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Teaching Children about Simple Acts of Kindness during the Holidays

By Dr. Crystal Lowe-Pearce, Registered Psychologist

The holidays provide a perfect opportunity to teach children about kindness and giving to others. This is an important lesson to learn. Looking for ways to show kindness teaches children to have empathy. It is a way for them to see things from another perspective, or in other words, to "put themselves in another's shoes". Focusing on opportunities for sharing with others teaches our children an important skill, which is valuable not just for the holidays, but all year long.

We are our children's best models. So below are 7 ideas (a week's worth!) of inexpensive ways that you and your children can show simple acts of kindness:

1. Encourage children to sacrifice a couple of dollars of their allowance to give as a charity donation. Many organizations collect change for local charities. To model this to your children, you could give up buying your afternoon coffee for a day or two and donate your change as well. Talk with your children about what it means to sacrifice for others.
2. Donate time to local organizations. Encourage children to offer to help set up for a holiday event, plan an activity for children at their church, or to help with something at their school. To model this to your children, you can offer to assist at a soup kitchen or help put

together food hampers for your local food bank.

3. Do something kind for someone in need of extra cheer. Consider visiting a local nursing home, and spending some time with some of the elderly residents. If your child has a small group of friends who would like to join in, consider preparing some carols to sing while you're there. You can model similar behaviour by visiting a neighbour who is unable to leave their house or someone who is in the hospital. Take along flowers or something colourful to brighten their room.

4. Do unexpected acts of kindness. Encourage your child to think of a surprise treat they could give to someone else, such as paying for another child's snack at canteen or leaving a note with kind words for someone in their backpack. Model your own unexpected acts of kindness, for example paying for the person behind you at your local coffee drive-through.

5. Show gratitude to emergency responders. It is important for children to learn to show thanks to those who sacrifice for them. Encourage your child to make a thank you card or a drawing for one of your local emergency services such as the police, fire department, or paramedics. To model your own gratitude, consider baking a treat to go with the card. Deliver it together.

6. Also think about thanking those who might not often get thanked. For example your child could leave a treat or thank you card for the school librarian or the janitor at school. You could model the same by leaving a treat in the mailbox for the postal worker or giving the cashier at your grocery store a card wishing them a happy holiday.

7. Show kindness at home. Encourage your children to show the same empathy to those within your household. They could help a sibling with a chore, look for ways to help out a family member without being asked, or simply to smile and find ways to compliment each other more. Model this behaviour by helping your spouse with a household activity you don't typically do; and despite all the stresses that the holidays can bring, try hard yourself to smile and compliment more as well.

Looking for ways to show simple acts of kindness, and shifting our focus to the needs of others, provides a wonderful opportunity to have discussions within your family about the things you are grateful for during the holidays and all year long.

Dr. Crystal Lowe-Pearce & Associates provide evidence-based psychological assessment and intervention services to children, adolescents, and adults. For more information, visit www.crystallowepearce.ca or call 902-495-8197.

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Supporting Your Grieving Child During the Holidays

By Anita Sablone, M.A., R. Psych.

An adult man loses his father and forces himself to attend local hockey events in his dad's honor, despite an almost incapacitating sense of sadness at every game.

An adult woman loses her unborn child and cannot walk past the baby section in the local grocery store for years to come.

A little boy loses his sister to cancer and refuses to swing in her seat on the backyard swing set, even as a teenager.

Regardless of age, losing someone we love is an event that touches us deeply and changes us forever – whether the grief is immediate or suppressed, to be expressed at a much later time in our lives. From that very moment and onward, life is not the same. Events and people are interpreted differently. The fragility of everything one thought to be true and stable is keenly felt.

For children, however, grief is a complex issue requiring unique, compassionate care. And, unlike adults, children have limited means of gaining therapeutic support and are often left to their own self-management. This is especially true for very young children who may appear not to be actively grieving at all. As adults supporting children through grief, it is important to understand a child's unique needs in grieving, and pave the way for healing – whether it be through family or outside supports, such as grief counselling.

Loss is often laid bare at poignant times of year, such as holidays. Christmas, in particular, is 'packaged' as a time for positive remembrance and reflection – remembering your blessings, visiting family, sharing time with loved ones. The magic and meaning of this holiday can be affected for grieving children, but it does not have to change entirely.

So, what do you do during Christmas when your family is grieving, and especially your child? Here are some tips for the upcoming Christmas holidays:

Trust your instincts. Allow your knowledge of your child to guide you. Don't be pressured by what others think you should do – you know best regarding what is the minimum stay, type of visit, etc. that can be

handled without significantly stressing your child. Take ownership of what you feel your child can handle – you know them best.

Plan ahead, accepting limitations of what you and your child can handle. Ask yourself, "What aspect of the Christmas holiday will be especially challenging?" Give yourself permission to make a "family plan" as a group as to which events you attend, who should go and even how long you may stay. As a family, you may decide to keep your usual plans the same or not attend anything – or somewhere in between.

Anticipate rough events or moments. Be open with your child – let them know that particular days or events during the holiday will be hard for them and you. Explain that it is ok to feel upset, angry and sad – all at the same time. Allow them to have their own reaction, and not compare it with your own.

Ask for help from others, especially to rest. In order to be responsive to your child, you need to first take care of yourself. Make sure to take time to focus on your own needs for quiet, a low-key activity or sleep. If your child wants to stay close to you, encourage them to enjoy a low-key activity such as reading a book or watching a movie, while you rest. Remember: children often take their lead from adults. You are teaching them an important lesson of self-care in the face of grief and loss – a lesson that will stay with them throughout their life.

Allow people to nurture you and your child. Take advantage of offers to cook and clean for you, run simple errands and even to take your child out for a short while. We often worry about burdening others, when they are actually eager to help.

Provide ways for your child to express their feelings and communicate needs.

Give you and your child permission to express intense emotions and feelings, and to be openly upset. Comfort one another, and try not to view the explosion of feelings a child (or yourself) may experience as "too much to handle" or "unnatural".

Children, especially younger ones, express their feelings most easily through drawing or crafting. When talking isn't working, encourage your child to draw a picture or make a craft. Some children will feel the need to take these tokens to the gravesite. This should not be a worry – it is a healthy expression of their love for your lost one.

Plan activities that are family- and friend-based, fun and relaxing.

Children can experience intense grief, but then they also need to be a kid. They may feel depressed one moment, and then want to play or be loud the next, as if nothing is wrong. They may want to be with friends. This is o.k.; such variability is a normal grieving pattern for children. Your child will need time with and time away from you in order to work through their loss.

Celebrate the memory of your loved one you have lost.

Make new traditions that your family can carry on for years to come, to commemorate your loved one. Give a gift to charity, adopt a needy child for the holidays through your church or local charitable organization, light a candle every evening to signify the presence of one you have lost. Create a meaningful, personal tradition that allows your child to look past the loss to good memories they will always have inside them.

And, most importantly, reflect with your child the journey that they have taken to get here... how much their love was important to their lost friend, sibling, grandparent. Focus on their resiliency and strength in helping their lost one through to last moments. In this way, you are teaching your child that, in the face of an uncontrollable outcome, there is strength to be found and life to continue. Face the challenges of the holiday with your child, as a family, and you will learn resilience side by side.

Have a peaceful Christmas, everyone.

Anita Sablone is an experienced, fully-registered psychologist from Carleen Hall Psychological Services, Inc. She specializes in supporting children, teens, young adults and their families through assessment, counseling and consultation services (e.g., working with a child's teacher or school).

Grief and loss in children/teens is one of her most valued areas of counseling, and one that continually inspires her regarding resiliency and a deep sense of hope in the face of harsh realities.

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Ways to Take Back Control of Christmas

By: Deborah Bird, MSc., Registered Clinical Psychologist

"It's the most wonderful time of the year." Christmas movies and songs often depict a false sense of the ease of Christmas preparations. Children often are perplexed as to why their parents don't share their enthusiasm and excitement for Santa Clause to come. Instead, children see their parents bustling around the house, putting up decorations, baking festive treats, purchasing gifts and hosting and attending parties. Parents are often overscheduled, over tired and they tend to lose track of dates and times for example; Johnny and Sarah's

Christmas concert is on the same night at the same time this year? AHHHHHHHHHHH!

Stop! Take a deep breath. Here are a few tips to take back the power to make decisions over the holiday season and prevent holiday stress for you and your family.

1. Stick to Healthy Diets and Family Routines: The holiday season often brings late night shopping trips, over indulgent food and alcohol consumption at parties and late bed times for parents and children.

Hung over parents and over stimulated, over tired children does not emulate the Hallmark Family Christmas cards.

2. Rest and Relaxation: Families are already over scheduled even without additional holiday events. Feel free to decline some holiday invitations and stay home and have some quiet evenings where everyone can get rest and stay on schedule.

3. Participate or create family traditions: Children often light up when they describe to me their family's holiday traditions. The fondest memories often include no electronics and having their parent's undivided attention. Dust off the board games, make some hot chocolate, make simple cookies and enjoy some conversations and laughter.

4. Extended Family: Extended family can be a source of support and stress all at the same time. Recognize when spending the holidays with family that you may be placed dual roles. One being a parent and another of being a sibling and a child. Have a discussion with your

family ahead of time to establish rules and boundaries and don't be afraid to execute an escape plan in order to make the best choice for your core family.

5. Set Realistic Expectations: For the most part, children don't have the concept of how much things cost. Show them appropriate presents for their age and within your budget and allow them to choose within those items.

Last but not least, please, take time for yourself to reflect with gratitude the gifts that you already have such as a roof over your head, food in the cupboard and people in your life that love you. Happy Holidays!

Deborah Bird MSc., has 13 years' of experience working with children, adolescents, adults, couples and families. She utilizes evidence-based approaches to treating her clients in a collaborative manner. For more information, please visit www.deborahbirdpsychology.com, email infobirdpsychologicalservices@gmail.com or call our office at 902-490-0090.



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Among the many evidence based therapeutic approaches, Deborah mainly focuses on using: Narrative Therapy, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT), Mindfulness Therapy and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.

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Could your child be showing early signs of autism?

By Caitlin Neily, MASP and Lindsay Bates, PhD - Registered Psychologists

Parents of toddlers often want to know whether or not their child is developing typically. With so much information shared in the community and media, it is difficult for parents to know when or what to be concerned about. By a child's first birthday, he or she should be speaking some words, responding to their name, and gesturing to communicate their wants and needs. By age 3, most children have achieved particular developmental milestones for speaking, walking, and doing things for themselves. If your child has not met these milestones, you may wonder whether your child's development is on track.

There are many reasons why children may not meet their milestones as expected, one reason being Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Recent estimates indicate that 1 in 68 children will go on to have a diagnosis on the autism spectrum. We now know there are early signs to indicate whether a child may be at risk for autism spectrum disorder. Parents, caregivers, and educators can learn the early signs of autism spectrum disorders to assist in making

a decision about whether further evaluation is warranted. Research suggests that the following "red flags" in social-communication may indicate that a child is at risk for autism spectrum disorder:

- Absence of looking at parents'/caregivers' eyes in early months (and beyond)
- Lack of back-and-forth sharing of sounds, smiles, gestures (e.g., showing, reaching, waving) or other facial expressions at 9 months
- Limited babbling at 12 months and/or first words not yet spoken by 16 months
- Not yet combining words (2-3 word meaningful phrases; does not include imitating or repeating) by 24 months

If you have concerns that your child may show some signs of autism spectrum disorder, speak to your child's paediatrician or another professional with specialized training/experience in autism spectrum disorders (e.g., psychologist, speech language pathologist). Although there is considerable variability within children's development, it is always best to err on the side of caution and be sure to have your concerns/questions explored by a qualified professional.

Ms. Caitlin Neily and Dr. Lindsay Bates are psychologists at Erica Baker Psychological Services specializing in the provision of assessment and intervention for individuals with autism spectrum disorders. Erica Baker Psychological Services offers a wide range of psychological services across the lifespan. For more information visit www.ericabaker.ca or call 902-445-3851.



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Honouring Your Child's Art

By Jo-Anne Bayers
Director, The Growing Place

Being creative, and creating using a variety of mediums has been a way of life for me since my own preschool years, so sharing my love for all things creative with children has been a natural, and rewarding part of my career as an early childhood teacher. Children have an innate sense of curiosity, eagerly exploring the world with abandon, soaking up knowledge as they grow. While art may seem like an unlikely educational tool, it is ideal for learning as it exposes children in a fun manner to concepts such as math and science, enhances language, and problem solving skills, and because there is no right way to create art it also boosts self-confidence, all skills necessary for life, and higher levels of education. Preschoolers are often prolific creators of art resulting in mounds of paper going home daily. Although every work of art may not qualify as a masterpiece, the skills they have learned while creating them are certainly worthy of being honoured, but the question of how can be a dilemma.

Jo-Anne is currently the Director at The Growing Place, and has over thirty years of experience. She has previously served as Resource Coordinator where she specialized in supporting children with special needs as well as offering support, and advice to parents on a variety of child, and family related issues. For more information please visit our website at www.thegrowingplace.ca

While your first instinct may not be to hang these works of art in a prominent location of your home that's exactly what I'd like to encourage you to do. With help from you even



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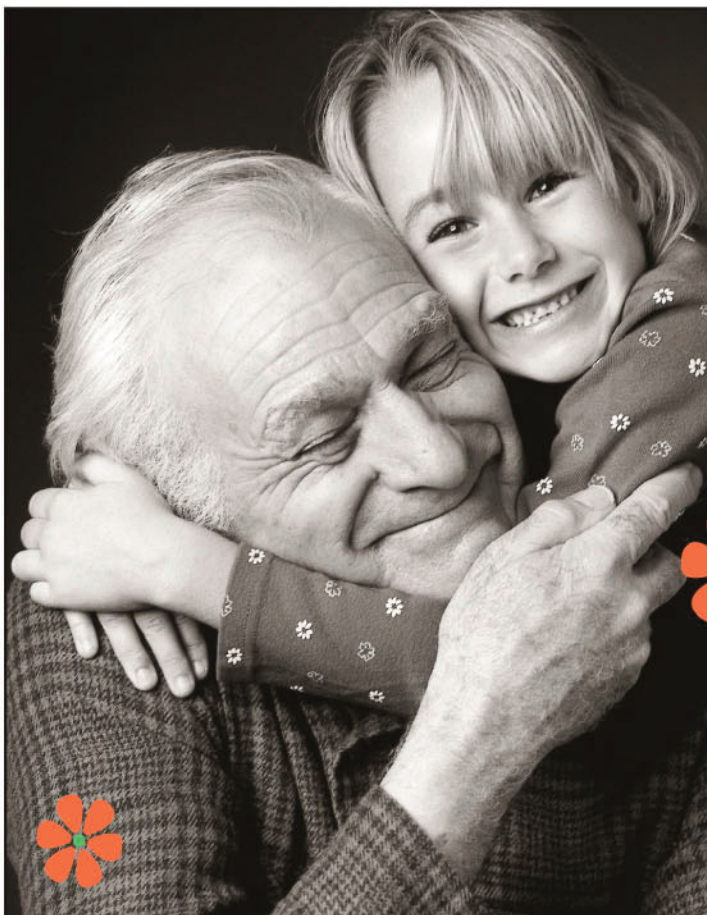


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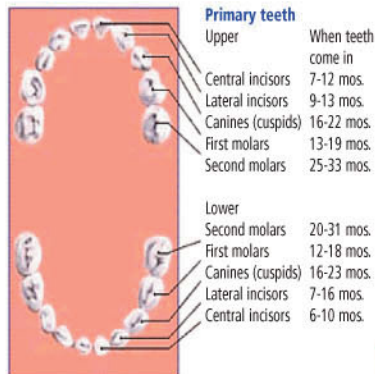
Health & Wellness

Dental Development on Primary and Permanent Teeth

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



Dr. Negin Ghiabi



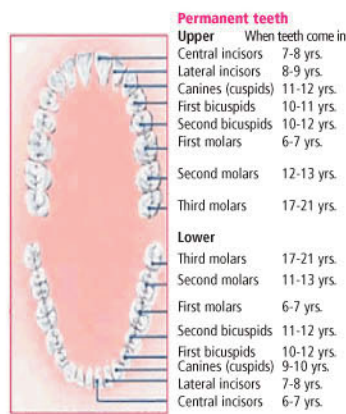
biscuits. They may have sugar added or contain hidden sugars.

- Do not ignore a fever. Getting new teeth does not make babies sick or give them a fever. If your child has a fever, check with your doctor.

Permanent Teeth

At age six or seven, the first adult (or permanent) teeth come in. They are known as the "first molars," or the "six-year molars." They come in at the back of the mouth, behind the last baby (or primary) teeth. They do not replace any primary teeth.

Also at around age six, children start to lose their primary teeth. The roots slowly get weak, and the tooth falls out. Children lose primary teeth until they are about 12 years old. It's okay for children to wiggle their primary teeth if they are loose. But it's not okay to use force to pull out a tooth that's not ready to come out. When a tooth comes out at the right time,



small, cool spoon.

- If your child is still unhappy, your dentist, pharmacist or doctor can suggest an over-the-counter medicine to ease the pain.

Here's what you should not do:

- Do not use the kind of painkiller that can be rubbed on your child's gums. Your child may swallow it.
- Do not give your child teething

Primary Teeth

All twenty baby (or primary) teeth come in by the time your child is two or three years old. The following chart tells you when baby teeth come in (or erupt) in most children.

If your child is getting his or her teeth and seems to be in pain, you can:

- rub the gums with a clean finger, or
- rub the gums with the back of a



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Did you know the first dental visit for a child begins at age 1?

there will be very little bleeding. Permanent teeth often look more yellow than primary teeth. This is normal. But it could also be caused by medicine your child took, by an accident that hurt a primary tooth, or by too much fluoride. Ask your pediatric dentist about this when you take your child for a dental exam.

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.

What's so special about a Specialist?

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



passionate about a certain niche and focus their time and energy in that area. They often do continuing education courses to help build their expertise in a certain area. Dentists who choose this path often refer to their practices as "limited" to a certain area. However specialized they choose to make their practice though, it is still different from a Specialist's practice.

Confused yet?

True dental specialists are dentists who complete dental school and then go on to study an additional number of years (typically 2-6) in one particular area of dentistry. For example, an Orthodontist is someone who studies for three additional years focusing entirely on tooth movement with braces and Invisalign as well as growth modification. An orthodontist no longer practices any other aspect of Dentistry and instead works with your general dentist to deliver you complete care. Students in these specialist programs are referred to as "residents" much like a medical resident. Often times they are also called a graduate student as these additional years of study can lead to a Masters degree. Upon completion of these extra years of study, these residents are tested by yet another set of board exams to achieve the designation of Board Certified Specialist. In Canada, specialists that have the designation FRCDC have completed this exam process.

There are 9 nationally recognized dental specialties in Canada. You can verify that the person you are seeing is a registered dental specialist by visiting NSdental.org.

So all specialists are dentists but not all dentists are specialists. The bottom line is that you need to be informed about the level of

expertise of the person who is treating you. As a general rule, as the complexity of a case increases, so does the necessity of having a specialist provide the treatment. That said, understanding case complexity is something that can be very hard to determine. Talk to your dentist and if you have more questions, don't be shy to inquire

about a specialist's perspective.

When it comes time to choosing care for the special ones in your life, consider the specialized knowledge and training of a board-certified dental specialist!

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.

Have you ever found yourself faced with a referral to a dental specialist only to hear that your neighbour's dentist does everything at their own office? Have you wondered why?

The field of Dentistry is complex from the outside but is important to understand. A dentist is a person who completes four years of dental school where they undergo special training in the head and neck region. Typically, a student entering dental school will already have completed at least one degree. Before attaining the designation of Dentist (DDS after their name) all dentists in Canada must complete all requirements of their individual programs but also pass a National Board Exam for competency.

A practicing dentist has a broad scope of practice, meaning they can do a wide range of procedures from fillings, to crowns to root canals, and orthodontics. Some dentists find themselves particularly



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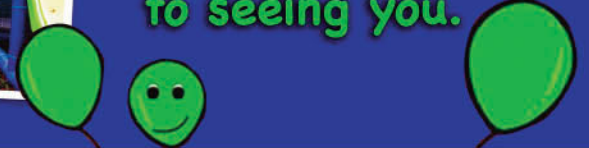
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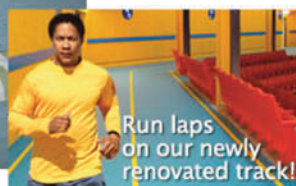
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Preventing Pet Poisoning

Submitted by Halifax Veterinary Hospitals



Did you know that the number one cause for emergency visits to the vet or animal hospital is poisoning? As everyone who has a pet knows, they can be extremely inquisitive. Their curiosity for all things edible, drinkable or, for that matter, inanimate, seems to know no bounds. It falls to you, the pet owner, to provide a safe environment. Fortunately, the basics are easy to accomplish. Here are some tips to follow:

- **FOOD & PLANTS.** In Canada, the highest number of pet poisonings occur from food. Pets, especially dogs, love human food. A number of items, such as onions, garlic or raisins, however, can be extremely dangerous, as can xylitol, which is found in sugar free gums and candies. Chocolate in high quantities can cause a high heart rate and seizures, as well as digestive tract problems.

There's a long list of plants known to be toxic for animals, including acorn squash, macadamia nuts and aloe. Lilies have been known to cause kidney failure in cats, and lemon and lime are particularly dangerous for dogs.

TIP: Know which plants and foods in both your home and garden are poisonous and either keep them out of reach or remove them. If you're not sure about your particular pet, ask your vet.

- **ANTIFREEZE/ HOUSEHOLD CHEMICALS.** Some antifreezes contain ethylene glycol, which has an attractive sweet taste, but can be deadly to an animal. Cocoa mulch is a popular ground cover, but it also contains theobromine, an ingredient

used in the making of all chocolates. The scent makes it appealing, but it can prove deadly if ingested by your pet. De-icing salts are not only skin and paw irritants, but if licked off can be poisonous.

TIP: Purchase an antifreeze that contains the safer ingredient, propylene glycol instead. Use a natural mulch in the yard and keep all chemical fertilizers and plant foods sealed up tight and out of your pet's reach. If your pet loves to play in the snow, be sure to wash and dry off its paws as soon as it comes indoors.

- **MEDICATIONS.** The safest bet here is to assume all human medications are toxic for animals. Some common ones you might have out in the open are pain killers, including aspirin and ibuprofen, cold medicines, vitamins and diet pills.

TIP: Store all your medicine bottles and tubes (which can be viewed as chew toys) out of sight from your pet. If you drop a pill, make that extra effort to immediately find it before your pet does.

Some other common household items you shouldn't overlook include batteries, pennies, automotive products and cigarettes, all potential toxins.

Your pet is a cherished member of the family. Make the safety habits outlined above part of your household's routine, and you'll reap the rewards for many years to come.

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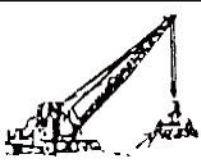
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Set a Goal to Eliminate Bad School Habits

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 Halifax at 902-423-4484 halifax@oxfordlearning.com or Bedford at 902-405-4116 bedford@oxfordlearning.com

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A Conversation Dilemma?

By Pam Streeter, Executive Director
Birch Hills Academy, Creative Kids Education Centre

The little girl who expects her parents to find friends for her.

The boy jumping alone on a trampoline in the backyard while playing on a hand held device.

The family texting around the dinner table.

Neighbourhoods appear empty.

Does this sound familiar?

As an administrator in a PreK - 9 school as well as school age and summer camp programs, I have observed an alarming trend over the past 6 years. A reduction in problem solving skills, conversation skills, resiliency, an increased need for instant gratification and a reliance on adults to solve problems and "fix" things for them.

We know that children learn by playing together, they learn how to solve problems, how to communicate, and how to take turns. Yet they are having fewer face to face conversations.

Today's children are over-scheduled, over-supervised, and plugged-in. Parents report that they are worried and find it stressful trying to manage extra-curricular schedules and arrange play-dates. Children report that they

feel scared, unsure and sometimes alone, even in a group. Are we losing family talking time and play, and opportunities for social skill practice, and bonding?

This past summer CBC Radio reported on a new phenomena - the demise of the family summer vacation. Children are enrolled in camps and other activities all summer long and the family vacation is the casualty. The Globe and Mail reported that Americans feel socially isolated even though they have many Facebook friends.

What can we do? There are a variety of programs available to children and families, however they are generally in controlled settings and have difficulty scaffolding into real life experiences. One company, SaySo Communication, is developing a friendship platform that will transition skills into real life.

If you would like to help shape this initiative, they invite you to share your families' challenges and frustrations with over-scheduling, over-supervision (or lack of) and children's fascination with technology. Visit www.tosayso.com to tell your story.



HRSB French Immersion Registration, February 1 – March 2, 2016

To learn more about french programs, contact:

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Education

3 Tips to Prepare for University Admission & Scholarships

University is an expensive investment, and it's an important life step for a young person. You want to get it right. For some students and parents, applying to university can be confusing and stressful. Here are a few tips to take control of the university admission process:

1. Get good grades. Despite the fact that some universities now require a personal statement for admission and/or scholarships, appropriate courses and grades are still the main criteria for admission (and often for scholarships as well). For many programs, a student's grades don't have to be stellar but they do have to be solid. Another reason to study and get good grades is because you'll actually have to know the material for university, and you'll be better prepared later if you study and do well now.

2. Prepare in advance for scholarships. You don't

have to be a top student to get a scholarship but you do have to apply. Every year millions of dollars in scholarship funding goes unused because students don't apply! But getting serious about scholarships means spending time—a lot of time—researching, planning and writing applications. Scholarship criteria varies greatly, but many require a list of activities, a personal statement or essay, and at least one reference. To save time, pre-write content in a Word document to cut and paste into each application, then tailor it to the scholarship. Give referees adequate time to prepare reference letters. Scholarship deadlines vary, so use a month-at-a-glance calendar so you don't miss any.

3. Tour all universities you're considering. Open house events are fun, but a more personalized campus tour will allow you to focus on your interests. Read about the university and programs before you go,

and then ask the tour guide questions that your reading didn't answer. Request in advance to meet with professors in the program(s) you're considering. Ask them what's special or different about their program, "So, why should I take XYZ here rather than at another university?".

This is a busy and important time for high school seniors. By doing research, asking questions and staying organized, students can minimize stress and enjoy this exciting time of life.

Janet MacDonald is an education consultant at mycampusGPS. She provides one-to-one personal guidance to students and families with university admission, scholarship research and preparation, and career exploration. See: www.mycampusGPS.ca, and follow @mycampusGPS.

Diane Racette, directrice générale par intérim du CSAP

Suite à l'élection de Darrell Samson, directeur général du Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP), au Parlement canadien le 19 octobre, le directeur général a pris sa retraite en date du 30 octobre. Les membres ont eu l'occasion de le remercier pour ses onze années de service au poste de directeur général du CSAP lors de leur réunion régulière le 7 novembre à Wedgeport.

Les membres du Conseil ont tenu à reconnaître le directeur général sortant pour son importante contribution au développement de la communauté du CSAP et de la communauté acadienne et francophone toute entière de la province. « On lui souhaite une longue carrière autant enrichissante au Parlement canadien », a dit le président du CSAP, Kenneth Gaudet.

Le Conseil scolaire est content de pouvoir continuer la gestion du CSAP avec la nomination de madame Diane Racette, jusqu'alors directrice régionale du

Central, au poste de directrice générale par intérim. Cela permettra au CSAP de procéder aux démarches pour la nomination éventuelle de la prochaine direction générale du Conseil scolaire.

Madame Racette entre en fonction immédiatement. Avant de combler le poste de directrice régionale dans la région centrale du CSAP, Diane Racette était directrice du Centre scolaire de la Rivière-Sud où elle a dirigé le déplacement de l'école de Blockhouse à Cookville.

Elle est née et a grandi à Rockland, en Ontario, une communauté francophone en banlieue d'Ottawa. Sa passion pour l'apprentissage l'a menée à une carrière dans l'enseignement. Elle a enseigné à tous les niveaux scolaires et dans différents environnements : français langue première, immersion et anglais langue première. Elle a co-écrit un manuel scolaire qui a été adopté par le ministère de l'Éducation de l'Ontario.

Diane Racette a également travaillé en tant que consultante au ministère de l'Éducation et du Développement de la petite enfance de la Nouvelle-Écosse pour la recherche et la rédaction d'un document cadre sur les résultats d'apprentissage. Elle est titulaire d'un baccalauréat ès Arts et en Éducation de l'Université d'Ottawa et d'une maîtrise en Éducation de l'université Mount St. Vincent. Elle était récipiendaire en 1997 de la bourse du Premier ministre pour l'excellence en enseignement.

Pour renseignements : Richard Landry, communications landryr@csap.ca (902) 769-5472 Pour accéder aux communiqués du CSAP : <http://csap.ca/communiqués.php>

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CRAFT CORNER

Sculpting With Wool

By Jenny Joan Larisey, Craft Consultant for Maritime Hobbies & Crafts

First off I want to thank all of the beautiful woolly animals in the world for their cute faces and fibers. They help to keep us warm over the winter months and straight up, is an amazing medium to work with as a textile artist.

For thousands of years man has practiced methods of turning the fleece of a sheep into warm clothing, blankets, carpets and as a means of shelter such as yurts. It wasn't until the 1980's that using a single needle became a means to sculpt wool. Unlike traditional felting, which requires the use of soap, hot water and agitation, needle felting is a dry process of manipulating wool fibers. Using a single barbed needle from an industrial felting machine and friction you can turn the wool into shapes, embellishments, or three dimensional objects.

I love this craft because it is almost instant gratification and the basic techniques are quick and easy to master. All you really need is a basic

understanding of the concepts of needle felting, good supplies and a great imagination. While there are many styles of felting needles available, you should choose a simple single needle for your first attempts. A single needle lets you have a lot of control over your work, and will help you avoid injury while you are learning the basics.

Because felting needles are sharp and fragile, it is very important to have some type of firm, yet resilient work pad that will hold up to all of the stabbing that goes along with needle felting. If your surface isn't resilient enough you will find yourself breaking needles. I have tried using a folded towel and upholstery foam, these both worked ok but I did find that peaces of the foam would come off on to my projects after multiple use and the folded towel was a little too firm.



What I find most satisfying to use is a rice bag. Using an open weave cotton cloth and doubling up the layers I made a 6 inch square bag filled with rice.

Besides sculpting 3D objects with the wool I also make appliques to decorate or fix up old sweaters. YouTube is a great way to see how all kinds of artists practice their craft and a good way to discover new techniques.

Drop in to Maritime Hobbies & Crafts to see our craft corner and for many holiday craft ideas. 1521 Grafton Street, Halifax, 423-8870



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