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Parent - Child Guide



December 2013/January 2014 Vol. 19 No. 5 Est.1995



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Children Grieve Too**

What’s the Best Way to Teach Our Kids?

Living in the Moment

Are Teens Truly Terrible?

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"Good Grief" Children Grieve Too

By: Dr. Virginia Walford - Registered Psychologist - Roth Associates in Psychology



Good Grief" is one of Charlie Brown's favourite sayings. He uses it in stressful and frustrating situations to express how he is feeling. I think that we could take a lesson from him that is useful for adults and children in regards to grieving.

Are the following statements True or False?

- Young children do not grieve because they have no understanding of death
- Bereaved children should be protected from the pain and suffering of bereavement because they are too young to cope with death.
- Bereaved children are able to resolve their grief quickly and readily go on with life in the absence of the deceased.

- Adolescents are too self-absorbed to really mourn the loss of another person.
- The best way for children to cope with the death of someone close is to forget about the deceased and to be given a replacement for that loss.
- Children should not attend funerals.
- A child who loses a parent early in life is psychologically scarred forever.
- Unless they are specifically told, dying children do not know that they are dying.

Answers: All of these statements are false.

It is healthy and appropriate for children to express themselves in times of joy and times of sorrow.

We don't have much problem with the "joy" situations. However, when it comes to loss and grief situations we become uncomfortable when children express intense and loud emotions. We tend to try to tone them down, distract them or minimize the loss instead of supporting them and facilitating healthy mourning rituals. This tendency to stifle a child's grief can do more harm than good and arises out of our own sense of "uncomfortableness" with the situation and the innate need to protect them.

William Worden in his book "Children and Grief" defines "bereavement" as the adaptation to the loss, and "mourning" as the process children go through on their way to adaptation.

Just like us it is helpful for children to talk about the loss and how it impacts upon them. They need to be told about the death in ways that are accurate and in language that is age appropriate. In other words, be honest in your description but do not overwhelm younger children with details. It is important to answer their questions honestly and do not be afraid to share your feelings with them.

There are numerous excellent books for children at different ages. One such book is "When a pet dies" by Fred Rogers. These books provide suggestions to help you help your child mourn and adapt to a significant loss whether it be a person or pet.

Grieving is not about forgetting. It is about remembering! It is about expressing and processing feelings. It is also a time to share something very significant with your children and to teach them that "Good Grief" is more than a cartoon character saying. It is a way to facilitate healthy mourning and adapt to a significant loss.

The above are general guidelines only. Please contact a qualified health care professional for specific situations.

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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Living in the Moment - Mindfulness Meditation

By Farley MacLeod, M.A., Registered Psychologist

The practice of clinical psychology is constantly changing and developing. Psychologists put strong emphasis on research evidence to ensure that their treatments are effective. Over the years, there have been schools of psychology that promote different types of treatment. It seems that one of the most talked about types of treatment in recent years has been Mindfulness Meditation (or simply Mindfulness).

In essence, Mindfulness involves learning strategies to bring our mind's attention to the present moment, rather than thinking of events from the past, or anticipating possible events in the future. Through using this strategy, we are able to bring greater awareness to the types of thoughts that go through our head and how those thoughts affect our emotions and physical state.

Mindfulness also emphasizes working toward a greater state of acceptance of the conditions of one's life, rather than focusing on dissatisfaction and situations that can't be changed. Another key aspect of mindfulness is bringing awareness to our thoughts, and striving to observe without judging.

These ideas have been around for thousands of years, and have their basis in the Buddhist tradition. This ancient tradition has come to the center stage of mainstream psychology treatment. Psychologist Jon Kabat-Zinn and others have successfully utilized these techniques, and much research has been done to back up their benefits in terms of assisting people with both emotional and physical health problems, including anxiety, depression, personality disorders, addictions, and dealing with chronic illnesses, among others. Jon Kabat-Zinn's book "Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness" has been very influential, as it described the techniques and many benefits to people who have had chronic illnesses and have been told "you have to learn to live with it". As such, these techniques provide people with a "how-to guide" of learning to live with it.

Another approach that has been used for many years, with a wealth of research evidence behind it, is clinical hypnosis. We often hear about these techniques being used to assist people to change habits, such as stopping smoking, but clinical hypnosis is also used with many other problems, such as managing anxiety, depression, pain, and many other physical health problems. In fact, there is significant overlap between the techniques used in clinical hypnosis, relaxation techniques, and mindfulness meditation. The key elements of clinical hypnosis are the focusing of attention and the use of suggestion to achieve clinical goals.

When we think of the changes happening in society, we can readily see why strategies that encourage a focus on the present moment are gaining traction and showing benefit. As the years go on and our reliance on technology increases, we are left with less time and greater pressure to do more in less time. As a result, we often go through life as though we are on autopilot, without being fully aware of what we are doing, how we feel about it, and how what we are doing is affecting us. It is no surprise that we feel anxious if we cannot meet our perceived demands and pressures. Taking time to be in the moment and bringing our awareness to these demands and expectations is essential in evaluating how we spend our time.

Some ways to begin to utilize these techniques in daily life are:

- Simply pay attention to the breath as it enters and leaves the body. Be aware of all the sensations you can of how your breath feels. Notice how the breath feels moving through the airways, and the movements of the lungs as they fill and empty. Utilizing the diaphragm by allowing this large muscle to relax, will allow the breath to be full and calming.
- When you are eating, make sure you pay attention to the sensations and tastes of your food. When you tune into these, it can provide a totally different experience. It can also help you to be aware of hunger and fullness signals more easily.
- Take time to scan through your body, from head to toe,

paying attention to the various parts of the body, noticing muscles that are relaxed and muscles that are tense. As you pass through each area, you may notice the muscles in that area relaxing.

- Be mindful of your body when you are walking. Notice how each step feels in various parts of your body.
- Take time when you are doing various tasks through the day, paying attention to the details of the experience.

As this becomes more familiar, it becomes more enjoyable to be in the moment when you are doing everyday tasks, such as housework.

- Practice being mindful of the time you spend with others, including your partner, your children, and your friends. Recognize how your body reacts to interactions with others. Take time to listen. Try to bring a non-judgmental attitude to interactions with others.

- When you become aware of your thoughts, recognize that they are not "the truth", but simply your interpretation of the situation at a given moment. You may want to ask yourself "is this a helpful thought?", and if the answer is "no", work toward changing the thought to something more helpful.

In essence, being mindful is about being in the present moment, and is the opposite of going through life on automatic pilot. These techniques seem

simple, but are not always easy to implement. When we practice them regularly, they can have dramatic effects on how we react to stressors and challenges in our lives.

Farley MacLeod is a Registered Psychologist with Jacqueline Milner-Clerk and Associates, which is a practice that employs male and female psychologists/ therapists who provide psychological services to children, adolescents, adults, families and couples. He can be contacted at 461-8133.

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What's the Best Way to Teach Our Kids?

By Lisa Saunders, Director of Programs, Bridgeway Academy

Over our history there have been and continue to be many great debates: is the world flat or round, does God

exist, are carbohydrates good or bad? Within educational circles one debate rages on; what is the best way to teach our kids?

Traditional education offers the stability and predictability of reading, writing and arithmetic, long-established customs found in

schools that our society has historically deemed appropriate. Progressive education, on the other hand, has the qualities of well-rounded education that western society has come to covet; a focus on each student's strengths and interests, assessing in various ways that support diverse learners.

Throughout the past 100 years many studies have been carried out with the sole purpose of investigating how we learn. Many of these studies have shown an overwhelming amount of evidence supporting the implementation of the characteristics of progressive education: individual instruction, informality in the classroom, multi-sensory teaching practices and the use of group discussions and laboratories as instructional techniques. Successful implementation of this very practice has been seen all over the world. From establishment of progressive education techniques by John Dewey in the early 1900's to the public uprising against the No Child Left Behind Act, progressive education has been a supported teaching practice spanning over two centuries, albeit with varied success. As long as we have administrators and policy makers fully immersed in traditional education, progression will not be fully realized. Difficulty lies in separating the two ideas in that, elements of traditional education: external motivation, memorization of rote facts and concentration on skills in reading, writing and math, are sewn into the very fabric of our educational system.

Each generation experiences the upcoming generation doing things

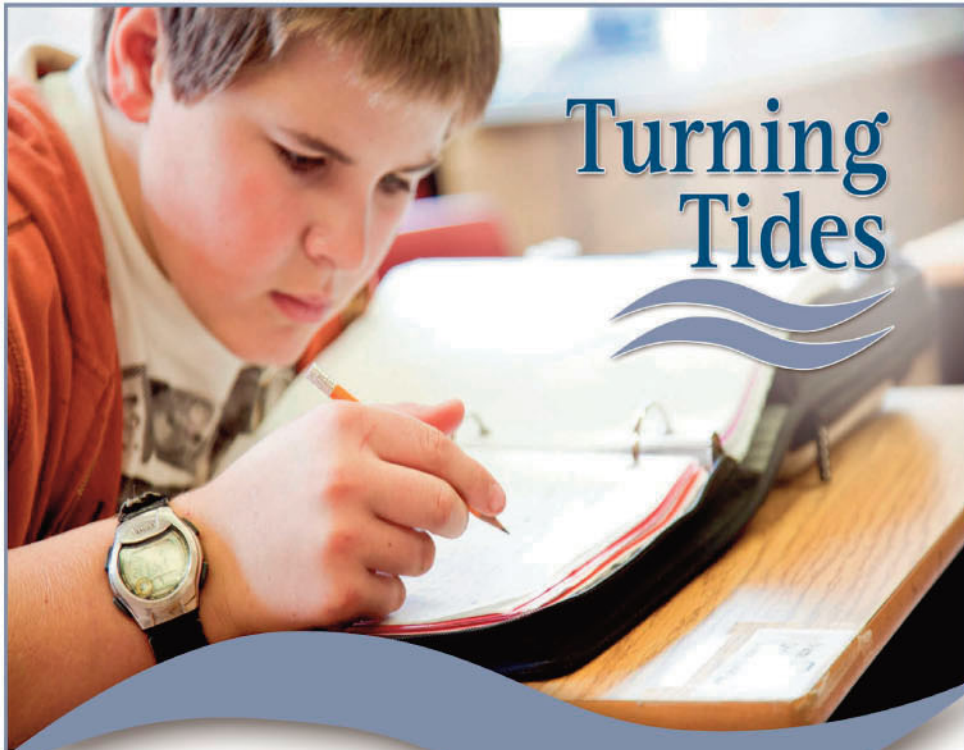
a little bit differently - how did our parent's parents feel about television, or our parents feel about computers; how do we feel about social networking and assistive technology? These tools can be seen as barriers to learning or they can be seen as tools, stepping stones for the next generation to express what we have taught them. As each generation learns more about how the next generation of students learn, educators attempt to predict what skills will be most beneficial in the next generation's society. Central skills include the need for workers to have a proficient ability to receive, store, process and communicate information. Teaching our students to be independent thinkers will always serve them, no matter their career choice.

Critics in education will always exist, projecting their view on an education system that is slow to change and seems to cater to the average student. The essence of learning is not to regurgitate facts, memorized for that expressed purpose, rather it is to understand, investigate and discover in a way that is meaningful to each of us. As we are all different in thoughts, experiences and viewpoints, so must our learning and evaluation be diverse from that of our classmates.

There are many students who have gifts that reach far beyond memorizing multiplication tables and mastering spelling bees, who require creative and out-of-the-box teachers to guide them towards becoming the forward thinkers of the next generation.

It makes sense to tailor education to each individual. Though many of our traditionalist teachers and administrators work in their comfort zone, relying on those methods that were bestowed upon them as students, we all want to teach and support our next generation of children in a way that will be beneficial to society. Teach a student what to think and humanity stays stagnant, teach a student how to think and who knows how far we will go.

Angela Rudderham is the Director of Turning Tides Community Outreach and Lisa Saunders is Director of Programs with Bridgeway Academy. We offer programs that provide academic, social, behavioural and organizational skills students need to succeed. For more information, please call 902-404-TIDE (8433) or visit www.turningtides.ca.



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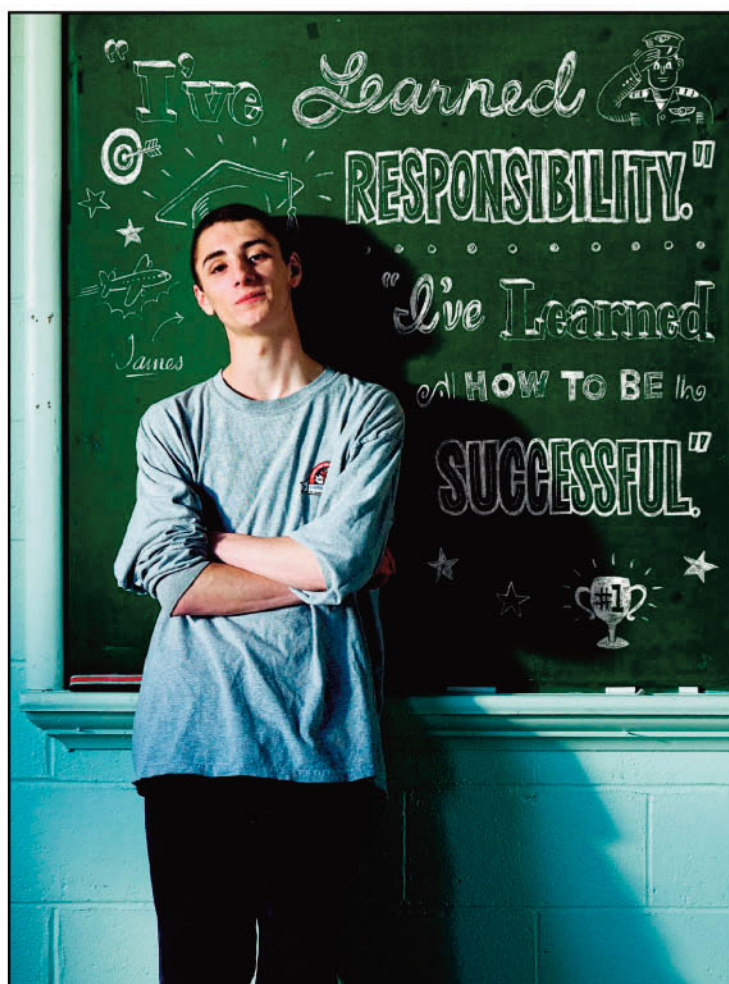
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Ask Away - Questions and Answers with Dr. Nina Woulff



transform into a surly drug addicted thieving thug?

Answer: Delinquent adolescents can create great stress and difficulty for their families, schools, society and themselves. However, about 13 % of adolescents develop severe emotional problems and 17% of adolescents develop aggressive or delinquent behavior. Thus the majority of children go through their adolescent years without significant emotional or behavior problems.

Question: But I hear other parents talking about how their children are moody, rude and inconsiderate. What is that all about?

Answer: In early adolescence (the middle school and early high school years) many children are more moody and self-preoccupied. Their attitude toward their parents may vacillate from affection to disdain with occasional rudeness.

However by the latter years of high school such behaviors usually diminish or disappear as the child develops a clearer sense of their own identity, greater self-confidence and comfort with their adult body and feelings.

Question: But then how do I tell the difference between normal adolescent moodiness and real problems?

Answer: The symptoms and signs below are not indicative of normal adolescent development. If you see any of these in your child you should be concerned. These include:

- Marked change in school performance.
- Inability to cope with problems and daily activities.
- Marked changes in sleeping and/or eating habits.

- Depression shown by sustained, prolonged negative mood and attitude, often accompanied by poor appetite, difficulty sleeping or thoughts of death.
- Abuse of alcohol and/or drugs.
- Persistent nightmares.
- Threats of self-harm or harm to others.
- Self-injury or self destructive behavior.
- Frequent outbursts of anger, aggression.
- Threats to run away
- Aggressive or non-aggressive consistent violation of rights of others; opposition to authority, truancy, thefts, or vandalism.
- Strange thoughts, beliefs, feelings, or unusual behaviors.

Question: Aren't teenagers rather secretive about their activities and feelings? How is a parent to know if these problems are going on?

Answer: It is wise to develop strategies for encouraging conversation with your children from an early age. However, if your teen is not high-disclosing with you there may be other ways of finding out what is going on. You can speak with his teachers and school guidance counselor. It is also a good idea to be aware of the character of the people she spends time with. If you suspect illicit drug use you should look for evidence.

You may also wish to speak with a mental health professional about your concerns and worries.

Dr. Nina Woulff has a private practice in Halifax which provides therapy for children, teens, adults, parents and couples. For more information, phone 492-1271 or check her website at: www.DrNina.ca



For over 25 years, psychologist Nina Woulff has provided answers to questions posed by CBC radio listeners on the popular Maritime Noon live phone-in. In a series of columns for Parent-Child Guide she will share some of the most frequently asked questions she has encountered. In this issue she will deal with questions about differentiating normal and problematic adolescent development.

Question: I find myself dreading the teen years of my children. I hear so many horror stories. Will my sweet 10 year old

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Staying Active and Warm this Winter Season

Jennifer Russell BScHP,
Health Promotion Specialist

The frost is on the ground and the cold crisp air has many of us digging out our warmer coats and mittens - winter is on its way in the Maritimes!

Although, we may be tempted to wrap up and stay warm at home during these chilly months, there are many outdoor activities families can enjoy during winter such as building snowmen and making snow angels. These activities are not only lots of fun, but they also allow children to use their imagination and creativity which supports healthy child development. Child Safety Link would like to share a few tips to help your family get the most out of this winter season, while keeping injuries to a minimum.

Wear the gear

- Make sure proper safety gear is worn when taking part in winter sports such as skiing, snowboarding, sledding or tobogganing, and ice skating.
- For skiing and snowboarding, it is recommended that a ski or snowboard helmet be worn. In Nova Scotia, it is mandatory for people of all ages to wear a ski or snowboard helmet when on the ski hill.
- For sledding, tobogganing, and ice skating activities, it is recommended that a CSA approved hockey helmet be worn.
- A bike helmet is not recommended to be worn for any winter activities because it is not designed to protect your head against falls on ice or hard snow.

Take care in extreme cold

- When the temperature or wind-chill drops below -25 Celsius, children should play inside. Wind-chill is the "feels like" temperature where exposed skin can freeze in minutes.

- Wet clothes are the biggest contributing factor to frostbite, so make sure children come in to change wet socks and mittens frequently.

- Tube shaped neck warmers should be used instead of long scarves that could tangle and cause a child to choke.

Winter play

- It is important to double check play areas to ensure they are safe for winter play! Before walking and ice skating on frozen lakes or ponds, be sure that the ice is at least 15 cm thick. If there will be a large group of skaters, be sure the ice is 20 cm thick.
- Snow banks at the side of the road are not safe places to play. The snowplow could come by and scoop up more snow, along with any children playing inside.
- When sledding and tobogganing, use hills that do not end in a ditch beside a road, and avoid any ice-jumps or extreme drop offs. Walk up the side of the hill when you are finished to prevent any collisions.
- If children want to build snow structures, they should avoid making roofs or forming tunnels that could collapse on them. Encourage them to have fun by being creative—try building a house with walls (instead of a ceiling) and fill it with "snow furniture."
- Active supervision is important when young children are playing outside in the snow. School-aged children should play outside with a friend who could call for help if a situation arose.

For more information on winter safety and other children's injury prevention topics, visit www.childsafetylink.ca
We hope you have a safe and happy winter season!

Help him "play safe" this winter...



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Early Education: Is Your Child too Young to Play this Way?

Submitted by Rafael Alcolado, Director, MusiQ Club HRM

Most parents interested in activities for their young children will need to be selective, because from sports to arts, there are quite a few options. If your child is 3-5 years of age, and preparation for school is an important factor you might want to move music to the top of the list.

Learning to sing songs, dance, read music and play the piano can be a lot of fun for young children. Many programs for children this age are focused on

music appreciation, or experiencing the aesthetically pleasing aspects of music. But other music programs exist that provide significant skill development in reading and performing and these offer very important cognitive and behavioral benefits, such as faster rates of learning in math, science and reading.

Is your child too young to develop skills reading music and performing the piano at 3-5 years old? The benefits are valuable, but what if it's too

much like work and it discourages your child from continuing?

If you're limited to traditional strategies for learning to read music and play the piano, the best answer might be to wait a couple years. Not every teacher has enough patience to work with a preschool child, and not every preschooler has enough concentration for the exercise to be worthwhile.

Thankfully, we are no longer limited to traditional strategies for reading music and playing piano. Canadian software publisher Adventus International has found a way to make the "work" involved in learning the language of music seem much more like the most exciting kind of play.

Adventus has developed award-winning interactive music learning software that provides a wonderful support for group music classes, and it also gets young students engaged and progressing at home.

Is this age group too young for technology? 2013 blog reviews by 100 families using Adventus software while their young children learned to read and play music showed children consistently responded with enthusiasm and focus, resulting in wonderful experiences at home and in the classroom. That's a real improvement over some of our early days in the studio.

This new approach is fun and effective, and also ensures students have access to very important cognitive benefits. Not many activities accomplish this much. If the Adventus approach hasn't been integrated into your existing day care program or home activities, a very modest effort could set your children up for successes that last a lifetime.

Inquire at
rafael@musiqclub.com
or call 453-4464



A New Way to Access the Healing Power of Music for Special Needs

The following short histories are provided by Steve Buckley, a specialist who uses music to help students with special needs in Innisfil, Ontario.

Jakob is an 18 year old diagnosed with Autistic Disorder (Classic Autism) who started working with music trying various instruments with little success. After his first year of music training he had a very short attention span and was prone to numerous and sometimes violent meltdowns.

Jakob's parents decided to try again the following September with a different approach using software provided by Adventus called Children's Music Journey (CMJ). I started Jakob in CMJ Volume 2 with an animated teacher named Mr. Dvorak and the practice room helper Miss Melody. Jakob quickly became absorbed in the program. When he finished his first set of lessons he wanted to know everything about it. Jakob then decided he would like to start on CMJ Volume one *because one always comes before two*.

Jakob was completely engrossed by the software and would sit contented and engaged through an entire lesson. The interactive animation and visual approach to reading made success and progress easy for Jakob which helped build confidence and

self-esteem. Jakob completed twenty-five weeks of lessons in CMJ1 in 12 weeks. He was reading and playing very well and looking forward to starting CMJ2.

Jules: Jules is a happy yet very shy young lady with Downs Syndrome. Her parents enrolled her in music lessons after she had been discharged from her SLP stating that she would never talk.

I started Jules with Children's Music Journey Volume 1. Even though breaking through the shyness made her approach to the keyboard difficult she eventually found herself following through the interactive lessons with ease. After Jules was comfortable in the studio environment we started adding some songs and dance encouraging her to use her voice and imitate the sounds and pitches she could play on the piano.

Jules was soon humming melodies and trying to articulate words from songs she liked. A year and a half of hard work and practice Jules gave her first recital for her parents where she sang her favorite song.

If you know someone with special learning needs who may be interested in working with music in this way, we'd love to hear from you. Contact jdmullen@adventus.com



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"The appeal to young kids is genius, they are having so much fun they forget they're learning. Thank you for making piano exciting for my child."
-Sarah Kennedy, Parent

"My students are enthusiastic to begin their sessions, and even the most active kids are completely engaged for the entire lesson. It's remarkable."
-Rob Collins, Music Teacher

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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 birthday in order to evaluate all risk factors and apply a prevention program.

Dr. Negin Ghiabi is a board certified pediatric dentist,

who practices at Pinnacle Dental Specialists in Halifax, NS. New patients are welcome. For more information, please call 902-407-7377.



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Did you know the first dental visit
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Upcoming free swims, lifeguard courses and more!



A Bronze Medallion/Bronze Cross 'Crash' Course will take place at the Wave Pool on December 13th from 5-9pm and December 14th and 15th from 9-6pm.

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.



With winter soon approaching and Christmas just around the corner we are pleased to be offering a few extra activities:

Needham Pool will be offering FREE SWIMS on Thursdays from 5 - 6pm

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

The Wave Pool is offering Christmas Bake and Swims on December 17th and December 18th 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. As well at the Wave Pool there will be a National Lifeguard 'Crash' Course from 9-6pm running on December 21, 22, 23, 27 and 28.

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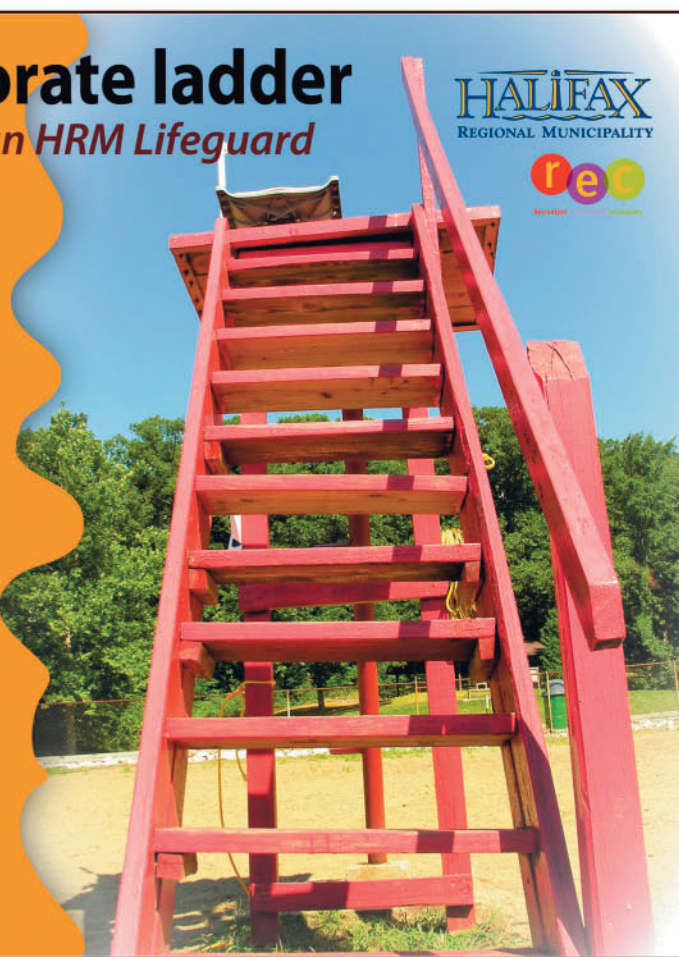
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Aquatic Services



Health & Wellness



Color Blindness: What does it really mean?

By: Dr. Jenna Snow, OD –
Family Vision Clinic

Some people have the misconception that people who are color blind see the world in only black, white, and gray. While this condition does exist, called achromatopsia, it is a quite rare form of complete color blindness with a prevalence of only 1 in 30 000 people¹. There are actually many different kinds of color vision deficiencies, depending on the range of colors one may see, or the perceived difference between colors. In most types of color blindness, there is no actual loss of vision, so the term "color blindness" is often more accurately described as a "color vision deficiency".

Our retinas are made up of millions of tiny photoreceptor cells called rods and cones. Rods are responsible for perceiving light, and function mostly in low lighting and cones are responsible for our

vision in bright light conditions and perceiving color. There are three types of cones: short wavelength cones "see" the color blue, medium wavelength cones see the color green, and long wavelength cones see the color red. To determine what color we are seeing, the visual processing system in our brain compares the intensity and wavelength of light that is absorbed by each type of our cones. The absorption of light rays by all of our cones produces the thousands of shades of colors people with normal color vision can perceive. When one or more of the types of cones is missing or defective, this is what causes a color vision deficiency. Often times, all 3 cones still exist, but one

Continued on page 22.

School Lunches Inspiration

This time of year, parents often find themselves in a "school lunch rut". Here are some simple tips for dealing with these three common frustrations:

1. uneaten lunches;
2. the "no-nuts" rule; and
3. "the sandwich rut"

Your child's lunch could be coming home uneaten for a number of reasons: Young schoolchildren are given very little time to eat lunch. If they are slow eaters and/or social butterflies they have very little chance of finishing it. When lunches are coming home uneaten our instinct is to jam the lunchbox full of choices in the hopes that one or two appeal. This can actually overwhelm your child. Instead, set them up for success: Pack small amounts of familiar foods and teach your child how to open the packaging. Praise their eating

efforts, however small, and get them into the habit of eating uneaten lunch items right after school.

Got a PB&J addict? Introduce them to some of the nut butter alternatives that are school-safe. My favourite is sunflower seed butter: healthy & school-safe, it also makes a delicious SB&J!

To get out of the "sandwich rut", make a list of all the healthy & portable lunch options in your arsenal. If you're low on ideas, google "kids' school lunches" and get some more! Post your list of healthy lunch and recess snacks in your kitchen and stock the ingredients. When you're stuck for a creative idea, check the list and get packin'!

For more tips & kid-friendly recipes, or to book a consult, visit www.simple-balance.ca.

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Benefits of Chiropractic Care During Pregnancy

By Dr. Tasia Lazaros, B.Sc.(H) Bch, DC,
Healthy Link Chiropractic Wellness Ctr. Inc.

Pain relief: a lot of stress is placed on the spine due to the physiological and hormonal changes in the body. Chiropractic care can gently, safely and effectively help balance the postural and pelvic changes that result in back, neck or joint pain.

Stress relief: Chiropractic Care and Soft Tissue Therapy in the cervical and pelvic areas of the spine can provide a relaxing effect.

Healthier and easier pregnancy and delivery: a hormone is released in the body within the last trimester to help the ligaments loosen up but as a result the joints can easily misalign before and after delivery. With chiropractic adjustments, the spinal misalignments can be corrected.

Prevent a possible c-section due to a breech presenting baby: many chiropractors are

Webster Certified which means they are trained specifically to analyze and establish balance in the pregnant woman's pelvis and in turn reduce undue stress to the uterus and supporting ligaments. The balanced state of the pelvis allows for optimal fetal positioning and allows the developing baby to turn by freeing up the space and avoiding a breech presentation and allowing for the best presentation for the natural birthing process.

As well, Chiropractic Care has many great benefits for the baby too!

Dr. Tasia Lazaros, B.Sc. (H), DC a local family chiropractor for over 13 years in Clayton Park West. Webster certified and Thompson Technique certified at Healthy Link 446-5465.

Developing Core Strength in Children

Ann-Marie Baker, Occupational Therapist With CBI Health Centre, Halifax

How many of us see our children slouch or prop their head up when sitting at a desk? Is it just fatigue or could your child have poor core strength? In order to sit for extended periods of time with good posture, it is essential for a person to have strong abdominal and low back muscles. Here are some positions that will help develop postural stability over time:

- On hands and knees with a flat back (e.g. complete puzzles, crawl)
- High kneeling without sitting back on feet (e.g. place/remove magnets from the fridge, tape paper on the wall to draw/colour, play a game of catch)

- Long sitting with legs out straight and with a tall back (e.g. throw a ball, hit a balloon)
- Lying on tummy (e.g. hold a stick in 2 hands and hit a ball through a goal, "Superman" position)
- Lying on back with knees bent (e.g. remove stickers placed on knees, throw a ball through legs while doing a crunch movement)
- Other activities can include wheelbarrow races and crab walking. An obstacle course is a good way to incorporate a lot of these different movements and postures. Have fun!

I have 13 years of experience working with children of all ages in the home and school settings. I am also bilingual. My private occupational therapy service may be covered by insurance companies. There is no waiting list and there is no need for a doctor's referral.

For more information or to book an appointment, please contact

Ann-Marie Baker by Phone (902)233-7337
or (902)455-6771 or by Fax (902)455-2270.

Bilingual Pediatric Occupational Therapist
Ann-Marie Baker B.Sc. O.T. Reg. (N.S.)

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Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays!

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Dr. Tasia Lazaros, B.Sc.(H), DC

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Education

An Investment in Education

by Lorelei Burgess, Oxford Learning HRM

Our current economic climate means that most families are tightening their belts and eliminating the extras. Luxuries are the first to go - no more dinners out, daily Starbucks or upgraded cable.

Whether you're in Canada, the US, Europe, or South America, the one thing that isn't seen as expendable is education. After all, there is only one sure-fire solution to riding the wave of uncertainty for the future...a better education for our children.

We want to protect and insulate our children from the hardships in life, and the best way to ensure that this happens is by ensuring that they are receiving a quality education that will help them reach their

potential and secure their footing to be successful in any economic climate.

Whether it is aiming for an ivy-league education, or developing an aggressive approach to making the most of your child's current educational situation, the sooner that children secure the basic academic skills, the better their chance becomes of having a smoother transition into higher education.

Even as early as elementary, children are developing core skills such as reading, math, and comprehension that are the foundation of the academic skills and learning habits that they will continue to build on for the rest of their lives. It's never too early to begin to invest in a stable academic future. In

fact, studies have shown that the earlier that young children develop strong reading and writing skills, the greater success they see in the higher grades. In high school, the earlier that students master the basic skills such as organization and time management, the greater their chances of improved grades. Better grades are the single best way to open doors to a promising academic future. Regardless if a child is in primary or secondary school, investments in academic outcomes are always a sound choice.

An investment in a child's educational future has the highest rate of return of any assets these days. Many parents are thinking about the future and saving money in RESPs for their children to attend post-

secondary education. Keep in mind though, that without a solid academic foundation early on, they may never have the opportunity to use the money saved.

Oxford Learning offers programs for children from 3 years old through university. We teach students the skills they need to be successful in school and in life. Oxford Learning has locations in Halifax, Hammonds Plains and Bedford. For more information about our programs and services or to learn how to make this back-to-school season a success contact Lorelei Burgess at 423-4484 or halifax@oxfordlearning.com. Visit us at www.oxfordlearning.com

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Education Learning Effectively

By Pam Streeeter, Birch Hills Academy

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- They demonstrate the ability to take initiative with their work, not needing to rely on others to tell them what to do (self-direction).
- They are aware of their learning and able to determine when they need to work more on an assignment.
- They are willing to take risks in their learning and are open minded to try new things.

Continued on page 14.



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Music Education – It's Never Too Early!

By Peggy Harrison

We have all noticed how singing can quiet and calm a baby. That is when music education begins. In fact, the writings of Zoltan Kodaly (Hungarian composer and music learning theorist upon whose work much of today's teaching is based) suggested that music education begins even before a child is born. When parents sing to babies and then sing with young children as they grow, they are much more likely to be able to sing in tune at an early age, as early as two or three years old. Children who have just listened to recorded music are less likely to be able to sing in tune at that early age. Although it is good to listen to a variety of music, nothing replaces the singing or playing your instrument for and with your child.

Carl Orff (German composer/educator) suggested that rhythm is the basis of music education. That also starts before birth with a baby hearing the mother's heart beat. Rocking, swaying in

parents' arms, riding in the car with windshield wipers going and bouncing are a few examples of how babies are experiencing rhythm all around them. A young baby will beat on a drum if given an opportunity (after trying to put the drumstick in the mouth, of course!). Some very young children, as young as one year old, can keep a steady beat to music.

Dalcrose-Eurythmics (Emile Dalcrose was a Swiss composer/educator) is another music learning theory based on movement combined with music. Children are always moving. Learning about the world around them involves constant movement. When music is combined with that natural inclination to move, musical expression is enhanced.

It is never too early to begin music education with your child. It begins at home!

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Learning Effectively Continued from page 13.

- They persevere in a task, recognizing when they need to ask for help and doing so.
- They are not afraid to make mistakes and understand that through mistakes we learn better. Making mistakes gives the learner opportunities to understand why an approach didn't work, how to correct it, and how to do better next time.

Practices to support the development of effective learners can also be utilized by parents as they move through daily activities with their children.

- Provide clear instructions prior to commencing the activity or learning the behaviour. If it involves a new skill, model the skill and if possible provide pictures of others doing the action or behavior. Break down the activity or behaviour into achievable steps.
- Give feedback often so that the child develops awareness of their progress. Feedback should be

timely, specific, and understandable to the child, and should allow the child to make an adjustment to his or her participation and/or behaviour.

- Provide lots of opportunity for practicing new skills and behaviours.
- Offer appropriate choices and acknowledge progress.
- Demonstrate excitement for new learning opportunities yourself and value education.
- Allow your child to take risks in learning new skills by avoiding the temptation to step in too soon to "fix" a problem when they are frustrated. Encourage and coach them through it.

At Birch Hills Academy the learning environment supports learners to develop the skill set required to be an effective learner. For more information email info@bha-ns.com.

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Education

SpellRead Halifax Learning

The team at Halifax Learning is proud to have taken part in The Fourth All European Dyslexia Conference in Växjö, Sweden hosted by Lianna University and the European Dyslexia Association. Founder, Sarah Arnold, and Program Director, Eryn Steele, teamed up with Mount Saint Vincent's Chair in Learning Disabilities, Dr. Jamie Metsala, to present results of all students taking part in the SpellRead program throughout HRM. Dr. Metsala was selected to present her research entitled, *Response to an Intensive Reading Intervention as a Function of Age, Phonological Processing, and Sublexical Sound-Spelling Automaticity*. Over 400 educators from around the world took part in the conference.



Halifax Learning was established in 2006 and since then this locally grown business has established eight satellite locations throughout the province, reached students on a global scale and taken part in educational conferences throughout the world! The growth of this local company speaks to the effectiveness of the SpellRead program and the life changing impact it has in developing strong literacy skills and confident learners.

Please visit our website, www.halifaxlearning.com, to book a free reading assessment and for more information on our programs. Happy Reading!



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The Benefits of the French Immersion Program

Why 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 so 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. Every student can have the same opportunity and the advantage is that they all have the potential to become bilingual.

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.

Bilingual people are also more sensitive to communication and are better able to understand and respond to the needs of others. Their exposure to another culture makes them respectful of differences, and allows them to communicate effectively with people of diverse backgrounds.

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.

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.

Keep in mind that skills learned in French are transferred to English, and skills learned in English are transferred to French! Read to your children in English or French, encourage them to write, and introduce them to word games like crossword puzzles, word searches and Scrabble.

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Continued on page 20.

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Photo: USGS Bee Inventory and Monitoring

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grow as performers and see their creative juices flowing as they co-write our Christmas show. This sense of empowerment is essential in developing their confidence and creativity.

This winter, we would love to have some new students join the KidSing family! No previous experience is necessary. Classes for the winter session begin January 11th. Online registration is now open. We can't wait to meet all the new KidSing kids!

This fall, we expanded our program into the Halifax region. We've really enjoyed working with our new KidSing kids and they are shining! It has been exciting to watch them

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Continued from page 17.

Festive Merriment at the Maritime Museum for Christmas at Sea!



"harbour" is full! For full competition instructions visit our website at maritimemuseum.novascotia.ca or call the Maritime Museum at 424-7491.

Enjoy being together this holiday by spending your time with us and learn a new or old Maritime tradition - from knot tying to LEGO building. To find out the latest events, exhibits and activities at the Maritime Museum, follow us on Facebook ([facebook.com/maritimemuseum](https://www.facebook.com/maritimemuseum)) or Twitter (twitter.com/ns_mma).

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Why do I Need Pet Insurance, Convince Me

Courtesy of Halifax Veterinary Hospital Inc.

As our pets become more and more valued and adored members of our families, a whole new world of questions and concerns face us as pet owners.

Gone are the days (hopefully forever) when society viewed pets as disposable. We have moved past "cats don't feel pain like we do" or "he's just a dog" to pets sleeping in our beds, joining us on vacation, and having their own sets of dishes. Millions of dollars are spent every year on specially scented bathing products, haircuts, toys, clothes and edible goodies. Dog bakeries wave their flags proudly and cat boarding facilities boast private rooms with windows and views of bird feeders.

The question remains: How much of your "pet available dollars" are spent on his/her basic necessities of health and wellness?

We take our children for vaccines and boosters. We insist on yearly check-ups with our MDs and go every 6 months to the dentist. We choose jobs that offer us health insurance for ourselves, our spouses and our children. We pay premiums every month from our pay cheques to make sure we can afford glasses, prescriptions, massage, orthotics and much, much more in our quest for health. What about Fluffy? What about Fido?

There are many misunderstandings and much misinformation about pet health insurance. "They won't insure my old

pet", "They won't cover anything I need", "The monthly premiums are outside my budget", "I don't need insurance because he is young and/or healthy". None of these "reasons" would stand up if we were considering our own medical well-being or that of our children or spouses.

Here are some of the facts we want you to know:

Pet Insurance saves lives. When our clients are faced with the cost of diagnostics and treatment for accidents like broken legs or motor vehicle hits, or for disease conditions like feline urinary tract disease, diabetes, kidney disease, or chronic ear or eye problems they are often forced to take money from rent, groceries or other bills to meet the expense of providing care for their pet. Sometimes pet owners are

forced to decide to euthanize their beloved pet because treatment costs are outside their budget.

Pet Insurance has many options. You can choose how much you want to spend per month, what you can afford as a deductible and how much coverage you want to fit in your budget.

Pet insurance covers all pets. You can enroll any pet at any age with a physical exam by your veterinarian. Only illnesses that pre-date the insurance will not be covered. Just like in human insurance.

Claims are easy. Whether you have your veterinarian fax in your claim forms or you set up to have your vet paid automatically through your insurance company, payments are typically received within days, not weeks.


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The Magic of the Season Thorough a Child's Eyes

Submitted by Make-A-Wish

As parents one of the best parts of the holiday season is seeing the magic of Christmas through our children's eyes. There is nothing more gratifying than to make a child's wish come true. At Make-A-Wish Foundation (of the) Atlantic Provinces, magic happens every day, granting the most cherished wish to a child with life-threatening illness and filling their hearts with joy.

Children like Maya. At 4½ this young lady from Truro is just brimming with dramatic talent. Loving to sing and dance, Maya dreams of one day seeing a professional ballet production and maybe being a ballerina herself. And children like Brian. Happy and filled with boundless energy, at 7 years of age this Cape Breton native is now a Lego master having built more than 200 Lego kits in the last two years.

Nothing gets in the way of the magic of these children's dreams. Not the

cancer both battle nor the numerous hospital visits and treatment regimes. Both have their sights fixed on their dreams. And this holiday season, their wishes will come true.

How lovely to think no one need wait a moment; we can start now, start slowly, changing the world!

- Anne Frank

Because of individuals with a passion to make a difference in their community and in the life of another, this magical holiday season Maya and Brian will have their wishes come true: Maya will see the National Ballet's production of The Nutcracker from the luxury of the "Queen's



Box" in Toronto and Brian will be in Lego building bliss as he visits LEGOLAND, Florida.

Their gift of time and treasure will bring smiles to these courageous children's faces and provide a deeply cherished memory for them and their families to last a lifetime.

We invite you to share in the joy of creating magic in the life of a child this season and throughout the year.

Give your gift of holiday joy to a child still waiting by texting wish to 45678 or call 902.466.9474. You can make wishes come true this holiday season.



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**Make it happen
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CRAFT CORNER

Warming up for Winter

By Jenny Joan Larisey, Craft Consultant for Maritime Hobbies Crafts

I have recently been reminded of the cold winter days as a young girl, the fire having burned out while everyone was coming home to a chilly house. The struggle was to get that fire blazing as quickly as possible using an entire Sunday paper. Has it always gotten this cold? I ask myself the same question every year.

For those of you lucky enough to have a wood burning fire place to keep cozy during the winter months here is a great idea for a fire starter. Dry pine cones make great kindling or fire starters because they burn really well. When wax and a wick are added to the pine cones, they burn even longer, making them ideal for your own fire or as a gift for someone else. Nothing warms the heart like a

roaring fire, and these pine cones will set even the most stubborn logs ablaze.

A nature craft that costs very little to make; just gather up pine cones, allow them to dry out, then dip in melted wax, it's easy! Here is a list of the basic materials you will need to create warmth for your winter: newspaper; waxed paper; beeswax; candle wick; crayons; large tin can and a selection of pine cones

Wax must be melted in a double boiler on medium to low heat. This can be achieved by using a metal can large enough for your largest pine cone to set into with at least two inches head room above the pine cone.

1. Cover your work area completely with newspaper, then with a layer of waxed paper.

2. Thread a wick through the petals of the pine cone, letting about one inch hang over the tip of the pine cone.

3. Holding the string, dip the pine cone slowly into the liquid wax and allow it to drip over the can until it stops. Place on wax paper and let dry. Repeat 3 or 4 times.

If you would like to create a bouquet of pine cones you can melt crayons in with the wax to add color. To use as a fire starter first trim the wick to 1/2", place the pine cone on top of the kindling and light the end of the wick. And there you have it, fabulous flames as easy as 1,2,3!

Please drop in to Maritime Hobbies & Crafts to see our craft corner, 1521 Grafton Street, Halifax, 423-8870, www.maritimehobbies.com

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Seasons Greetings

And All the Best in The New Year

Once again I am happy to thank all our wonderful readers for the interest in our newspaper throughout the years. I am also grateful and appreciative to all our advertisers whose continuous support has made this local publication possible for almost 19 years.

Thanks very much also to our talented writers whose professional and interesting articles keeps the newspaper informative and well read.

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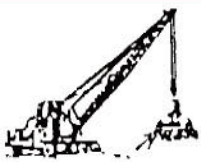
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Continued from page 11.

Color Blindness: What does it really mean?

By: Dr. Jenna Snow, OD – Family Vision Clinic

of the cones has decreased sensitivity to the light rays it is supposed to absorb.²

People with a color vision defect are not unable to see color altogether, but they have difficulty distinguishing between groups of colors and may only see a few shades of colors instead of thousands. Some colors may appear faded or washed out, while others may be identical to the way people with normal color vision see them.

The most common type of color blindness is a "red-green" deficiency, meaning people will have difficulty differentiating reds, oranges, browns and pinks from each other, and also greens, blues, and purples from each other.³ But, another more rare type of color blindness known as "blue-yellow" also exists. In this type of color deficiency, people will have trouble deciphering between shades of blues from greens and different shades of yellows.³ Even rarer, is the condition called achromatopsia which means a complete lack of cones. With no cones at all, this person will see the world in gray-scale (monochromatic) and will also have very poor vision.

While some color vision deficiencies can be a result of eye disease, most are usually inherited genetically.. aka, it is something you are born with. The way in which these genes are inherited (X-linked recessive) means that males are more predisposed to have a color vision problem than females. About 8% of males have some degree of color deficiency, and only 0.5% of females. If the color vision defect is from genetics and not disease, it will not get worse over time.

Depending on the severity of a color deficiency, some people don't even realize that they don't see colors the way others do. Growing up as a child, everyone learns their colors the same way, and what you are told is a shade of "blue" is what you will identify with. It is not un-heard of that adults come in for an eye exam and find out that they have been color blind their whole life and never knew the difference. For the most part, having a mild color deficiency is something that doesn't have a huge impact on one's life.

It can however affect potential career options, for example: commercial pilots, police officers, and electricians (because of colored wiring). Professions like these require near perfect color vision to pass requirements. This is why it is important to know from an early age what kind of limitations your child may have when it comes to the impact on their future. It may also help explain why a child is having some difficulties with learning. It is important to inform your child's teachers of all visual problems they have. Many teaching tools rely on color recognition, so it is important for them to know if your child is struggling in that area.

Routine eye examinations are recommended for all children. The Canadian Association of Optometry recommends regular eye exams for children, beginning at age 6 months, and then annual after the age of 3 until 18 years old.

1. Kohl S, et al. A nonsense mutation in PDE6H causes autosomal-recessive incomplete achromatopsia. Am J Hum Genet. 2012.

2. Color Vision Deficiency. AoA. 2013. <http://www.aoa.org/patient-s-and-public/eye-and-vision-problems/glossary-of-eye-and-vision-conditions/color-deficiency>

3. Color Deficiency. CAO. 2013. <http://doctorsofoptometry.ca/colour-deficiency/>

For further information or to have an eye examination, you can see Dr. Jenna Snow or any of her colleagues at the following Family Vision Clinic locations. Halifax Location: Park West Centre: 287 Lacewood Drive 457-2224, Bedford Location: Nine Mile Circle: 620 Nine Mile Drive, 407-7174, Dartmouth Locations: Queen Square: 45 Alderney Drive 469-8230, Tacoma Plaza: 50 Tacoma Drive 434-1231, Superstore Mall: 650 Portland Street 462-4600.

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