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# The Gift of Self-Compassion

By Jacqueline Milner, M.Sc.

Compassion is a particular type of empathy towards others when we perceive they are suffering. It is characterized by sensitivity towards the suffering and a desire to alleviate it and includes the qualities of tenderness, comfort, kindness and connection. Self-compassion is when we embody these qualities towards ourselves when we are suffering. Instead of ignoring and pushing through our difficult emotions and experiences, self-compassion acknowledges and accepts that it is a difficult time for us. Instead of being judgmental, harsh and critical towards ourselves during these times, self-compassion is kind-hearted, gentle and comforting.

It has been my experience that people in general have an easier time feeling and showing compassion towards others rather than themselves. When things go wrong, we fail, or something else happens that brings us pain, we tend to be self-critical and self-blaming. We often withdraw from others and ruminate about what is the matter with us. It appears that often we have different "rules" for others than for ourselves. We can be quick to forgive, allow mistakes and difficult feelings to

be present for others, but are much more judgmental, strict and unforgiving towards ourselves. Although we show support and encourage others to take care of themselves, we neglect to show the same care towards ourselves.

There are many possibilities for why we engage in a harsher stance towards ourselves than others. Our past experiences with caregivers or peers may have been harsh, critical or even abusive ones; hence the relationship with ourselves may be riddled with beliefs and feelings of worthlessness and unlovability. This often leads us to believe and feel we are not deserving of compassion. These memories or "recorded tapes" from our past are often carried over into our present and future lives. Alternatively, perhaps we have never been taught or modeled self-compassion; hence, we simply do not know how to be compassionate towards ourselves.

Our culture is one which striving, achieving and "success" are highly valued. This often results in the belief that in order to succeed, we need to motivate ourselves by being strict and unrelenting. Failure to meet (often) unreasonably high

expectations tends to be responded to with shaming, criticism and harshness. To show "softness" and understanding towards ourselves is viewed as weak, disadvantageous and ineffective in meeting our goals. Also, we are a culture that emphasizes self-esteem over self-compassion. Self-esteem is reliant on our comparisons of ourselves to others and where we stand in relation to this, rather than unconditional loving acceptance.

## Cultivating Self-Compassion

Research is increasingly revealing the benefits of compassion for our psychological and physical well-being. Compassion has been linked with overall positive functioning and increased feelings of happiness as well as decreased feelings of shame and self-criticism. Self-compassion has also proven particularly helpful when we are experiencing anxiety and fear, often easing the amount of distress being experienced.

According to Dr. Kirstin Neff, a pioneer in the research of self-compassion, self-compassion can be broken down into three primary components: Self-Kindness, Common Humanity and Mindfulness.

Self-kindness is a stance that we take towards ourselves that embodies warmth, acceptance, tenderness and comfort. It is the same approach and relationship we would have towards a good friend. Instead of self-talk that is critical and disparaging, it is loving and kind. Instead of being impatient and judgmental, we are understanding and supportive. Instead of rejecting

and ignoring, we acknowledge the pain and take steps to ease our suffering.

Another important component of cultivating self-compassion is the awareness and understanding that all of us struggle and experience pain. When we are the ones struggling and suffering however, we often tend to feel quite isolated and alone, believing that we are the only ones just not getting it right, that something is the matter with us and we are deeply flawed. We begin to ruminate and get further entangled in these negative ideas of self. Self-compassion is different than "self-pity". It recognizes that suffering is a shared common experience with others.

The last component of self-compassion Dr. Neff identifies is mindfulness. Mindfulness is being present and open to whatever arises within and outside of ourselves. So often however, we tend to want to avoid unpleasant and painful experiences and emotions. Mindfulness is more accepting of all emotions and experiences, pleasant or unpleasant and encourages us to be more aware and disentangled from our thoughts, emotions and sensations. It is difficult to be self-compassionate towards our self if we are not aware or do not allow difficult emotions and sensations to be present. If fact, it is these times in which we would benefit from kindness and compassion towards ourselves.

## Practices To Cultivate Self-Compassion

The following is a short "Self-Compassion Break" adapted from Dr. Neff's book *Self-Compassion* and presented in *Mindful* magazine to help get you started in the area of cultivate greater self-compassion when you are experiencing discomfort and pain:

- 1) Put both hands on your heart, pause, and feel their warmth. You can also put your hands on any other place on your body that feels soothing and comforting, such as your belly or your face.
- 2) Breathe deeply in and out.
- 3) Speak these words to yourself (out loud or silently) in a warm and caring tone:  
"This is a moment of suffering  
Suffering is a part of life  
May I be kind to myself  
May I give myself the compassion I need"

Sometimes, just placing your hands on your heart, pausing, checking in and observing your thoughts, feelings and sensation in the moment and then asking yourself "what do I need right now" for comfort and ease can be helpful for softening a painful experience. Finally, even taking a single tender breath in for yourself and exhaling a tender breath out towards others can cultivate greater compassion in the moment.

*Jacqueline Milner is a registered Clinical Psychologist and principal of Jacqueline Milner-Clerk and Associates Inc., which is a practice that employs male and female psychologists who provide evidence-based psychological services to children, adolescents, adults, families and couples. She can be contacted at 461-8133.*



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# Advice From Children About Parents Divorce

By Carol Shirley, MASP – Registered Psychologist Roth Associates in Psychology



In recent years I have met with increasing numbers of children who are coming to me with issues related to their parents separating or divorcing. It has become evident that these children have no recourse for the suffering they undertake at the hands of their typically, well-meaning parents. Although the separation/divorce is a legal issue the collateral damage suffered by the children is not. These children are not being physically mistreated nor are they being neglected per-se. All of the parents I've spoken with tell me that they would do anything to protect their children and I know they believe they mean it. I also believe that they truly do not understand how their behavior is affecting their children.

Separation/Divorce represents significant change in the life of all members of a family including that of the extended family (aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, etc.). The event is most often announced only after a time of turmoil in the core family. Fear of an uncertain future tends to grow as a decision to separate is announced. It seems to be a rare event when both parents agree to separate and are confident in their decision. It is more likely that one parent or the other has made the decision, which is then told to the other. At times the unhappiness is hidden or ignored consciously but it tends to sit in the shadows of shame and grows until its unmanageable (sometimes resulting in an extra-marital affair which adds to the emotional pain).

Children are emotional sponges - they feel us. They do not

necessarily understand marriage or divorce but they do know that they prefer to feel good and are very sensitive to people and events that result in their feeling bad. They, like most of us, feel confused when the words they receive conflict with the emotions they feel.

Parents who separate/divorce well tend to be fairly emotionally intelligent. They are able to differentiate between their children's parent and their ex-spouse. They do not speak ill of their children's father or mother and know that how they feel about their ex is their issue not their children's. They understand that the child's relationship with each parent and their extended family is important. Parents with well-adjusted children post-divorce sit on the same bleachers at the soccer game; they speak respectfully to each other in front of their children and their children's extended family. These parents deal with their own emotions as step parents or step siblings are introduced, rather than feeling the need to discuss it with their children. Both parents (and their partners) go to school events; they go to sporting events and support their children. Some even eat Thanksgiving dinner (and/or other 'family' events) together and they enjoy it.

Well-adjusted kids can talk openly about the things they did at mom's or dad's without concern for the feelings of the parent they are addressing. These children enjoy the freedom of sharing both of the lives they live without being emotionally shutdown. Children report being worried when their parents interact, as they are afraid there will be a fight. They (children of all ages) feel stressed and confused when one parent talks negatively or complains to them about the other parent. I've met

many adults who still carry the pain of having had to provide their parent with emotional support as children. Children (typically) need to have their own relationship with both parents.

I have asked a number of children from divorced families what advice they might have for the parents who are divorcing. Their responses were:

- 1) Be nice to each other it hurts your children when you're not.
- 2) Spend one on one time with the older kids.
- 3) Call your kids at the other parent's house to talk to them but don't fight with the parent.
- 4) Don't lie to your kids - we know when there is something wrong.
- 5) Keep your parenting styles similar.
- 6) Let kids have a say on what they want.
- 7) Pay attention to your child

when they are at your house (put away the cell phones).

- 8) Talk to your kids and get to know them as people.
- 9) Let kids talk to the parent one on one and not always with the step parent present.
- 10) Tell kids to talk to their parents, if the parents are listening, if not, talk to another trusted adult.

*Roth Associates in Psychology Inc. is a full-service counselling firm whose Registered Psychologists and other professionals offer assistance to children, adolescents, adults, couples and families. Daytime, evening and week-end appointments are available, please contact (902) 454-6166.*

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# Healthy Sleep Habits for Children and Families: On the road to better sleep

Naomi S. Aquino, M.Sc., Psychologist (Candidate Register)

**Y**awn... stretch! This is a common expression for parents with young children who are having difficulties with sleep. I've been feeling slightly less of this lately, after 16 months of very rough, often sleepless nights, my little boy is starting to get the hang of this sleeping through the night thing (please knock on wood for me). It was a rough road, and I'm sure the battles are not over yet, as soon enough we will enter into new phases with new sleeping challenges.

As a new parent and psychologist working with children, it is easy to get caught up in the many different sleep strategies available, and the well-meaning advice from friends and family, who simply want to help you get more sleep. However, I felt what worked for us was just finding a strategy that we felt comfortable with as parents and that worked for our son, and trying to be as consistent with it as possible.

Having sleep difficulties with my own son has made me

more aware of the impact of sleep difficulties not only on the parents, but on the entire family. I believe it's important to begin good sleep habits from the time your child is very young. And good sleep habits aren't just for children. Practicing good sleep habits is important throughout life and can lead to improvement in quality of sleep.


According to the National Sleep Foundation, the amount of sleep we need varies extensively with school aged children requiring between 10-11 hours of sleep and teenagers requiring between 8.5 and 9.5 hours of sleep. With extracurricular activities, homework and other family activities, it can be hard to find the time to catch the zzzz's. But, it's worth it, sleep is vital to our day-to-day functioning, and sleep deprivation can lead to a host of issues such as difficulties with learning and mood, obesity and other health problems (National Sleep Foundation). Here are some helpful habits to try for you and your family:

- 1) Rub-a-dub-dub. Establish a consistent bedtime routine that includes calming activities such as having a bath, listening to music or reading a book. This helps to signal to your body that it's time for sleep.
- 2) Ditch the Screen! Avoid stimulating activities (e.g., exercise or screen time) before bed. The Canadian Pediatric Society recommends keeping TV's and videogame system's out of children's bedrooms. Exercising throughout the day can improve sleep.
- 3) Water's best. Reduce drinks with caffeine intake throughout the day, especially in the afternoon and evening hours.
- 4) Set your clocks! Plan to go to bed at roughly the same time each night and get up at roughly the same time each morning. For adults and teens, this includes the weekends!
- 5) Set the mood. Make sure your bedroom is set up for sleeping with dim lights, a comfortable temperature and a relaxing atmosphere.

For these and other useful suggestions about sleep, visit the National Sleep Foundation website (Sleepfoundation.org) and their counterpart for children sleepforkids.org. Following these tips will help you be on the road to better sleep. However, if you or your family members are still

having sleep problems, don't hesitate to talk to your doctor or mental health professional to help you find what is best for your family.

Naomi Stright Aquino is a Psychologist (Candidate Register) at Carleen Hall Psychological Services, offering psychological services for children, teens, families and adults. For more information, please contact 902-406-7413.



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And I am pleased to thank all our wonderful readers for the interest in our newspaper throughout the many years.

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# Health & Wellness

## Children Oral Health

By Dr. Negin Ghiabi, Pediatric Dentist at Pinnacle Dental Specialists



Dr. Negin Ghiabi

Dental caries is the most common chronic disease of childhood. Approximately 60% of children experience caries in their baby teeth by age 5. If left untreated, dental caries, periodontal diseases and other oral conditions in children can lead to pain, infection and loss of function. These undesirable outcomes can adversely affect learning, communication,

nutrition and other activities necessary for normal growth and development.

Severe caries is one of the factors causing insufficient development in children who have no other medical problems. Children with early childhood caries may be severely underweight because of the associated pain and lack of willingness to eat. Nutritional deficiencies during childhood can impact cognitive development. Children with dental pain may be irritable, withdrawn or unable to concentrate. Pain can affect test performance as well as school attendance.

Dental caries is a transmissible infectious disease. Caries may be transmitted from caregiver to child through salivary contact. Infants whose mothers have untreated caries are at greater

risk of caries. Eliminating sharing utensils and orally cleansing of a pacifier may help decrease an infant or toddler acquisition of cariogenic microbes.

Infants and young children have unique caries risk factors such as ongoing establishment of oral flora and host defense system, susceptibility of newly erupted teeth and development of dietary habits and childhood food preferences. Children experiencing caries as infants and toddlers have a much greater probability of subsequent caries in both primary and permanent dentitions.

Non-carious primary teeth guide the permanent teeth to erupt in the correct position. Early loss of primary teeth and or primary teeth with large cavities will reduce space in the dental arch and cause crowding

in later on. Infection in primary teeth due to severe caries can damage the formation of permanent teeth, or result in their discoloration or malformation.

Considering all these factors, it is prudent to have your child be evaluated by a pediatric dentist no later than his/her first birthdate in order to evaluate all risk factors and apply a prevention program.

Dr. Negin Ghiabi is a Board certified Pediatric Dentist. Her private practice, Pinnacle Dental Specialists, in Halifax limited to dentistry for infants, children and adolescents. We welcome new patients as young as 1 year old. No referral is needed. For more information please call 902-407-7377.



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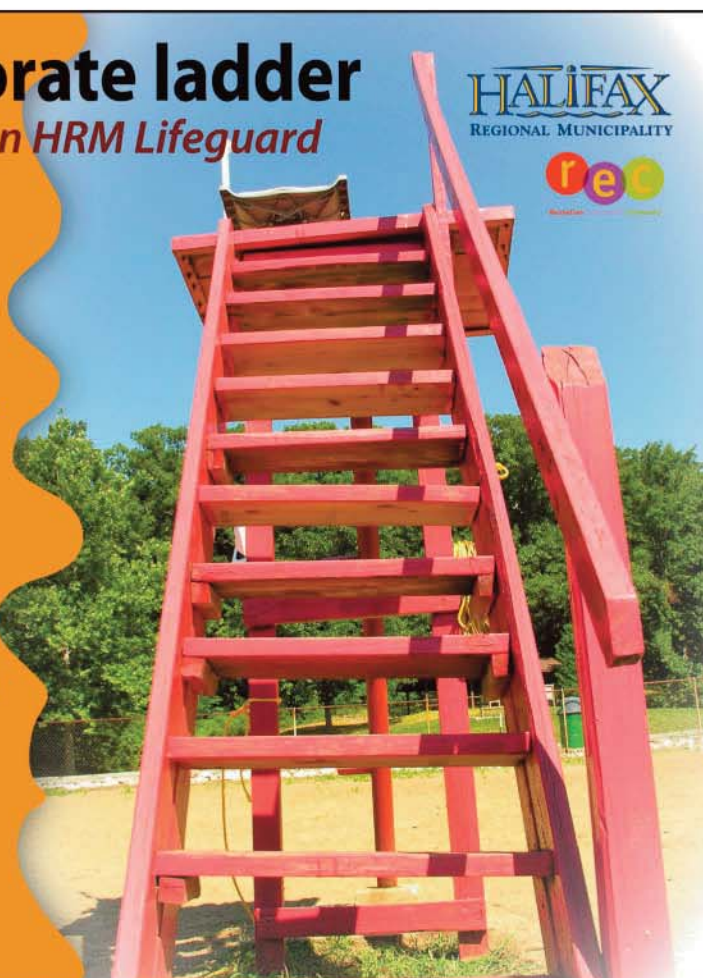
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Wavepool will be offering FREE Family SWIMS on Tuesdays from 7-8pm

The Wave Pool is offering Christmas Bake and Swims on December 16th and December 17th for children 5-10 years from 5:30 - 8:30pm. \$12 per child. Participants will bake and decorate goodies and will also go for a swim.

Don't forget that HRM Aquatics is now offering all school aged swimming lessons in French - call to find out more and to register at the pool nearest you - 490-6666



# Health & Wellness

## Is your tire alignment off? What about your teeth?

By Dr. Sarah Davidson DDS, MSc (Ortho) FRCD (C), Halifax Orthodontic Specialist Group



As we transition from fall into winter, we all scramble to get our cars outfitted with winter tires. We tend to be diligent when it comes to our tires. When our car develops a shake while driving, the diagnosis is often poor alignment and we book an appointment to get our tires aligned. We know that otherwise our driving quality will be compromised. Similarly, when we don't rotate our tires, any one tire may get overused and the tread may wear. A very neglected tire may in fact go flat and require replacement.

So why is an orthodontist writing about tires? Well let me explain. An Orthodontist is foremost, an educator. When you seek the advice of an Orthodontist you are looking to gather information on your teeth and bite from a specialist. Sometimes you might know there is a problem and be interested solely in the solutions. Other times you may be referred by your general dentist and be unaware of an underlying issue with your bite. Regardless of the knowledge you have when you enter your orthodontist's office; you are looking to have your questions answered and therefore become more educated on your teeth, bite and your overall health.

Your occlusion (or how your teeth bite together) and the way your jaw works is complicated. Before investing in something such as orthodontic work it is imperative that you understand why you must maintain a

healthy and functioning occlusion. Comparing this complex system to something we relate to can be helpful. As it turns out, teeth and tires have a fair bit in common. Like tires, when teeth are out of alignment, the ride will be bumpy. Chewing and normal jaw function can be compromised and the bite may not feel even or smooth. Many patients report chewing on or favoring one side or the other because of poor alignment. This uneven functioning can lead to problems with the underlying supporting structures such as the temporomandibular joints.

Furthermore, teeth can wear down, just like tires do, if they are not in proper alignment. We don't have the benefit of being able to "rotate our teeth" and your adult teeth are the only set of "tires" you'll get so it is critical to prevent damage such as wear that is irreversible. We want to avoid

"replacement" with root canals and crowns if at all possible.

So make it your New Year's resolution to have your alignment checked! Your local Orthodontic specialist would be happy to answer any questions you have and you may just leave smiling!

*Dr. Sarah Davidson is a Board-Certified Orthodontic Specialist with the Halifax Orthodontic Specialist Group. She is a co-owner of The Brace Space in Bedford (Larry Uteck) and Stuart & Davidson Orthodontics in Dartmouth, offering conventional braces and Invisalign for children, teens and adults. For more information, contact 455-7222.*

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# FUN

# Places To Go!

## hop! skip! jump! Indoor Play Space a Big Hit With Kids

hop! skip! jump! Indoor Play Space has just opened and it is already the place where kids want to play. Perfect for drop-in play,

birthday parties, and day care outings, the 10,400 square foot facility is Nova Scotia's newest and biggest indoor play space, offering fun and active self-

directed play for children 12 years of age and under.

Co-owner, Ashraf Adas alongside his wife, Nadia

Shahin partnered with friends Mohamed Naim and his wife, Tahani Shaaban to build the play space, after deciding about a year ago that HRM

was due for a large indoor space for kids.

The facility boasts a 3,500 square foot, three level, multi-colour play structure that includes a ball blaster arena, a spider climbing tower, wave slides, soft climbing wall, zero gravity ball table, and a ball pool along with a toddler section, featuring a spinning palm tree, space spinner, balloon carnival, trampoline, and animal merry-go-round and more. There is also a café and a lounge area, perfect for the comfort of parents and caregivers.

hop! skip! jump! Indoor Play Space rates are as follows: \$12.99 (plus tax) for children

five to 12 years of age and \$9.99 (plus tax) for children one to four years of age. Each additional child receives a 10 per cent discount on selected play passes. Military personnel also receive a 10 per cent discount on price and adults and infants are free.

Located at 10-100 Susie Lake Crescent in Bayers Lake, the hours of operation are Sunday - Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Friday - Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

For more information on hop! skip! jump! Indoor Play Space, visit: [hopskipjump.ca](http://hopskipjump.ca), like on Facebook: [hopskipjump\\_hfx](https://www.facebook.com/hopskipjump_hfx), follow on Twitter: [/hopskipjump\\_HFX](https://twitter.com/hopskipjump_HFX), and follow on Instagram: [hopskipjump\\_hfx](https://www.instagram.com/hopskipjump_hfx)

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# FUN

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inspired by our 101 year-old ship *CSS Acadia* or *Titanic* or any of the ships and boats in our exhibits – even a shipwreck! Bring your completed work during our museum hours and we'll include it in our LEGO display—we'll take entries until January 11, 2015. For full competition instructions visit our website at [maritime-museum.novascotia.ca](http://maritime-museum.novascotia.ca) or call the Maritime Museum at 424-7491.

So start a family tradition by visiting us to wrap up 2014 or start the New Year right! The Maritime Museum would be a part of your winter-time seasonal memories, so bring in our museum ad in this issue to save on your family admission! To find out the latest events, exhibits and activities at the Maritime Museum, follow us on Facebook ([facebook.com/maritimemuseum](http://facebook.com/maritimemuseum)) or Twitter ([twitter.com/ns\\_mma](http://twitter.com/ns_mma)).





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at sea**

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For more information visit  
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Although everyone agrees that a baby shower, a birthday celebration, a wedding, a vacation — even a picnic — requires planning, many people never consider planning ahead for one of the most important events in their lives.

Death is a 100% certainty — it's a natural part of life. But your death will inevitably bring loss and sadness to those who love you. By planning your own funeral now, you can ease the burden on your loved ones in the future.

Some final decisions really should be yours. Burial? Cremation? Deciding how to manage your remains is one of the most wrenching decisions your loved ones must make. By pre-planning, you can make an informed choice. And your family can take the time now to discuss ideas openly, while minds are clear and focused.

Over the years, the cost of final arrangements have grown steadily with rising inflation. A family already faced with emotional crisis will now discover that many funeral homes will require funeral fees to be paid up front. The convenience of monthly terms only applies to those planning in advance.

By purchasing funeral services now, the costs are effectively "frozen" at today's prices and at today's dollar value, resulting in greater financial ease and long term savings that can reach into the thousands. Be sure to ask if the price is protected, because some do not offer price protection on your prearrangement.

*This article is brought to you by Atlantic Funeral Homes by Arbor Memorial — family owned and operated.*

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# Seniors Section

## Satisfaction and Grand-parenting

By Dr. Maureen Gorman, Registered Psychologist

### Recognizing the Wisdom Within the Walls

Have you ever looked at a seniors' community and thought of the magnitude of knowledge, the decades of life experiences, stories and historical perspectives, and then considered age from a collective perspective?

Working at The Berkeley Gladstone, Risa Lee has pondered it many times. Fascinated by the wisdom and experience all around her, she searched for an interesting way to visually represent the combined age of the residents.

*'In the beginning, I thought of creating something with candles, but understandably she had concerns about safety and logistics. I haven't given up on the idea though, it would be stunning outside at night,'* says Risa with a smile.

After much contemplation and a variety of ideas, Risa settled on using paper strips, one for each resident, with dots to represent every year of their lives.

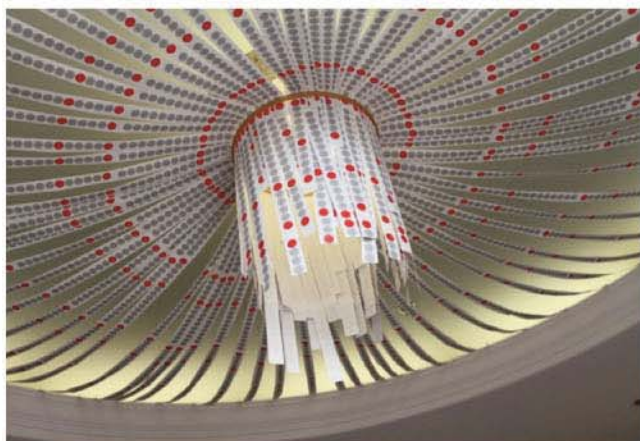
*'I was astonished to discover that there was a total of sixty-five hundred dots representing the combined ages, ranging from 75-99, of the residents living at The*

*Berkeley Gladstone. So many of them are still active and independent, and have plenty of stories to share,'* she remarks.

It took ingenuity, blood, sweat and tears to hang this very striking symbol of life experience within the building, but Risa found the perfect spot. Suspended artistically from the coffered ceiling, backlit by the chandelier it covers, it is impossible to miss as you enter the lobby at The Berkeley Gladstone.

For something so simple, it is really quite stunning and remarkable. Risa calls it the 'Canopy of Experience'. It has sparked many a discussion with residents, families and visitors. Residents feel very honoured by this creative art installation which compels people to stop and consider the wealth of knowledge within the building. Our seniors have stories to tell. The question is do we stop to listen?

For further information please contact,  
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Outlined in the October/November 2014 edition various styles of grandparenting. The Active kinds are Surrogate Parent, Supporter, Fun-Seeker, and Influencer. The Passive kinds are Authoritarian, Distant (emotionally), and Influencer (may be active or passive). Some important roles you can play in your grandchildren's lives include financial backer (education, basic needs or special things such as travel) or teacher of skills that your own children were not interested in learning (knitting, wood working). Grandparents may model a lifestyle not stressed at home (e.g., using "proper" table manners). Your home may simply be different than your grandchildren's; for example, you are the only artist in the family, or you live "in the city" or "country". You (and your home) may represent a respite from the structure and perhaps hectic schedule your grandchildren normally follow; it is a place to relax. If your role is child minder or you live with or near your children, your contact is likely frequent. You may provide more practical assistance to them (e.g., transportation or babysitting) hopefully with full appreciation. Your family's specific needs plus your availability, and "Style", will suggest to you some unique ways that you already participate in the lives of your grandchildren.

The next part of this exercise is to review the list just made and now indicate whether you do these things because you believe it is necessary or because the parents ask for the help. Which of these activities are done without the feeling of need attached to it?

This exercise is meant to bring to your attention how much satisfaction you get from being a grandparent. Regardless of the reason for the particular way you participate in your grandchildren's lives, a big source of satisfaction in your own life is derived from your involvement with them. One recent study (in 2008), showed that it is the sense of purpose and of feeling valued that contributes to your satisfaction level. This may not be surprising, given the increased likelihood that you are retired and/or your children are independent. Transitioning from work and/or to the "empty nest" may be made easier when your grand-parenting roles give you a "reason to get up in the morning".

Your self-review of the roles you play in your grandchildren's lives hopefully can help reinforce your joy and satisfaction in spending time with them and in your life, overall. What you may have just learned is that you get at least as much out of it as your grandchildren and their parents.

An exercise you may want to try is to identify the roles you play as grandparent. Make a list of the things you do that are of practical help (e.g., hosting sleepovers when parents are going to be away overnight), things that are entertaining or "just for fun" (joining the family on holiday, or taking grandchildren to a movie), and also things that you do to enhance their cultural, educational, or artistic experience. Add to your list anything else you think applies.

The next part of this exercise is to review the list just made and now indicate whether you do these things because you believe it is necessary or because the parents ask for the help. Which of these activities are done without the feeling of need attached to it?

Your self-review of the roles you play in your grandchildren's lives hopefully can help reinforce your joy and satisfaction in spending time with them and in your life, overall. What you may have just learned is that you get at least as much out of it as your grandchildren and their parents.

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Dr. Gorman is in Private Practice in Dartmouth, at 33 Ochterloney St., Unit 145. Please call 902-466-0469, visit the website, www.gormanandgarland.com, or email me directly at maureengorman31@eastlink.ca a My areas of practice (to adults of all ages) include Role Transitions, Caregiver Stress, Grief and Anxiety/Depression, or if you want references pertaining to this article.

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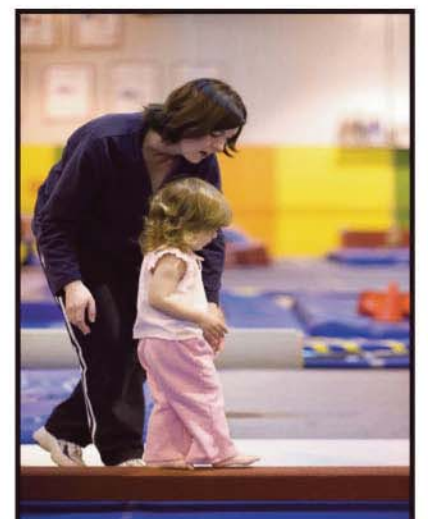
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*Remember too we have swimming, skating and day camps over the Christmas Holidays.*



# Education

## Set a Goal to Eliminate Bad School Habits

by Lorelei Burgess, Oxford Learning HRM

Setting resolutions is a common way to begin the New Year. From healthier eating to exercising more, the New Year presents an opportunity for students of all ages to hit the re-start button in life, both in and out of school.

The New Year is a chance for students to evaluate their academics and get any needed help. This is the time for students to renew their school motivation and set academic goals to get back on track.

When setting goals we recommend that students follow the CAM rules: keep goals **Clear, Achievable, and Measurable**. Students should

keep goals concrete, with milestones to mark improvement. For instance, a C-minus student shouldn't set a goal of winning a math scholarship, but instead, set a goal of getting a C-plus by the next test and a B by the test after that.

Another great way that students can ensure they start the New Year off on the right foot is by eliminating bad school habits. We suggest that students resolve to include one or more of these habits in their New Year's resolutions:

**1. Rise and Shine.** By setting alarm clocks 10 minutes earlier, students

can reduce the morning rush and alleviate stress.

**2. Tune Out.** By simply eliminating one half-hour of TV or computer screen time, students have more time to focus on schoolwork.

**3. Be Prepared.** Students can check items off their to-do list by preparing for school the night before. Choose clothing, re-pack book bags, and prepare lunches at night to reduce the morning rush.

**4. Get Organized.** Agendas help students stay on track so that homework and assignments are not forgotten.

**5. Stick to a Schedule.** Hang wall calendars in a visible spot and be sure to write down all school assignments, extra curricular activities, and social engagements.

**6. Hit the Sheets.** A better night's sleep ensures that students are less sluggish more mentally alert during the school day.

**7. Hit the Books.** Extra curricular reading is one of the best-known ways for students to build vocabulary and develop strong language skills.

**8. Eat Right.** Healthy eating habits keep the brain active all day. Avoid sugary treats and heavy meals, which can cause attention levels to crash.

**9. Get Outside.** Take in some fresh air and get the blood pumping with some exercise. Exercise has been shown to increase circulation to the brain.

When students start the New Year off by setting academic resolutions, and by eliminating bad habits, they set the tone for success for the rest of the school year.

For over 25 years, Oxford Learning has been helping students of all ages develop better school habits. Whether it is goal setting, reading comprehension, math skills, or homework help, Oxford Learning's programs help students start the year off on the right foot.

For more information about goal setting or any of Oxford Learning's programs, contact Oxford Learning in Halifax, Bedford and Hammonds Plains at 902-405-4116 or [lburgess@oxfordlearning.com](mailto:lburgess@oxfordlearning.com)

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# Education

Give your child the advantages that come with being bilingual. Enrol your child in French Immersion.



**HRSB French Immersion Registration, February 2-27, 2015**

**Join Canadian Parents for French for our French Immersion Parent Information Sessions**

7:30 pm, February 10, 2015 at the Alderney Gate Public Library, 60 Alderney Drive, Dartmouth

7:30 pm, February 17, 2015 at the Canada Games Centre, 26 Thomas Raddall Drive, Halifax.

**For more information, contact:**

Canadian Parents for French – Nova Scotia  
8 Flamingo Drive, Halifax  
Telephone 902-453-2048  
Email [cpf@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:cpf@ns.sympatico.ca)

**W**hy not offer your child the advantages of Canada's world-renowned French Immersion programs? The advantages go beyond learning both of Canada's official languages. Being bilingual opens doors and produces excellent students and creative thinkers.

#### Is Easy and for Everyone

Immersion students master French in the same way that they learned English. The process is natural because French is used as the language of instruction and as a means of communication.

Students learning in French immersion are being taught the same curriculum as if they were in an English program. No

special skills are required. Children with all types of academic ability can succeed in French immersion, not just above average students.

#### Improves Your English

Learning subjects in French does not interfere with English language development. In fact, it improves it.

Research shows that learning a second language has a positive effect on first language achievement. Immersion students match and often exceed the English skills of other students by grade 4 or 5, even though they usually start reading and writing in French first.

#### Fosters Excellent Students... Excellent Communicators

Students with two languages can focus more on meaning and pick out the most relevant points from information provided. They are better able to communicate their thoughts and express themselves and can answer open-ended questions more easily than those with only one language.

#### Offers an Edge

Thousands of businesses in Canada operate in more than one language and the numbers are growing. In today's global economy, those who are bilingual can choose from a wider range of national and international jobs that require employees with second language skills.

Continued on page 20.

## Where Have the Nursery Rhymes Gone?

By Pam Streeter, Executive Director, Birch Hills Academy

*"Oh where, oh where have the nursery rhymes gone?  
Oh where, oh where can they be?  
With their rhythmic beat,  
And their lilting song,  
Oh where, oh where have they gone?"*

**I**n recent years we have noticed a disturbing trend in the decline in rhyming skills in students entering our programs. At the same time teachers are telling me that the children in their classes do not know the nursery rhymes that were once so prevalent.

Unlike rhyming books and chants nursery rhymes were much more versatile in their use between parent and child across the day. From quick, playful rhymes with actions ("This Old Man") during play time, engaging rhymes ("Round and Round the Garden) for bath and changing times, to soothing, peaceful rhymes (Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star) for lulling an infant off to sleep, nursery rhymes provided frequent opportunities for parents to interact and bond with their child. As the child grew the use of nursery rhymes provided opportunities to model the cadences of speech through song and another chance to introduce and use vocabulary, which was often reinforced through actions.

From an auditory discrimination perspective nursery rhymes provided valuable practice, through repetition, to recognize similarities in sounds between certain words. Engagement in nursery rhymes increases opportunities to develop listening and thinking skills. Oral language (vocabulary), phonological awareness (of which rhyming is a part), and comprehension (thinking skills) are the building blocks of literacy.

From a neurological standpoint the use of nursery rhymes across early childhood into early elementary years makes sense. Experience wires the brain and repetition strengthens the wiring. So bring back those nursery rhymes!

For more information on the programs at Birch Hills Academy please contact the founder, Pam Streeter, at 902-832-6700.

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Birch Hills Academy is an innovative, private day school that emphasizes individualized teaching, from preschool to Grade 9.

Open House February 7th 2-4 pm



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# Education

Continued from page 19.

Give your child the advantages that come with being bilingual. Enrol your child in French Immersion.

## How You Can Help

The French Immersion program is designed for children of non-French speaking parents. Even if you don't speak French, you can still make your child's French language experience positive.

Be supportive and enthusiastic. Research shows that students whose parents have positive attitudes toward French do better in Immersion programs.

Help your child to use French outside of the classroom! Watch French TV and DVDs, borrow or buy French books, and choose activities in French like plays, courses and sport activities.

**For more information, please contact, Canadian Parents for French – Nova Scotia**

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## Halifax Store keeps rollin'

One of Canada's oldest stores is all about family, friends – and fun

By HAL MILLER



John Hatt, from left, Mike Larisey and Greg Hatt operate one of the oldest hobby stores in Canada

How far east do hobbies extend in North America? At least to Halifax, N.S., where Maritime Hobbies & Crafts has been in business since 1946. Started by Terry Ahearn, its current owners bill it as Atlantic Canada's oldest hobby store, and one of the longest-running hobby stores in the country. Mike Larisey and John Hatt have been the owners since

1989. Larisey started working at the store as a teenager in 1967. Except for a six-year stint at another hobby store, he's been there ever since, purchasing shares of the business until he was an owner. Hatt was once a regular customer of the store. Soon, Hatt's son, Greg, will run it.

Maritime Hobbies & Crafts is a full-line store, carrying model

trains, radio control, plastic models, crafts and specialty items. The staff of 10 is comprised of family members and former customers. Employees have at least one and sometimes several different areas of hobby expertise. Larisey's granddaughters work in the craft section of the store once a week. "Even our customers help customers," Larisey says.

This is the fifth location for the store. Located in the downtown core, it's a couple of blocks from the Halifax waterfront. Larisey says the current building is literally "a real brick-and-mortar store." It's a former girls school built in 1889. He says the area is vibrant, with lots of foot traffic. In the summer, cruise ships that dock in the harbor bring even more shoppers.

During his early years in the business, Larisey had a special talent for starting the sometimes finicky Cox. 049 engines that were common in control-line planes at the time. "I broke in a lot of people's engines," he says. However, his primary passion lies in model railroading. "They call me Sheldon the train geek," referring to the character in the TV show *The Big Bang Theory*. The Hatts are R/C enthusiasts;

John is an old-school aircraft builder, and his latest project is a World War I Fokker Dr. 1 triplane.

Larisey and Hatt have seen trends come and go in the hobby industry, like control-line flying. The store was once a full-line Cox dealer with all the planes, parts and accessories for the hobby. The store also had a slot car track in the basement. (Larisey recalls radio control with single -channel pulse transmitters and escapements, before the invention of proportional control and servos.) Today, model railroading, R/C and plastic models represent the bulk of the business.

Being so far north, one might think the weather would limit demand for R/C aircraft. Not so, Larisey says. The hobbyists fly off the frozen lakes in the winter, and there are many in the province.

One business trend Larisey and Hatt have noticed is the lack of young people coming into hobbies in the region. That's a common refrain from hobby dealers everywhere, mostly due to increase competition for customer's time and other factors. In Nova Scotia, Larisey sees it primarily as a population issue. He says the province has

the most senior citizens per capita in Canada.

### Community outreach

Maritime Hobbies reaches into the community through its work with a model railroad layout at a local hospital, various modeling contests, and rocketry and R/C events. The store's Facebook page has numerous photos of new products and events, and the store also has a website. "We keep the store as old-fashioned as we can, but we keep up with technology, too," Larisey said. The Store is also its own community, representing a gathering spot for hobbyists. The group of guys that operate the model railroad at the hospital comes by on Tuesdays before going to lunch. On Saturdays, military modelers

tend to congregate at the store. When the store was open at night, there was a group called the "Friday Night Irregulars" that came in to operate the model railroad.

Larisey is stepping back from the business in semi-retirement and is there only a few days a week. Still, in his voice you can hear how he's enjoyed what he's done – and continues to do – over the years in the retail hobby business. "You won't get rich," he says, "but you can make a living and have some fun."

**Maritime Hobbies & Crafts Ltd. 1521 Grafton St., Halifax, N.S. 902-423-8870**  
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# The Feline Friendly Practice

Cats and dog both require special considerations when travelling to the vet. But cats in particular can require more preparation and attention to reduce the stresses related to the carrier, the trip in the car and being in a strange environment they may perceive as threatening. Some cats are more outgoing and more receptive to strangers than others, and those cats often do fine in a regular veterinary setting. Cats that have less experience outside their own environment and who are a little more leery of strangers can require special handling. That's where a feline friendly certified vet can be invaluable to help those more emotionally fragile or person-particular cats get through what can already be a stressful time, a vet visit. That's why Halifax Veterinary Hospital is working to offer a feline friendly practice certified by CatVets.com at one of our locations. Dr. Elizabeth Croft working at Halifax Veterinary Hospital has her "Feline Practitioner" designation. While there are certainly outgoing and "dog-like" cats, many cats are accustomed only to their own families and find the process of even a routine vet visit to be highly traumatic and stressful. If the visit is due to your cat feeling sick or needing services beyond routine care that stress and fear can be multiplied substantially further complicating their care.

CatVets.com is affiliated with the American Association of Feline Practitioners and they offer certifications to veterinarians around the world, including Canada, for veterinarians who achieve further education and training in specialized care for cats.

## Why seek out a Feline Friendly Practice for your cat?

It is estimated that there are 7.9 million feline companions in Canada, compared to 5.9 million canine companions. Yet cats are half as likely to come to vets as dogs are, and statistics show that is due to the increased stress of a vet visit both for cats and for their owners. In fact:

- Almost half of all cat owners say they only bring their cats to the vet for vaccinations.
- A little more than a third of cat owners will only take their feline



companion to the vet if they were sick.

- A majority of cat owners report that their cat "hates" going to the veterinarian.
- One-third of cat owners say that just the thought of bringing their cat to the vet makes them feel stressed.

A feline friendly practice alleviates these concerns by providing feline specialized care that can help even the most standoffish and nervous cats to feel more comfortable in a veterinary setting. A Feline Friendly Practice recognizes that:

- Cats find travel difficult and over stimulating.
- Cats are stressed by being in close proximity to other cats and dogs.
- Cats are more susceptible to stress and anxiety.
- Cats have unique medical requirements and also require gentle handling.

Because of cats' unique needs and tendency to become anxious and stressed in over-stimulating situations such as a vet visit, veterinarians who have been certified as a Feline Friendly Practice offer a uniquely gentle and feline-specific approach that helps cats to feel as at ease and comfortable as possible.

A Feline Friendly Practice offers caring and empathetic handling of cats and elevates care for cats by offering feline-specific facilities, care, and equipment designed to meet the unique medical needs of cats and is able to recognize, diagnose, and treat feline-specific diseases.

Halifax Veterinary Hospitals are happy to be among the only clinics in Halifax offering this unique service. Don't hesitate to give your beloved feline companion the veterinary care they need by bringing them to a place where they can have a lifetime of empathetic and feline-centered care. Ready to give your cat the care they deserve?

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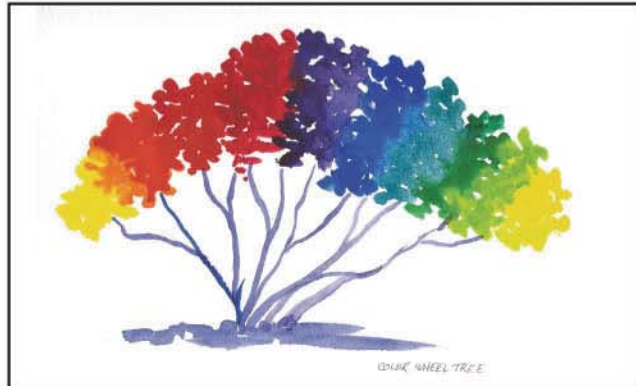


From the Big Apple, Jenny Joan Larisey,  
Craft Consultant for Maritime Hobbies & Crafts

Color is the result of objects interacting with already colored light rather than objects generating the color themselves, this is known as Newton's theory of color.

In the visual arts, color theory is practical guidance to color mixing and the visual effects of specific color combinations. As you design, it is helpful to keep in mind how the eye and the mind perceive certain colors and the symbolism we associate with them. Observing the effects colors have on each other is the starting point for understanding the relativity of color. Preferences and meanings of color are personal and subjective, no one color or situation is the same to everybody.

Sir Isaac Newton first developed a circular diagram of colors in 1666 now commonly known as the color wheel, it has become traditional in the field of art and is the basic



tool for combining colors. The color wheel was designed so that virtually any colors you pick from it will look good together.

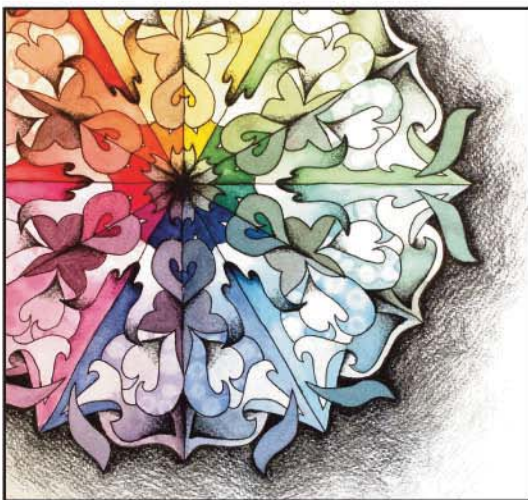
Over the years scientists and artists have studied and designed numerous variations of this concept and the most common version is a wheel of 12 colors. The wheel is based on the three primary colors; blue, red and yellow because these colors were believed capable of mixing all other colors.

Take some time to create your own color wheel, it helps with mixing and matching colors to know the relationship of adjacent, harmonizing, contrasting, and complementary

colors and is a fun project to do on your own or with a group. You can cut out colors from magazines and make a collage, melt crayons, sew fabric scraps together, or paint with watercolor, the mediums to use are endless.

Color theory encompasses a multitude of definitions, concepts and design applications, enough to fill hundreds of books. I have gathered a few books that I want to read up on to help me develop my understanding on how we see color and where it comes from. Over the next few months I am going to get cosy with color, and by the end of winter I plan to be dreaming in it.

Here is a list of some recommended books:  
Color: A Natural History of the Palette by Victoria Finlay  
Colors by Anne Varichon  
Color Choices by Stephen Quiller  
Color by Betty Edwards  
A Perfect Red by Amy Butler Greenfield  
Interaction of Color by Josef Albers  
The Secret Language of Color by Joann Eckstut & Arielle Eckstut



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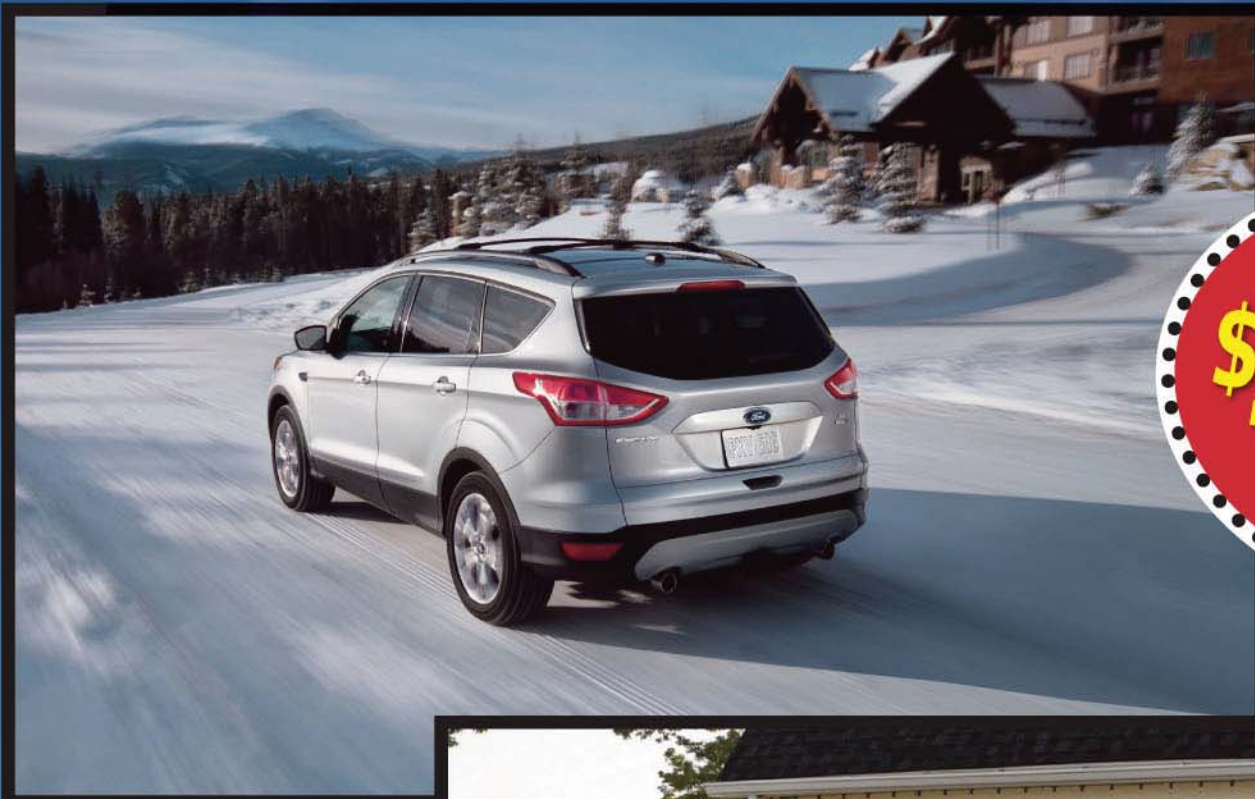
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