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Parent-Child Guide

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Being Your Own Best Friend

By Carol M. Shirley, Registered Psychologist, with ENIGMA

In our everyday world, finding acceptance of "who we are" can be very difficult. Most people feel constant fluctuations in their emotions by the flow of social "should and should not's" that suggest how we ought to behave. The perceived need to please our parents, friends, co-workers, and children (along with anyone else) can leave us feeling out of touch with ourselves. Allowing others outside to define our identity keeps us in a sort of fluid state. We tend to adapt to the environment and we play out the role we've become accustomed to playing.

When we fail to live up to the expectations that we think other people hold for us we try to think our way to a solution. A lot of thinking without action puts us at the top or beginning of a downward emotional spiral. Our thinking can become increasingly negative and aggressive in both intensity (tone) and globally (who it affects). Often through our thoughts we say things to our self that does not reflect or honour that what we are on the inside. Forms of negative thinking include engaging in gossip, comparing ourselves to others and belittling.

Consider the notion that the relationship with self is like no other. We literally spend twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week in our own company. Think about the negative things you say to yourself and answer this question: "If someone else said to me the things I say to myself,

would this person be my best friend?" The relationship we have with our self affects our ability to consistently find and experience joy.

Treat yourself with the same kindness, compassion and understanding that you would show your best friend. Behave the way you would advise her/him to behave if your problem was your best friend's problem. Learn to be honest with yourself and find a balance between giving and taking both to and from others. Do not make promises to yourself or others that you are not going to keep. Say what you mean and do what your say.

Positive self-esteem (feeling as though I'm not enough and I like myself) begins with positive thinking. It is essential to identify and embrace our positive personal qualities. It is also essential to understand how our behavior affects others and reflects who they believe we are. People outside of us do not have the benefit of hearing our thinking processes nor do they see our intent. What they see is our behaviour.

Learn to say no to others especially when saying yes means saying no to yourself. Learn to understand and set boundaries for yourself and others. Experience your emotions, feel them, think about them but learn not to act on them without understanding the consequences of your actions.

It is important to teach our children that they are enough. Recognize that diversity is the soul of creativity. Help yourself and your children learn that it is human to make mistakes. Learn from those mistakes, reflect and learn and move on. Learn how to forgive (yourself and others) and live your life with minimal regrets. Hold yourself and others to a standard of expectations that they can live up to and clearly define your expectations. Children need to learn that helping at home is not an option. It is expected (think about the big picture and what is being taught and not about isolated incidents). We all need to use manners. Manners help us feel appreciated. Be your own best friend.

For more information go to www.carolshirley.ca or phone 902-495-3181.



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All the Benefits of a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP)

Submitted by The Sutherland Wealth Management Group

Less than one out of four children benefit from the financial assistance provided by a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP).

This assistance provides a helping hand to children whose dreams won't be cut short by a mountain of unpaid bills. RESPs also benefit parents, since every dollar they invest in the plan quickly multiplies due

to governmental subsidies and tax-free accumulation of income. And contrary to popular belief, a RESP investment isn't beyond the reach of families on tight budgets.

Here is what you need to know about RESPs.

Who Can Contribute to a RESP?

To open a RESP, the subscriber must have a social insurance number (SIN).

The recipient or recipients must also have a SIN and be Canadian residents. There are three types of registered education savings plans: the individual RESP, family RESP and group RESP. Rules and restrictions vary according to the plan. Sale fees, file opening fees, and some annual fees or penalties in the event of changes made to the plan can also apply.

What Return Can You

Expect?

RESP returns will obviously vary according to several factors linked to financial markets and the types of investments chosen. But as a general rule, the sooner you start saving, the higher the amount will be, thanks to the tax-sheltered cumulative earnings.

That said, the main appeal of a RESP in terms of earnings stems from the fact that each contri-

bution is enhanced by a federal government grant, and by a provincial grant in some provinces. Indeed, the Government of Canada offers grants to encourage Canadians to save for their children's post-secondary education. Through the Canada Education Savings Grant (CESG), the federal government awards 20% on each dollar invested in a RESP, up to \$500 annually (i.e. 20% of a \$2,500 contribution) and up to a lifetime grant of \$7,200).

On top of the general grant, eligible low-income families may receive the Canada Learning Bond (CLB), which consists in an initial one-time payment of \$500, followed by annual payments of \$100, for a maximum of 15 years. To benefit from the CLB, one only needs to open a RESP account, since no contribution is required. Eligible low- and medium-income families who can contribute to the plan may also qualify to receive an extra 10% to 20% on every dollar of the first \$500 saved annually through the Additional Canada Education Savings Grant (A-CESG). Unused RESP grants can accumulate until the child turns 17 and can be claimed, through additional contributions, up to a maximum of \$1,000 per year at the federal level. Thanks to this governmental assistance, regardless of the family's financial situation, money invested in a RESP earns a one-time initial return of up to 30%, before accumulating in an investment product.


What Are the Tax Benefits of the RESP?

Unlike the Registered Retirement Savings Plan

(RRSP), the RESP contributions do not allow the subscriber to reduce his/her taxable income. However, the capital invested in the RESP and admissible grants grow tax-free. The beneficiary may receive the money from the RESP in the form of Educational Assistance Payments (EAP) when it is time to start his/her post-secondary studies in a Qualifying Educational Program.

The EAPs are taxable income in the hands of the RESP beneficiary. The latter may however be exempt from paying taxes on the amounts received if the EAPs are judiciously planned and if the child has no other significant source of income. That said, it is important to note that the EAP is exclusively made up of money from grants and investment income. It does not therefore include the amount of contributions made by the RESP subscriber (usually the parents). From the moment when EAPs are paid, the subscriber can recover the RESP contributions without any tax impact, since tax on these invested sums was already paid in the past. The subscriber can use them as they see fit, for example, to make RRSP contributions. At any time when the amounts are withdrawn from the RESP, only the earnings and gains accumulated on the capital and grants are taxable.

For more information check out Canada Revenue Agency's website or reach out to us at terry.sutherland@nbc.ca.



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Nature has been the antidote to the stress, anxiety and isolation of COVID-19 and other tragedies. People are rediscovering that nature brings us joy. That being outdoors makes our kids happy and brings families together. That nature can keep us healthy—mentally and physically. That it restores us.

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But our wild spaces and treasured species are threatened. Many of our most important and treasured natural areas, including critical habitat for endangered species, are privately owned and at risk of development.

The Nova Scotia Nature Trust's mission is to protect the province's ecologically significant lands. Over 25 years they have protected 15,000 acres using a strategic, science-driven approach to identify and protect the most threatened, unique and significant natural areas. But nature needs all of us to move faster, before it's too late. So they **have set an ambitious goal: to double their protected spaces to 30,000 acres within 3 the next 3 years.**

Thanks to amazing funding partners, **every dollar you give to this campaign will unlock four more.** That means your \$100 gift will generate another \$400, for a total of \$500 in land conservation.

Help save the wild places you love. Ensure that our wildlife thrives. Protect a healthy planet. And preserve a legacy of wild spaces for future generations to enjoy.

Contact Barbara Haley at 902-425-5263 or Barbara@nsnt.ca or visit nsnt.ca for more information.

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HRM MLAs and MPs Working Hard for YOU!

Pre-Primary Now Available To All Nova Scotia Families

By Hon. Lena Metlege Diab, MLA Halifax Armdale

I'm very proud to share with you that Nova Scotia has completed the rollout of our pre-primary program! Every four-year-old in Nova Scotia now has access to pre-primary, a free, universal early learning program.

Since 2017, when the program was first launched, pre-primary has benefitted over 14,000 children and their families, helping our young ones adjust to a classroom-like setting and socialize while learning through play. By making the program available to all four-year-olds, Nova Scotia is evening the playing field and helping all our students succeed. Not only do children make friends in pre-primary, they learn about routines, try new foods, and get better prepared for what school feels like.

Provincewide, Nova Scotia has invested \$51.4 million this year to deliver pre-primary to all 253 school

communities with elementary schools. In addition to universal pre-primary, the province has also completed its rollout of busing for eligible pre-primary children. Access to busing reduces barriers for families, especially in rural areas, to access the program.

As a mother and grandmother, I'm excited that Nova Scotia is able to offer this opportunity to all families and communities. I believe it will make a great difference for our children, and will help families save on their child-care costs as well.

Families who wish to register their child for pre-primary can still contact their Regional Centre for Education or the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial.

As always, if you have questions, comments, or concerns, my constituency office can be reached at (902) 455-1610 or lena@metlegediab.ca.



Fall Update from Rafah Di Costanzo, MLA for Clayton Park West



Just like that—summer is over, and the fall has made its beautiful appearance! There is something about autumn; it is crisp and fresh, and signals a time of change.

I hope everyone is happily settled back into their school and work routines. We are extremely fortunate that we have had very few cases of COVID-19; the more cautious we are, the safer we will be.

COVID-19 certainly brought along challenges, and I know many people felt anxious going back to school before the first week commenced. However, now that we have all gone back, the feedback has been extremely positive in our office regarding how teachers and staff are handling their new normal.

In this province, we are so fortunate to have been able to have in-person schooling. We have very hard-working teachers and staff who care deeply about the health of their students, so I know our children are in the greatest care. Our students will flourish in their academics far more in schools, than they would at home; school is beneficial for both mental health and social development.

I would like to share some exciting news regarding my *MLA Litter Prevention Challenge: 'Let's Stop Littering'* and the *Litter Prevention Committee (LPC)*; the team (Emily Williams, casual staff member, and Michele Di Quinzio, Summer student), created *two youth litter prevention videos*: one for grades Primary to 6, and one for grades 7 to 12. Within the videos are informative fun-facts and demonstrations on how to prevent litter. I know the best way for students to learn proper methods of litter prevention is from their peers. We have distributed the litter prevention videos to the four schools in my riding.

The LPC also completed four monthly clean-ups this summer and fall, and six clean-ups in 2019. Please note that the LPC is still hosting our monthly meetings via Zoom from October to April 2021. If you are interested in joining, please email the LPC leads; Michele Di Quinzio or Jayne Hawkins,

at: *litterpreventioncommittee@gmail.com.*

The success of this grass-roots initiative showcased true community-sense in the riding, which is why we felt ready to launch a brand-new initiative within the coming months for our wonderful seniors. Our seniors' group will focus on issues that they face on a daily basis. We also hope to combat the issue of loneliness amongst our most vulnerable members of society. If you would like to join, or have any additional suggestions, please email or call my office (information below).

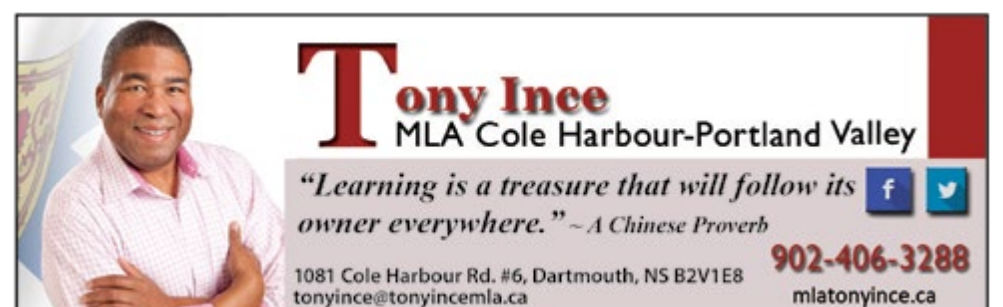
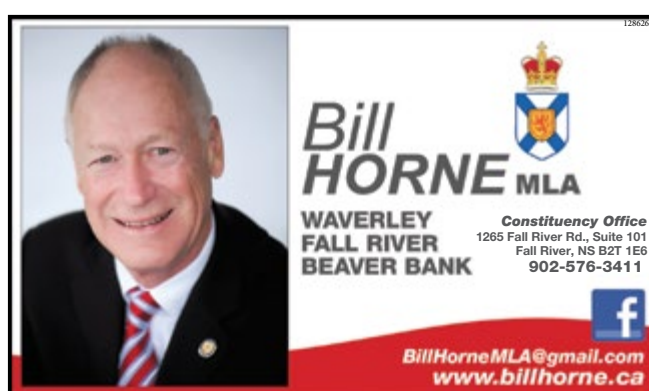
And remember, my office door is always open!

Warm regards,

Rafah

EMAIL: rafah@rafahdicostanzo.com

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HRM MLAs and MPs Working Hard for YOU!

Thanksgiving in 2020

By Darrell Samson, the Member of Parliament for Sackville-Preston-Chezzetcook

It's hard to believe that October is here already and we'll soon be celebrating Thanksgiving.

2020 has been a difficult year around the world, but as we all know, Nova Scotia was hit particularly hard this past spring. However, in terms of COVID-19, our tiny province is the envy of many other jurisdictions across the globe, since our "Atlantic Bubble" is keeping our residents remarkably safe from the pandemic compared to other places.

No matter how difficult the year has been, or the losses we may have endured along the way, there is always something to be thankful for. Here are some of mine:

- I'm thankful for the additional time people had to spend with family and friends this year. Whether parents working from home, kids out of school longer, or whatever else may have contributed to it, more family time is always a blessing.
- I'm thankful for how resilient we are as a province and how we stepped up to help each other throughout the year. The number of Nova Scotia flags and Nova Scotia Strong signs were a testament to this. No matter how small or large the gesture, they all add up.
- I'm thankful for our volunteer spirit as demonstrated in Facebook's Ultimate Online Kitchen Party, the many colourful community signs, painted rocks, stories of businesses helping out (when they are struggling themselves), and many more. It's truly amazing. Sure, that's just the Nova Scotia way... but it's nothing to take for granted. #novascotiastrong.
- I'm thankful for the leadership of our premier and Dr. Strang throughout the pandemic. Regardless of anyone's opinion on any given provincial issue, there is almost unanimous support for the dedication they have shown to keep us all safe.
- I'm thankful for the teachers and school staff who went the extra mile to make sure our students have the best learning environment possible in these challenging times, and that the return to school plan seems to be working well, despite the fears and anxiety that resonated earlier in September.
- I'm thankful for our frontline workers: the doctors, nurses, lab technicians and other staff; po-

lice, fire, and EMTs; our military who were deployed to address critical situations over the year.

- I'm thankful for the 'other' frontline workers for whom we all developed a deeper appreciation this year, such as those working in grocery stores, pharmacies, the trucking industry, food outlets, and delivery drivers.
- I'm thankful for the overwhelming support of Nova Scotians to adopt safe COVID-19 protocols, even when our number of cases were negligible. In particular, when asked to wear masks, we followed the advice of the professionals, even though we knew there would be no fines imposed. This precautionary directive will certainly serve us well if (when?) we are faced with a second wave that has crippled many other places.

This is certainly not a complete list, but there isn't enough room to list everything. So yes, no matter how dire our current situation may seem to be, we have a lot to be thankful for.

Visit me online at:
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Funding, new Ideas, key to restoring dignity in long-term care



More and more seniors are saying they don't want to go to a nursing home. But unless we present better options for care, they don't always have a choice.

We can't let our seniors down. So we have developed a plan to help them up.

Right now, we have 1,400 people waiting for a space in long-term care homes. The PC Caucus is committed to eliminating this list -- and then some. We know the province needs to commit to build at least 2,500 new beds, all in single rooms.

This will mean new jobs in long-term care. Nova Scotia should be adding 2,000 new health professionals to work in the sector. The PC Caucus believes in reinstating training grants and pushing for more full-time work for the workers who got us through this pandemic.

There will be a cost. Nova Scotia hasn't opened a single long-term care bed in seven years, and it has created a backlog. The province can budget to make this happen, but we shouldn't be doing it on our own.

The Federal Government should be supporting this plan for Nova Scotia. With this partnership, we can build 3,500 beds. Those 3,500 beds would clear the waitlist and provide a single room for everyone who wants one.

We need new ideas as well.

More beds and more staff are necessary to meet the current need, BUT as our population ages, we need new options for seniors who can no longer remain at home. Presently, we have in the range of 8,000 beds in long-term care. In the next 10 years, the need could jump as high as 20,000.

Today, the options are home care, and nursing home/residential care, but not enough in between.

The Progressive Conservative Caucus believes that the province should fund a "Supportive Living" option. This would be a new model that provides optimal care, supports the philosophy for aging in place for residents, and works for families, at a daily rate that makes sense for taxpayers. Supportive Living can and will take many different forms: apartments or a campus attached to a nursing home, and every single one of them will meet strict regulations, including infection control.

Too many seniors end up in hospitals. Why leave seniors in emergency rooms when we can free up space in our health system while giving seniors what they want?

Dignity. Respect. Choice.

Together these ideas can take away some fear from aging. The PC Caucus has a clear vision, rooted in best-practices, that will provide security and compassion for our greatest generation.



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73 Tacoma Drive, Suite 204 Dartmouth, NS B2W 3E7

Who doesn't love homemade cookies!

By Pete Cullen, Executive Director, Ross Farm Museum

This is the traditional Rosebank Cottage molasses cookie that has been handed down from generation to generation in the Ross family and is still faithfully made by our staff at Ross Farm Museum. An established New England and Atlantic Canadian recipe by the 1870s, molasses cookies were an adaptation of gingerbread recipes and contain just as much ginger. They make a great after-school snack or a fall treat—and are a great way to introduce young people to baking! Of course—not too many cookies at once! While cookies in our cottage are a COVID no-go, we want to make sure you can still taste them at home. Tag us on social media with your cookie pics and recipes! What are your traditional family cookie recipes? (@RossFarmMuseum; #cookiesRFM)

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. Lard or shortening melted
- 2 cups Molasses
- 2 cups Sugar (Cream together add cool lard)
- 2 Eggs
- 2 Heaping teaspoons soda, dissolved in 1/2 cup of hot water.
- 2 teaspoons Ginger
- 2 teaspoons Cinnamon
- 1 teaspoons Cloves
- 1 teaspoons Allspice
- 1 teaspoons Salt
- 8 to 10 cups Flour (Best if left overnight)

Directions:

Mix dry ingredients into soft mixture forming a dough you can handle. Roll out on floured board cut into cookies and bake 350 degrees approximately 10 minutes.



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Seniors' Living Care

Alzheimer's, Caregiving, and COVID-19

By Bayshore Home Health

Dementia is now widely recognized as one of the most significant health crises of the 21st century," says Alzheimer's Disease International. Around the world, 50 million people live with dementia; that number is expected to triple by 2050. In Canada, more than half a million people live with dementia; by 2031, it will be 1.4 million, says the Alzheimer Society of Canada.

About 61% of Canadians who have dementia live at home. Most have a caregiver, usually an adult child or spouse. The role of caregiver can be rewarding but also highly demanding, both physically and emotionally—and the COVID-19 pandemic has made caregiving more stressful and complicated.

As the pandemic stretches past its six-month mark, people with dementia and their caregivers continue to face several challenges, including:

- **Physical distancing:** Physical distancing reduces the risk of infection but also limits the social contact and supports that seniors and their caregivers rely on.
- **Safety precautions:** People with dementia may have difficulty understanding, remembering and following COVID-19 precautions such as handwashing, mask wearing, and physical distancing.
- **Behavioural and emotional changes:** People with dementia may experience difficult feelings – such as stress, fear, confusion, frustration, agitation, or anxiety – as a result of the disruptions and challenges caused by COVID-19.

If you are struggling, it's important to seek support. Caregiver stress and burnout were common even before the pandemic struck, and practicing self-care is often challenging when looking after a loved one.

Talk to family members and friends to see if they can pitch in—by preparing meals, picking up groceries, or socializing with your loved one by phone or video call.

Home health care also helps to ease the strain on family caregivers. Bayshore HealthCare provides quality home care services to individuals living with dementia. Our caregivers are trained and certified to provide dementia and Alzheimer's care at home, and they understand the complexities and techniques required for day-to-day support.


Bayshore also provides personal care, companionship, respite care, meal preparation, light housekeeping and other services that help lighten the load for family caregivers. All services are provided with COVID-19 safety protocols in place.

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Seniors' Living Care

Celebrating Thirty Years of Retirement Living

Submitted by The Berkeley

The Berkeley turned 30 this September! We can hardly believe its been three decades since The Berkeley Halifax on Green Street opened its doors as the very first retirement residence in Halifax. Back in the 1990's this concept was new, and it took time for seniors to recognize the value. Once people understood the idea was to create peace of mind and a social community with included benefits, the building filled up and another was soon being constructed in Dartmouth with Bedford and Gladstone following over the next 12 years.

It is an incredible milestone and one of which we are extremely proud! Our growth over the last 30 years has been intentionally slow, meant only to meet demand. Our goal is not to be a big company, but rather a big family. Our vision has always been to provide an extraordinary, personalized experience for seniors. A social, active, simple lifestyle where independence and choice, along with safety and security, are supported by included benefits.

Our residents see the value in this all-inclusive apartment-style living, and most take advantage of the full compliment of offerings - the dining service, housekeeping, daily activities and easy access to a health care professional. Our sched-

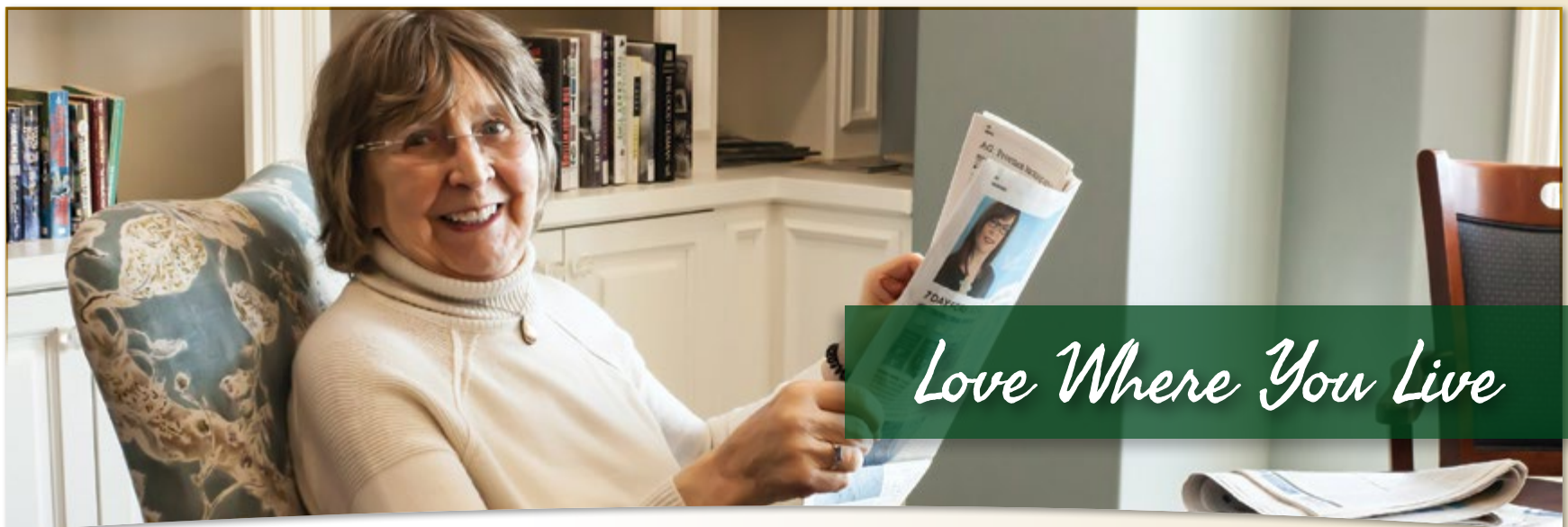
uled activities are among the best benefits of all to stay active and engaged, with opportunities to try new things and enjoy that which has always been of interest. Of course, some prefer the quiet of their own apartment and that is always their choice.

The greatest value of all in retirement living is the inherent support found in community living. Our residents are never without the option for companionship and feel reassured by the security of knowing they are not alone. This is vital for peace of mind and overall health and wellness.

We are thrilled to have made this lifestyle possible for seniors for 30 years and we look forward to the future. A lovely coincidence this year is that we are not only celebrating 30 years but also the opening of our new building - The Berkeley on Pepperell - which will replace The Berkeley Halifax.

Thanks to all - residents, their families and our employees both past and present - who have been part of our 30-year journey. Your support has been invaluable, and we will always consider you part of The Berkeley family!

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The Berkeley is a family-owned retirement living business built on the foundation of compassion, care, support, and respect for others. At The Berkeley, that means a warm, welcoming community, a sense of belonging, and the benefit of an apartment with included services. Enjoy life in a community without the worries of loneliness, personal safety, and household responsibilities. The Berkeley offers a lifestyle for seniors where companionship, convenience, choice, and care are a top priority. For residents and their families, it means peace of mind, safety, and security.

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RETIREMENT LIVING

Do you know what problems to watch for in your child's bite?

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



At this time we are often behind the mask, but this won't last forever. There is a lot of dental development going on every day and having an early look can be the best thing you can do for your child. As recommended by the Canadian and American Orthodontic Associations, age 7-8 is the ideal time for this early exam but even if your child is older they will benefit from the check up.

Although the adult teeth may be just starting to erupt, this check-up provides valuable information to your orthodontist and dentist about your child's growth patterns and jaw relationship. It also provides you, as the parent, a better understanding of the development of your child's bite. If a potential problem is identified, your Orthodontist will recommend monitoring your child at a regular interval (often yearly) until a time that treatment is indicated. Usually orthodontic

treatment is recommended around age 11-12 when the main growth spurt happens and many of the permanent teeth are present, but in some cases early treatment is necessary. Early, interceptive treatment may prevent a problem from becoming more serious (possibly requiring surgery) or may achieve results that would otherwise be unattainable if treatment is delayed.

So do you know what to look for? A developing smile can be a bit intimidating from a parent's perspective but here are some "bad bites" (or malocclusions) to watch for.

An underbite (bottom teeth bite over top teeth); a crossbite (top teeth bite inside bottom teeth on one or both sides); a deep bite (top teeth completely cover bottom teeth); an open bite (teeth don't come together in front); protrusion ("buck teeth"), excessive spacing or crowding; or any of the following: Early or late loss of baby teeth; difficulty chewing or biting; mouth breathing; a thumb or finger sucking habit; jaws that shift or make sounds; grinding or clenching of teeth; biting the cheek or the roof of the mouth; speech difficulties or facial imbalance.

Don't be alarmed if you

see one or more of these features in your child's bite. Many changes occur as a child grows and some problems are temporary. However, mentioning your finding at your child's next regular dental visit is a good idea. Your Dentist is an excellent resource and will likely refer you to an Orthodontist as they see fit. A referral from your Dentist is recommended, as your Orthodontist will want to work with your Dentist to ensure the best overall care and results for you or your child.

We welcome a visit from you any time and are always happy to answer any questions you may have!

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 The Brace Space Sackville 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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CRAFT CORNER

Fresh Trimmings

By Jenny Joan Larisey
Craft Consultant for Maritime Hobbies Crafts



For myself, decorations tend to be more seasonal and celebratory than holiday specific. That being said, winter is here and Christmas is just around the corner. It's time to jazz things up around the house.

A family tradition for me is to string popcorn for use as a garland to decorate our Christmas tree. A garland is a great decoration that can be used in so many different ways. For those looking for a new tradition there are many materials that can achieve a more modern look.

Garlands have been used in many cultures around the world for various celebrations dating back thousands of years. Used for symbols of peace, love and passion; long chains of flowers, leaves and foliage have been delicately strung into garlands, wreaths and chaplets to be used or worn as decoration.

One of the great things about decorating with a

garland is the endless options of materials. Beads, bells, pompoms or tassels just to name a few. Try mixing together different materials and adding a string of lights, your garland can be as simple or as elaborate as you like!!!

This year I am going to make a garland of dried citrus fruit and pinecones.

I will start by drying the citrus fruit. (you will want to give yourself a day for this part as they take about 4-5 hours per batch) Slice the fruit into 1/4" slices and lay them in a single layer on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake at 175 degrees for 4-5 hours until the fruit is crisp. You don't want any moisture remaining in order to prevent mold or rot. All ovens are different so be sure to check on them every hour.

Use a sturdy twine and tapestry needle to string everything together. Vary your garland with different patterns and number of slices to be as long or as

short as you see fit. Incorporate additional botanical items such as star anise, cranberries or bay leaves.

When you are ready to take down your garland leave it outside for the birds to enjoy!!!

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All Screen Time is Not Created Equal

Submitted by Oxford Learning

How do you balance screen time and online learning? Online learning is now a key part of everyday life for all students. Has monitoring screen time gone out the window?

Ten years ago, a large study showed that students aged 8-18 used technology upwards of seven hours a day. This statistic gave rise to the term "screen time."

Experts researched the effects on children's social development and noted the effects that online time was having in a number of areas including social anxiety, sleep habits, and attention span.

Thanks to Covid-19, screens have become part of the way that children learn both in and out of school. This means that it's more important than ever to pay attention to not just how long children are on their screens, but also to what they are using technology for.

There is a difference between using technology for learning and using technology as a form of recreation. Children need a variety of online and offline experiences, including opportunities to let their minds wander. Screen time that promotes socialization, such as FaceTime with friends or a video conference with the teacher is beneficial. Activities in which children feel engaged such as playing video games interactively are better than passive and solitary screen time, such as watching YouTube videos.

Now that screens are a part of how children learn, the question has shifted from "how long are children online?" to "what are they using their online time for, and how is it affecting their brains?" (source: <https://hms.harvard.edu/news/screen-time-brain>)

Too Much Screen Time has Been Linked to the Following Issues:

- 1. Health factors**—staring at screens for long periods of time can cause headaches and body aches, especially for children who are not used to it. It can also lead to weight gain and other problems related to a more sedentary lifestyle. (source: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/science/analysis-teens-are-sleeping-less-why-smartphones>)
- 2. Attention and Distraction Issues**—social media is linked to providing dopamine, which makes using it addictive. It's also instantaneous, which makes the brain crave immediate feedback. Unfortunately, too much screen time can shorten attention spans making it harder to pay attention when offline. (source: <https://now.northropgrumman.com/this-is-your-brain-on-instagram-effects-of-social-media-on-the-brain/>)
- 3. Decrease in Creativity**—too much time consuming content does not allow space for boredom. Boredom and the freedom to let our minds wander is important because that's the time in which creativity and imagination develop.
- 4. Sleep impacts and memory**—the blue light emitted from screens, especially in the hours before bed, can interfere with natural circadian rhythms leading to poor sleep. Lack of sleep impacts how well children feel the next as well as their brain's ability to process and store new information when learning in class.
- 5. Social factors**—social development issues such as depression and anxiety are on the rise with the younger generation thanks to an increase in social media usage.

cont. on pg. 20

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cont. from pg. 19

While we may not be able to control the fact that screen time is now a necessary part of school, we can control **how much** technology is used for socialization and recreation.

It's important to establish balance in life; too much time in front of screens is not healthy. So, while school requires that students use screens, it's important to discuss with all family members how to best achieve a balance between online and offline time every day.

- **Know your Consumption Habits.** Pay attention to how screens are being used during non-learning times. Is it for socialization or recreation? Are kids be-

ing social and creative? Or is it just to consume media from YouTube?

- **Make an Offline Time Agreement Together.** Whether it's to walk the dog every night, putting phones away during dinner, or while playing board games together a few times a week, agree as a family to have some tech-free time every single day.

Now offering the choice of online or in person classes to all students, Oxford Learning provides students with the opportunity to learn from anywhere and still fit learning into busy schedules. Call Oxford Learning Bedford at 902-700-6489 or email: bedford@oxfordlearning.com or call Oxford Learning Halifax at 902-701-9254 or halifax@oxfordlearning.com for more details.



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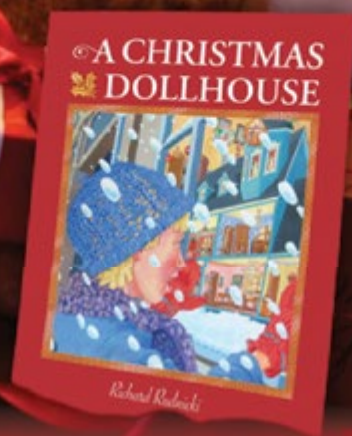
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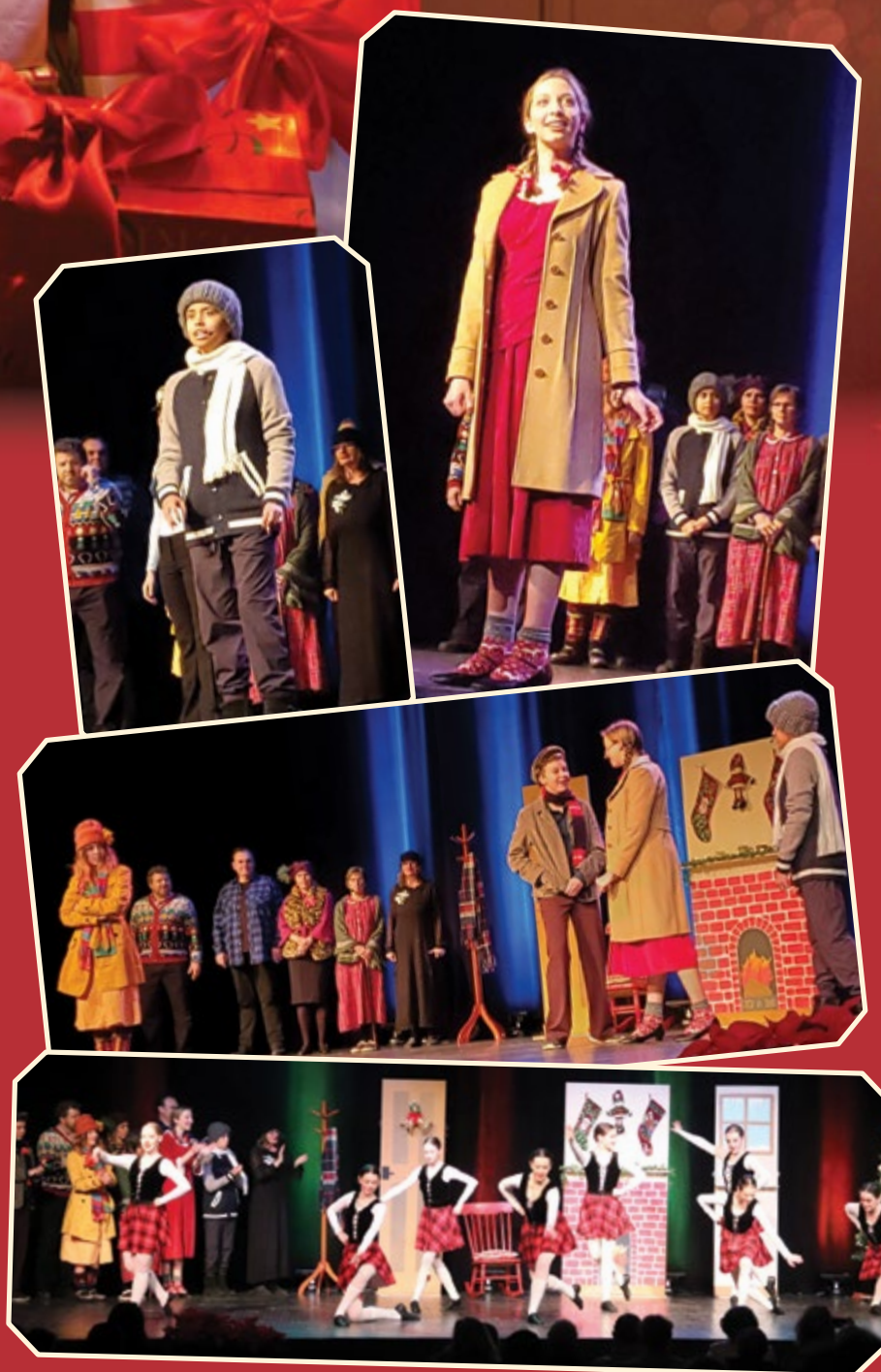
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How COVID-19 Impacted Children's Socialization And The Challenging Behaviours It Has Produced

By Angie White, The Growing Place

COVERD-19 shut the world down overnight and changed how everything works. As adults we are better equipped to deal with the stresses that situations throw at us. Children, however, are social beings and aren't fully capable of understanding what is happening with the world.

A child's social skills develop with the many interactions that they have throughout everyday and everywhere they go. When COVID-19 hit and everything shut down, there was nothing for these children. Schools shut down, daycares closed, only one person per household was allowed in the stores.

Children were forced to stay home and away from friends, grandparents, cousins, everyone. The only interaction they had was the family that lived with them and possibly a teacher once a week for an online class. Children, they had to deal with their parent's depression, anxiety and loneliness as well as their own. This was very frustrating for children.

Children often do not know how to verbalize their frustrations therefore they "act up". Many parents have been dealing with challenging behaviours over the last few months. This can be stressful for parents, as well as teachers. A few main things to remember is that children need routine and consistency in their lives. They need things to be as "normal" as possible. Speaking to children on their level and explaining things as simply as possible will help calm children. Lower your expectations of them for a while and they may need a few moments to themselves every now and then. Children will also need extra love during this time.

COVID-19 has really done a number on many people. But children have it the hardest and we need to help them as much as possible to get through this.

Angie currently teaches the school age program at The Growing Place (Pleasant Street location), as well as assisting with our Inclusion Programming. She is our Arts and Crafts expert, and an endless resource for new ideas to try in the classroom. For more information please visit our website at www.thegrowingplace.ca

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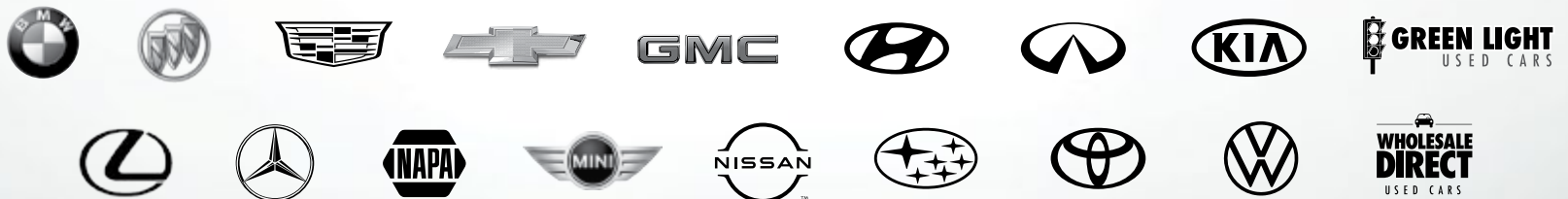
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