facing bullying, are at higher risk. Recognizing warning signs early and responding with support can make a critical difference.

### Important Resources

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call or text 988, available 24/7
- High Plains Mental Health: Local counseling and crisis support



### Warning Signs to Watch For:

- Talking about wanting to die or hurt themselves
- Expressing hopelessness or feeling like a burden
- Withdrawing from friends, family, or favorite activities
- Drastic changes in mood, sleep, or eating habits
- Risk-taking behaviors or giving away prized possessions

### How Parents, Caregivers, and Educators Can Help:

- Start the conversation: Ask directly and listen without judgment
- Encourage professional help: Connect youth with counselors, psychologists, or pediatric mental health providers
- Create a supportive environment: Foster open communication and let youth know it's safe to share their feelings
- Model self-care: Caregivers who manage their own stress and emotions positively influence children

By staying informed, fostering open communication, and connecting youth to resources, families and communities can play a vital role in preventing suicide and supporting emotional well-being.





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## BUILDING HEALTHY FRIENDSHIPS



Friendships are more than just playtime—they help children build confidence, empathy, problem-solving skills, and a sense of belonging. At the same time, making and keeping friends can sometimes feel challenging for kids as they navigate new situations, emotions, and social expectations.

### How Parents and Caregivers Can Help:

- Model positive relationships
- Practice social skills at home
- Encourage safe social opportunities
- Talk about what makes a good friend
- Support healthy boundaries
- Build empathy and problem-solving skills



Friendships are powerful tools for growth and well-being. By offering gentle guidance, parents and caregivers can help children form relationships that support them through school, family life, and beyond.

Want to hear more? Check out the [Thriving Kids](#) podcast with Dr. Mandi Silverman, where experts share additional strategies for supporting your child's social development.

### CLOSING THOUGHT

Whether it's through building healthy friendships, connecting as a family, or supporting mental health, every small step we take helps create stronger, more resilient communities.

Thank you for being a part of this important work!

Project Frontier  
has created a  
file full of  
helpful tools for  
parents and  
caregivers!



Scan the QR code above or click [HERE](#)  
to find information on supporting  
mental health and well-being for  
both you and your child.