



# Badlands Head Start: PRENATAL TO FIVE



## October/November/December 2020 **Newsletter**

### Upcoming Dates

<b>November 1st</b>	Daylight Savings Time Ends
<b>November 11th</b>	Veterans Day
<b>November 18th</b>	Policy Council Meeting
<b>November 19th</b>	TREC Board Meeting
<b>November 26th</b>	HOLIDAY
<b>November 26 &amp; 27th</b>	<b>NO CENTERS</b>
<b>December 16th</b>	Policy Council Meeting
<b>December 17th</b>	TREC Board Meeting
<b>December 25th</b>	HOLIDAY
<b>December 21st, 2020-January 1st, 2021</b>	<b>NO CENTERS</b>
<b>January 4th, 2021</b>	<b>CENTERS RESUME</b>



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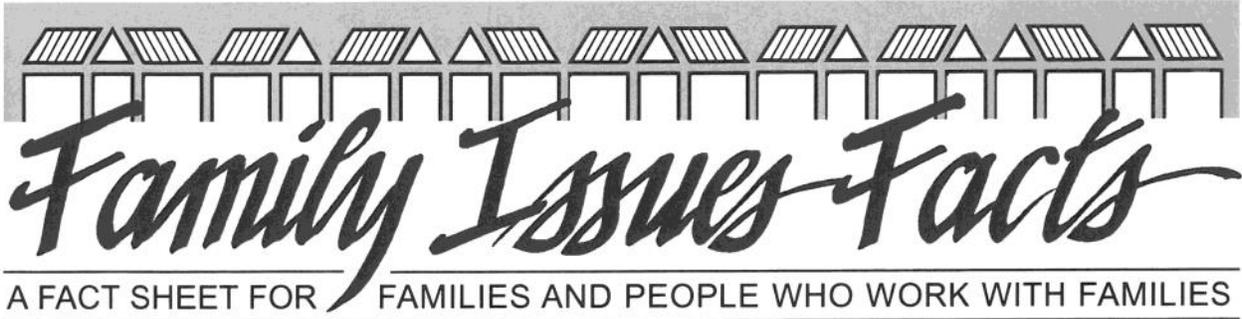
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# Message from Melissa

*Melissa Pickle - Program Services Director / Education & Disability Specialist*



## Family Issues Facts

A FACT SHEET FOR FAMILIES AND PEOPLE WHO WORK WITH FAMILIES

### *Discipline that Works: The Ages and Stages Approach*

Bulletin #4140

“Ages and stages” discipline is based on normal changes in your child’s growth and behavior. Children’s behavior changes just like their bodies change — in predictable patterns.

Stages of growth build one upon another, like the circles in a “slinky” toy. Each child grows according to his or her own genetic “time plan,” moving forward toward maturity. As they grow, children switch back and forth between “comfortable” ages or stages and “uncomfortable” ages.

The comfortable stages come when they take in all they’ve learned — all the new and old pieces seem to fit together well. Uncomfortable stages are times of rapid growth and change. Change, for most of us, causes stress and anxiety — discomfort. A child in a time of discomfort may have trouble coping with day-to-day life, may seem extra-sensitive or may argue more.

However, some children are naturally more relaxed. They are easier to discipline, even if they’re at an “uncomfortable” stage.

Other children may be more difficult. They may have more stress at a certain stage of growth.

#### **The Difference Between Discipline and Punishment**

Discipline and punishment are not the same. Discipline is about guiding children in ways that support their development of self-control. It is respectful, accepting and comforting. It enhances self-worth. Punishment is used to hurt. It focuses on the child rather than on the act or behavior.

Discipline is ongoing. It is the way you talk to your child, the way you treat your child, the way you live. It is how you help your children respond to the day-to-day events in their lives.

Examples of discipline for very young children include child-proofing cupboards in the kitchen and bathroom to keep children safe or putting fragile items out of reach.

For school-age children, making sure they have a good snack after school is an example of discipline that helps both them and you cope better with end-of-the-day fatigue.

#### **Base Discipline on Your Child’s Development**

Children change very quickly, especially in the years before they start school. Discipline that works at one stage may not work at another. A child of 2-1/2 is very different from a 3-year-old. At 2-1/2, many children are in an “uncomfortable” stage. They can be very aggressive one minute and withdrawn the next. A key to disciplining a 2-1/2-year-old is to use routines and avoid giving the child choices. By the age of 3, however, many children have reached a much more “comfortable” stage. Discipline at this stage can be much easier and relaxed.

Yet by 3-1/2 years the child may enter another “uncomfortable” time. He or she may have difficulty with changes.

The more you know about normal developmental changes, the more you’ll be able to guide children well. Knowing more about what they are going through also takes some stress off you as a parent.

# Message from Melissa

## Roadblocks to Good Discipline

The six biggest roadblocks to effective discipline are

- 1. confusing discipline with punishment.** Discipline helps children develop self-control and self-esteem. It teaches right from wrong. Punishment might restrain a child temporarily, but it does not teach alternative behavior. Punishment can even damage the parent-child relationship by reducing a child's trust in the parent.
- 2. believing that what works at one time will work all the time.** You need to change the way you discipline your children to keep pace with their natural growth. Different ages and stages, as well as different children, require different techniques.
- 3. thinking that when you have difficulty disciplining a child, you are a "bad" parent.** Don't put yourself down if you don't get the results you want. Think it through and try again.
- 4. believing your children "should" behave a certain way at a certain time.** Children are unique and special. They develop at their own speed, in their own way.
- 5. believing you must "win" every battle.** It is important to "pick your battles." Don't fight over unimportant issues.
- 6. parents disagreeing in front of a child about discipline.** Solve serious disagreements in private.

## The Effect of Negative Behavior Correction

If you treat your children with the same respect and kindness you offer a close friend, they will learn positive behaviors. Negative

methods of behavior correction such as sarcasm, hurtful teasing, verbal abuse, humiliation and physical punishment do not help children learn positive ways of acting. Rather, they create angry children who do not feel very good about themselves.

## Tips for Effective Discipline

Punishment is not a recommended way to teach children self-control. Here are some tips to help you discipline in an effective manner and avoid punishing actions.

- 1. Set reasonable limits.** Setting reasonable limits offers realistic guidelines for children and helps them to feel secure. When you set limits, stick to them and be consistent. If you don't stick to your limits, you will only confuse children and they may misbehave more.
- 2. Use consequences.** Letting children learn from experiences can be very effective if done properly. Parents can tell children ahead of time what the consequences of exceeding limits will be. Remember that consequences give children a choice, and parents must be willing to accept the child's decision.

Consequences can be *natural* or *logical*. *Natural consequences* let children learn the natural order of the world. For example, "If you don't eat, you will be hungry." *Logical consequences* are consequences that are arranged by the parents. For example, "If you don't put your dirty clothes in the hamper, you won't have clean clothes to wear to school."

Consequences are used to teach responsibility and decision-making. The situation itself provides the lesson and helps to develop a sense of accountability.

**3. Take corrective action as soon as possible.** It is important to correct misbehavior soon after it occurs. Carry out the *logical consequences* you've established for your child. If you don't, what are you really teaching your child?

**4. Stay calm.** Anger can "turn off" or "tune out" your child. It may make the corrective action ineffective. It may also create unneeded power plays.

Any kind of punishment done calmly is more effective than that done in anger.

**5. Provide a short time to "cool down."** In the past, this has been referred to as a "timeout." The intent is to give both you and your child time to cool down and control any anger you may be experiencing. Remember that this cool-down time should be relatively brief. It is not a punishment. Maintaining or regaining respect and comfort are two important parts of cooling down, for both adults and children. Follow up with the child about his or her behavior.

**6. Set an example.** Discipline is best taught by example.

## Using Effective Discipline

Implementing effective discipline is not always easy and takes some practice. Don't get discouraged! Remember, if you don't get the results you want, think the situation through and try again.

Discipline is a positive experience that helps children learn to set and follow behavioral limits and develop self-control.

Prepared by **Judith Graham**,  
Extension human development  
specialist

Source: Ames, L.B. (1992). *Raising Good Kids: A Developmental Approach to Discipline*. Rosemont, NJ: Modern Learning Press.

# Message from Melissa

## Discipline that Works: The Ages and Stages Approach

Bulletin #4140

Age	Development of Emotions	Tips
Infancy	Stable, well-balanced periods occur around 4, 16, 28, 40 and 52 weeks. Periods of imbalance occur often around 8, 20, 32 and 44 weeks.	No discipline needed.
18 months	Acts on impulse. Is insistent, demanding. Not much trouble with own emotions, but has trouble with other people's. Wants own demands met here and now. Not very adaptable or cuddly. Easily frustrated; attention span extremely short. Loves the outdoors and carriage/stroller rides.	Doesn't easily obey direct commands. Get attention by doing something child likes and wants to share. THINGS TO TRY: Pick up and put child where wanted. Distraction.
21 months	More demanding and less adaptable. Dependent. Has strong needs and demands, but cannot communicate them. May resist being touched.	Need for great patience and wise assessment of capabilities; discipline is not the important thing at this age. Arrange to just get smoothly through the day. THINGS TO TRY: Most successful are physical; rearrange the setting to avoid problems. Talking to them usually doesn't work.
2 years	Less demanding. More adaptable. Tends to be quiet and calm. Willing to cuddle and accept affection.	Take advantage of child's rituals, especially at bedtimes; use security items the child likes (thumb, blanket, etc.). THINGS TO TRY: Distract them or change the scene.
2 1/2 years	Great imbalance. Moves between extremes of aggression and withdrawal. Bossy, rigid, selfish, possessive, jealous. Likes sameness, repetition, predictability; changes are very hard, even minor ones; toys, etc. all have a "proper place."	Age of opposite extremes. THINGS TO TRY: Avoid giving choices. Avoid questions that can be answered by no. Use routines. Talk and work fast so child will be doing what is wanted before she or he has time to think and rebel. Anticipate difficult times or situations and avoid if possible; do not expect your child to wait for things or to share easily.
3 years	Often time of emotional calm. May be happy, contented much of the time. Gets along well with others. Likes others and wants to please them.	THINGS TO TRY: Enthusiasm, good-will and common sense.
3 1/2 years	Difficult age. Is uncertain, unsettled, insecure, yet is stubborn, demanding, unwilling or unable to give in or adapt. Tends to be fearful, unhappy. Child's big emotional struggle is with his/her mother (she is the only worthy opponent); enjoys talking/conversation; time of great motor uncertainty and fluctuating fine motor capabilities. At this age, children are much better with almost anyone other than the principal caregiver.	Difficulty making changes. May be good in long periods of play, but very poor at changing from one activity to another. THINGS TO TRY: Simplify changes as much as possible. Avoid head-on clashes. Let him know he is great — the best child ever; emotions may be very fragile; may express fears or anxieties about the dark and animals — support these but do not encourage; use an imaginary companion to help get things done; heavy use of positive phrases: "let's," "how about," and "maybe you could." Give in when things aren't important. Change subject or distract by bringing in something nice so child forgets to object.
4 years	Energetic, out-of-bounds. May go to extremes to test self against others. Often enjoys own impish, humorous ways. May be selfish, rough, impatient, loud. Loves adventure. Socially silly and larger-than-life manners may annoy adults.	Delights in upsetting adults. THINGS TO TRY: Ignore profanity, boasting, super-silly way of talking, if possible; enjoy her silliness and participate; usually likes and respects boundaries and limits; bargaining works well; surprises are good motivators; whispering very effective; praise and compliments work wonders as does the simple art of conversation. Make few rules, but enforce these strictly.

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*For more information on family issues, contact your county Extension office or the University of Maine family living office, 5717 Corbett Hall, Orono, ME 04469-5717, (207) 581-3448/3104 or 1-800-287-0274.*

# Message from Melissa

## Discipline that Works: The Ages and Stages Approach

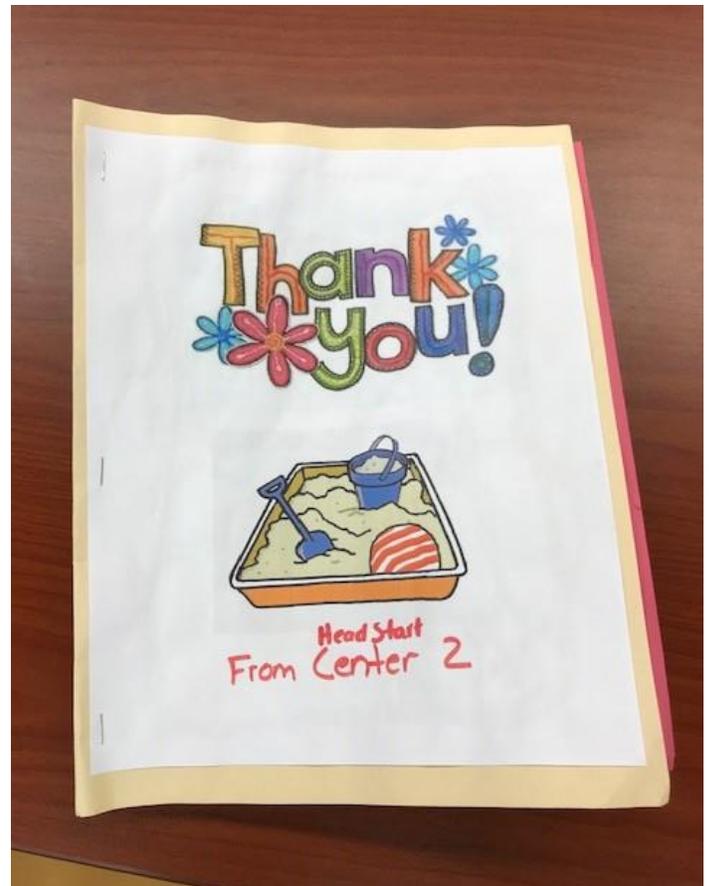
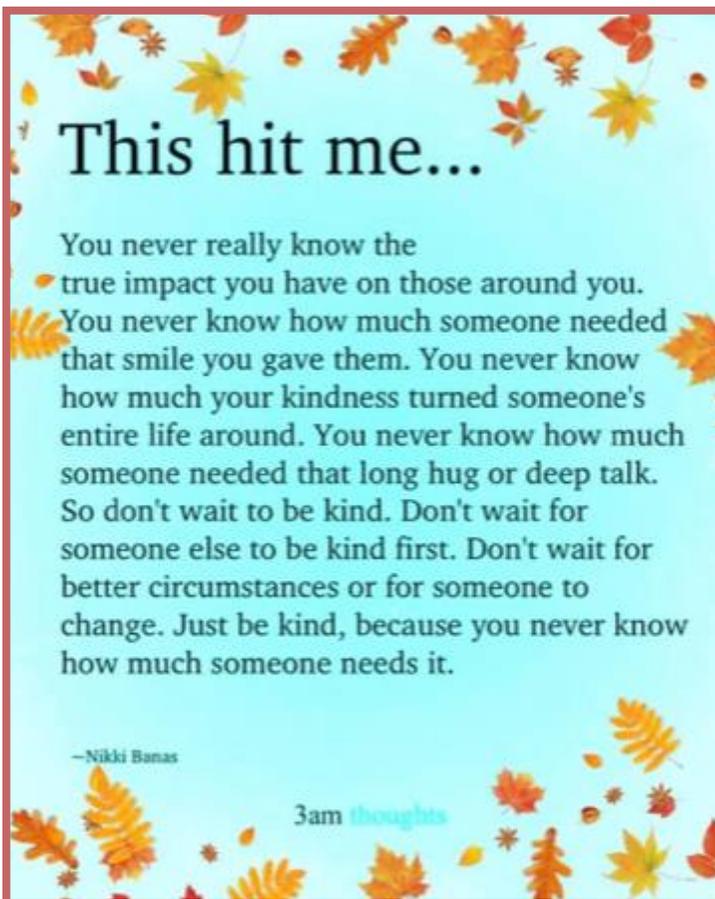
Bulletin #4140

Age	Development of Emotions	Tips
5 years	Tends to be calm, quiet, well-balanced. Pulls in and usually tries only what he knows he can do, so is comfortably well-adjusted. Friendly, loving, appreciative, wants to please and do the right thing; wants and means to be good; not yet able to admit to wrongdoing and as much as he tries, does not always tell the truth.	Let them know what is and is not reasonable to expect. Many things parents consider bad are often simply immaturities. THINGS TO TRY: Prevention is much better than punishment. If you punish, do so calmly. Child's wish to be good and do the right thing is strong. With luck, there should be relatively little need for punishment.
5 1/2 - 6 years	Highly emotional. Not in good balance. Loves one minute, hates the next. Much confusion and trouble between self and others. May demand, rebel, argue, fight. When in good mood, is cheerful, energetic, enthusiastic. Needs much praise, but behavior often merits criticism. This only makes behavior worse. Not able yet to tell the difference between mine and yours.	Age of extreme imbalance. May be very rude, resistant, defiant. Thrives on head-on clashes. Punish if absolutely necessary, but calmly. THINGS TO TRY: Patience and skill. Ignore refusal or be impersonal when child answers commands with "I won't." Praise — it may not be easy to find something to praise but try hard; avoid resistance and head-on collisions; sidestep issues if possible; bargain; give in on occasion.
6 1/2 years	Behavior quiets down for a few months. Usually relates strongly and warmly to adults close to them. Brief periods of being happy with themselves. Money is becoming of real interest both as an allowance and as a reward. Eager for more possessions.	THINGS TO TRY: Small rewards for little chores or even eating a good meal. Give them "chances" to get a request done. Consenting and bargaining also work well.
7 years	Quiet, rather negative emotions. May be serious, self-absorbed, moody, worrisome, or suspicious. Very sensitive to others' emotions. May feel disliked by others and that they are critical or poking fun. Procrastinates, has a short memory, and is easily distracted; often completely tunes out the outside world.	Obedience problem may be because child is sidetracked. THINGS TO TRY: To have a simple chore done, tell child in advance. Be sure they heard the directions. Remind the child before he or she forgets and does something else.
8 years	Vigorous, dramatic, curious, impatient, demanding. Not as moody as 7, but still sensitive. Very demanding of parents, especially mother; strongly influenced by her wishes and desires; wants time, attention, affection and approval; beginning to think abstractly; interested in and concerned about own possessions. Easily disappointed if people don't behave as wished. Can be quite critical of others and self. Argumentative.	Easily disappointed if what an adult says or does isn't what the child wants. THINGS TO TRY: Give commands in ways acceptable to the child. Money is a good motivator, as are time, attention and approval.
9 years	Quieter than at 8. Seems to be independent, responsible, dependable, cooperative. May sometimes be temperamental, but is basically reasonable. May be age of considerable rebellion against authority; tend to go to extremes; will take criticism fairly well if carefully phrased; great interest in fairness; group standards may be more important than parental standards. Demanding of others, but likely to be as critical of self as of others. Very involved with self and may not hear when spoken to. May appear absent-minded or indifferent. Shows anger at parents, but is also proud of them, is loyal to family, friends. May show concern for others.	Interests are beginning to spread beyond home and family. May resist feelings of being a little child and of being told what to do. THINGS TO TRY: Save direct commands for big important matters.
10 years	Emotionally direct, simple, clear-cut, usually well-balanced, yet still childlike. Less anxious and demanding than at 9. Most often good-natured and pleased with life. But may show sharp, violent temper. Can be very affectionate. Not a worrying age, yet a few earlier fears remain. Enjoys own humor, which may not be very funny to others. Happy age.	Tricks or specific and special ways of approaching a child are no longer particularly useful; involve the child's ability to distinguish good from bad, right from wrong, truth from untruth; best technique is to know what is reasonable to expect.

# Butte, Harding and Perkins Happenings



A very important thing to learn... Pedestrian & Transportation Safety! The Bison children spent the week learning about how to cross the street safely, along with a song about red, yellow, and green lights and what they mean. We also learned about holding hands with an adult when crossing the street and to buckle up in our booster seats when traveling.



A BIG THANKS YOU to Croell Redi Mix for donating the sand in the sandbox at the Belle Fourche Center. The kids love it so much! They even wrote a BIG THANK YOU booklet complete with their hand prints to send them !

# Activity Page

## Mary Had a Little Lamb



Mary had a little lamb,  
little lamb, little lamb,  
Mary had a little lamb,  
its fleece was white as snow.

And everywhere that Mary went,  
Mary went, Mary went,  
and everywhere that Mary went,  
the lamb was sure to go.

It followed her to school one day,  
school one day, school one day,  
It followed her to school one day,  
which was against the rules.

Nursery Rhyme Charts from [www.hubbardscupboard.com](http://www.hubbardscupboard.com) © 2017

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It made the children laugh and play,  
laugh and play, laugh and play,  
it made the children laugh and play,  
to see a lamb at school.

And so the teacher turned it out,  
turned it out, turned it out,  
And so the teacher turned it out,  
but still it lingered near.

And waited patiently about,  
patiently about, patiently about,  
And waited patiently about,  
till Mary did appear.

"Why does the lamb love Mary so?  
Love Mary so? Love Mary so?  
Why does the lamb love Mary so,"  
the eager children cry.

"Why, Mary loves the lamb, you know.  
The lamb, you know, the lamb, you know.  
Why, Mary loves the lamb, you know,"  
the teacher did reply.

Nursery Rhyme Charts from [www.hubbardscupboard.com](http://www.hubbardscupboard.com) © 2017

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**Sing a Song—Make some food—Draw some pictures.**  
**Spend a great afternoon bonding with your children!**



classroomclipart.com  
<http://classroomclipart.com>

## Tuscan Grill Cheese Sandwich – CACFP Home Childcare

### Tuscan Grill Cheese Sandwich

A Tuscan Grill Cheese Sandwich with mozzarella cheese, fresh spinach and tomatoes makes a lunchtime favorite even better!



**Preparation Time:** 15 minutes  
**Cooking Time:** 20 minutes

**Makes:** 6 servings

#### CACFP Home Childcare Crediting Information

1 sandwich provides ½ cup vegetable (¼ cup dark green vegetable, ¼ cup red/orange vegetable), 1 oz equivalent meat alternate, and 2 oz equivalent grains.

#### Ingredients

- 1 oz Margarine, trans fat-free
- ¼ tsp Garlic powder
- ¼ tsp Dried basil
- ¼ tsp Dried Oregano
- 12 slices Whole-grain bread, sliced
- 7 oz or 7-1 oz slices Low-fat mozzarella cheese
- 8 oz or ½ of a small bag Fresh baby spinach leaves, divided evenly into 6 servings
- 10 leaves each
- 12 oz or about 4 medium Fresh tomatoes, ¼" sliced evenly

#### Directions

- 1 Preheat oven:  
Conventional oven: 400 °F  
Convection oven: 350 °F
- 2 Melt margarine in a large saucepan.
- 3 Add garlic, basil, and oregano. Stir well. Set aside for step 10.
- 4 To prevent sticking, evenly coat a baking sheet (18" x 13" x 1") with butter flavored pan release spray.
- 5 Place 12 bread slices on baking sheet.
- 6 Place (about 1 oz) cheese slice on top of each slice of bread.
- 7 Place ½ cup (about 10 leaves) spinach on top of cheese.
- 8 Place 2 slices of tomatoes ¼" each on top of spinach.
- 9 Place 1 slice of bread on top of each sandwich.
- 10 Brush the top of each sandwich with margarine mixture.
- 11 Bake until lightly browned:  
Conventional oven: 400 °F for 15-20 minutes.  
Convection oven: 350 °F for 10-15 minutes.
- 12 Critical Control Point:  
Heat to 140 °F or higher for at least 15 seconds.
- 13 Critical Control Point:  
Hold at 140 °F or higher until served.
- 14 Serve 1 sandwich.

#### Source:

CACFP Home Childcare 6-Serving Recipe Project

**Nutrients Per Serving:** Calories 281, Protein 16 g, Carbohydrates 30 g, Dietary Fiber 4 g, Total Sugars 5 g, Total Fat 11 g, Saturated Fat 5 g, Cholesterol 8 mg, Sodium 526 mg, Vitamin A 217 mcg RAE, Vitamin C 19 mg, Vitamin D 20 IU, Calcium 358 mg, Iron 3 mg, Potassium 244 mg



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# Information from Misty

*Misty Wilbur - Health, Nutrition and Safety Specialist*

## Fire Safety & Health Information



### 1. Create an Escape Plan

First, gather your family and walk through each room in your house. Discuss the possible exits and escapes. Your plan should include at least two ways to escape from every room. If you have young children, make a map with them of your home and indicate the possible escape routes. Once you've established the exits, show your children *how* to get out of the house. Before opening a door, it's important to touch it first. If the door is hot, keep it closed and find another way out. Show them how to exit a smokey building by dropping to their bellies and shimmying out under the smoke.

### 2. Pick a Meeting Place

Choose a place where family members can meet once they get out of the home safely. The location of this meeting spot will depend on where you live. Make sure the spot you choose is easy to get to and far enough away from the burning home. Once you pick a location, make sure everyone in your family knows exactly where to meet.

### 3. Practice, Practice, Practice

It isn't enough to just create a plan. You need to practice your plan until each and every member of your household can escape in less than two minutes. Practice yelling fire several times and leaving through different rooms in different scenarios. Practice crawling under smoke and testing door handles.

Make sure everyone knows that if there is fire to get out, call for help and never go back inside.

Once you have it down, practice at least twice a year

### 4. Check Smoke Alarms

A fire safety plan will only work if you have fully operational smoke detectors on each level of your home. Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in a home fire in half. Test your smoke alarms once a month and change the batteries twice a year.





## NATIONAL CHILD HEALTH DAY

In the United States, National Child Health Day occurs each year on the first Monday in October. The day recognizes the care and guidance children need to grow strong and healthy.

Each child deserves to be the healthiest he or she can be. From the food they eat to the words they hear, children require support and opportunities to grow. Parents often worry about chronic disease, accidents or childhood illnesses. At the same time, they focus on a child's mental health and general health. Whether it's their environment, the food they eat or how much TV they watch, the day is an excellent opportunity to support the children in your life.

## HOW TO OBSERVE #ChildHealthDay

Go for a walk, play in a park, do some yard work or participate in activities to promote child health. Other ways to participate in the day include:

- Schedule your child's next routine checkup.
- Ensure vaccinations are up to date.
- Schedule a routine dental checkup.
- Add new healthy activities to your children's routine.
- Set an example by letting your children catch you in healthy habits.
- Inspect your child's toys. Are they broken or age-appropriate?
- Share your best tips for helping your children live a healthy lifestyle.

While you're celebrating, be sure to use #ChildHealthDay to post on social media.

## NATIONAL CHILD HEALTH DAY HISTORY

Each year since 1928, under a Joint Resolution of Congress, the President of the United States proclaims Child Health Day. Originally observed on May 1st each year, in 1960 the date was changed to the first Monday in October.



# Information from Misty

Misty Wilbur - Health, Nutrition and Safety Specialist

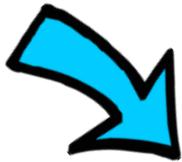


It's **COLD** out

Children absolutely love snowy weather. If it were up to them, they'd wake up and race out the front door of your home wearing nothing but pajamas at the first sight of snowfall. While this free-spirited nature can be innocent and inspiring, it also means that you as a parent need to help guide your child so they are dressed properly for any adverse weather conditions. When it comes to winter weather, this is an absolute necessity as cold weather can really take a toll on your child's health. Younger children are more susceptible to cold for a simple reason: Their smaller bodies lose heat rapidly. Younger children are also less likely to actually realize they're getting cold, which means the job of keeping them warm (and knowing the signs it's time to go inside) falls to us parents.



**A warm hat  
that covers the ears**



**A scarf or neck  
warmer**

**Gloves or  
mittens**



**A warm  
coat and  
snow pants**

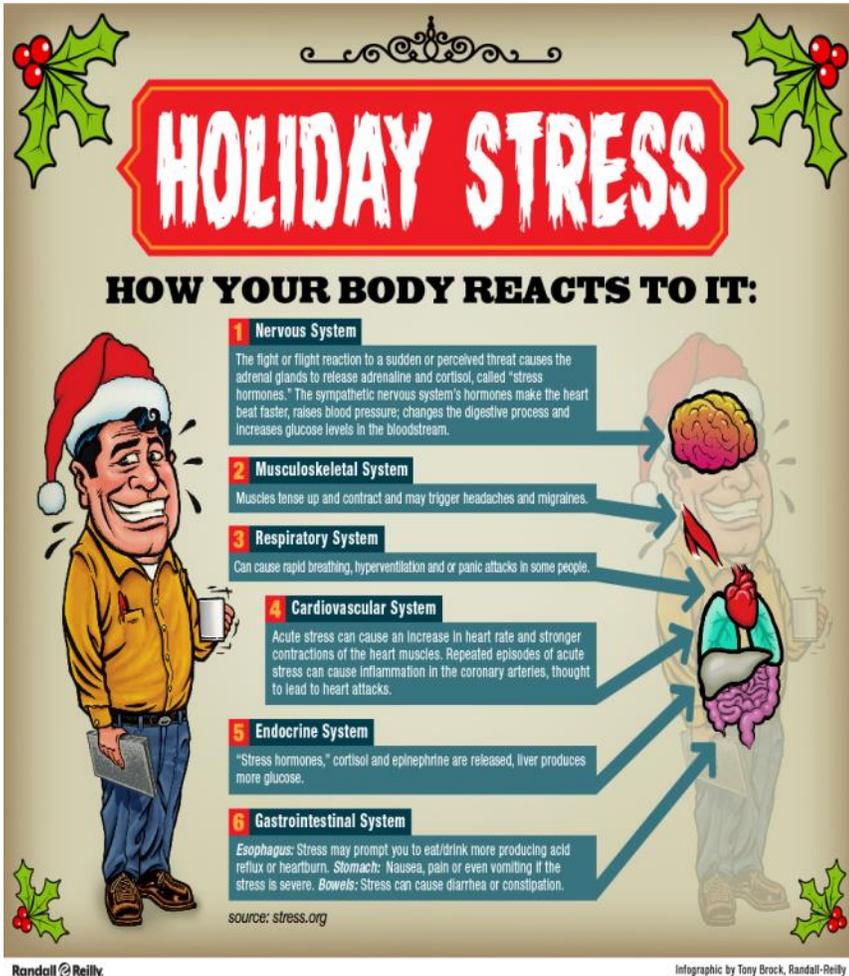
**Warm socks and winter boots**

# Mental Health

## Rebecka Funk MA, LPC-MH - Mental Health Consultant

I wanted to reach out to all of you and share a few reminders and tips in managing holiday stress. Most of us already are experiencing an abundance of stress due to the changes of COVID19 and the worries of getting sick. The holiday season is a beautiful exciting time but is often filled with extra activities, increasing financial and emotional pressures for families that are already busy and stressed enough!

Please remember to consciously think about taking care of yourselves and your own families during the holiday season! We often give great advice to the families we work with but neglect practicing this ourselves! Holiday stress can affect us not only emotionally but physically as well. Listed below the picture are a few tips to cope with the additional stress we feel during the holidays!



Remember stress does not just happen during the holiday season. Often, we invite it in!

Keep expectations realistic, avoid the pressure to spend more than you should or can afford. Make homemade gifts or think of a low cost experience you can do with loved ones instead. Maybe it's just hot chocolate and game night. Maybe it's an afternoon of sledding or watching holiday movies together.

Say no! It's o.k. to say no and not over schedule yourself! There's so much going on during the holiday season. Sometimes we're so busy we can't really enjoy it.

Keep your regular healthy habits going! If you exercise and typically eat healthy, carry on! Don't throw your healthy habits to the wayside during the time you need them most! Stay on track with your sleeping schedule and watch all the extra sweets, caffeine and alcohol that surround us during the holiday season.

Keep expectations of family members and family get togethers realistic. Remember that people's personalities don't just change during the holiday season. Set shorter visits with family members that contribute to your emotional stress and avoid discussing conflicts and hot topics during this time.

Remember that depression, anxiety and other mental health issues don't just disappear because it's the Holidays. Allow yourself to still feel your feelings but to reach out to others when you think your depression or anxiety is increasing. I know the next few months are going to go quick for all of us! May your holiday season be filled with good health, peace, happiness and love.

Becky Funk MA., LPC-MH

TREC Badlands Mental Health Consultant

# Mental Health

**Rebecka Funk MA. LPC-MH - Mental Health Consultant**

**HELP!!!!!!**

## **Challenging Behaviors and How to Help**

Often, we hear the term “challenging behavior.” What exactly does this mean? A challenging behavior is not typical child misbehavior. It is defined as a persistent pattern of inappropriate and difficult behavior a child engages in to meet their need.

Addressing and managing a challenging behavior can test the most competent parent. It can be emotionally exhausting to parents, teachers, family members but most of all the child themselves. Most children do not wake up every morning thinking “I’m going to ruin your day.” Often, things begin to gradually fall apart as the day progresses. Challenging behaviors can impact our child’s ability to learn and to build happy, healthy peer relations as well. How can we as parents help our child who is exhibiting a challenging behavior?

Ask yourself what is the purpose of this behavior? Every behavior serves a purpose. What is your child getting from behaving this way? Attention? Avoiding complying with adult’s requests? Once you can identify what you think your child is getting from this behavior, you can begin to identify ways to prevent this from occurring. Maybe it is a little more one on one time, maybe it is holding your child more accountable and ensuring they do what was initially asked of them. For example, cleaning up their toys or brushing their teeth, etc...

Look at your daily routine and schedule with your children. Do you have one? Does your child know what to expect in a typical day? Are the rules clearly explained and even perhaps displayed somewhere in your house? Children thrive in predictable environments. This not only prevents misbehaviors but makes a child feel secure and safe.

Identify a plan on how you want to address the challenging behavior such as spitting or hitting. Make sure your consequence is age appropriate and safe. Implement and stick to it! Challenging behaviors do not appear overnight, and they do not disappear this quickly as well! It takes time!

Remember that no consequence works 100% of the time. It is normal for a child to test this. If your response seems to be making some difference...stick with it!

Make sure your child knows how to do what you are asking them to do. Sometimes we need to teach our child a specific behavior like sharing with friends or using their words to ask for what they want rather than grabbing something away from someone else. Really observe and ask yourself if your child simply needs guidance and practice in learning how to do what you are asking them to do. Learning a new skill is always easier when you make it fun. Turn music on during clean up time. Help your child a few times together to show him/her how to do something before you expect them to do it on their own.

Be your child’s strongest cheerleader! Praise, praise, praise your child!! Change is hard! Make sure you are noticing the times your child does do what is asked of him/her. Praise them not only for the results but for their efforts when you observe they are genuinely trying.

Should your child continue to struggle with a challenging behavior, do not be afraid to reach out for assistance! Contact your teacher, home visitor or a qualified professional in the community who can give you guidance and support.

