

Bright Start UpDate

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Stress and the Holiday

Holidays can be an extra special time for families with young children, but they can also be very stressful. Some children may react strongly to changes in routine. It is important to plan ahead so the holidays are a special experience for everyone.

Here are a few tips to help keep your family on track during the busy holiday season:

- Talk with your family about your plans and expectations. Let kids know what is coming up so they can prepare for a change in routine.
- Anticipate problems that could arise and make plans for handling these situations. If a family gathering is scheduled over nap time, what are you going to do?
- Take “field trips” to get away from a crowded house. The presence of too many people can be overwhelming for young children, especially when it is loud or there is nowhere for them to play. A walk around the block or a short trip in the car could help children and parents regroup.
- Remember they are children. Some events just aren’t kid-friendly. Choose to stay home or make childcare arrangements rather than expecting children to behave in adult situations.
- Focus on relationships rather than a to-do list. Remember that the holidays are about spending time with family and friends.
- Be active! Plan get-togethers around physical activities such as sledding, building snowmen, or walks.



Plan ahead so the holidays are a special experience

- Make time to have fun together as a family. Play non-competitive games, cook or bake together work at making good memories.
- Don’t over-schedule. Pare down activities to just what needs to be done. It will open up time on the calendar, lighten the stress, and make the events you do attend much more enjoyable.
- Start new traditions. Keep things new and fun by adding to your family traditions. Whether it is making a new kind of cookie, adding a community service project, or going caroling together, a new tradition can be a lot of fun.
- Keep good nutrition in mind. Feed your family a healthy meal before going out and always keep healthy snacks in your bag.
- Think sleep. Sleep is critical to maintaining a positive attitude. Plan for naps and keep to regular bedtimes. It may not be possible to always get to bed on time, so a nap before an event could make all the difference.
- Set a budget for your holiday spending and stick to it. This

means not only gift-giving, but also meals and travel expenses.

- Think of creative gift-giving options. Pare down gift-giving expenses by having children make gifts. Handmade gifts are personal, special, and can be very inexpensive not to mention fun!
- Maintain realistic expectations. Kids are going to be crabby and misbehave at times. Before disciplining, remember to **H.A.U.L.T.** Many times children act out because they are **Hungry, Angry, Upset, Lonely** or just plain **Tired**.

Prepared by Bobbi Larsen, Extension Educator/Family and Consumer Sciences, Clark County, South Dakota State University

Sources: *Don't Let Stress Take Away Holiday Cheer*, University of Iowa Extension at www.extension.iastate.edu/news/2008/nov/162601.htm, *Stress, depression and the holidays: 12 tips for coping*, Mayo Clinic at www.mayoclinic.com and *Children and Holiday Stress*, University of Minnesota Extension at <http://www.midwestchildcare.com/children%20and%20holiday%20stress.pdf>



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Healthy Baby – What Parents of Young Children Should Know About H1N1

The H1N1 virus may have faded from news headlines but cases are still being reported around the world and in South Dakota as well and more are expected this fall.

Parents of young children should be aware that younger age groups appear to be at higher risk for H1N1 flu and its complications. Parents should also know that clinical trials are underway on a vaccine for the H1N1 virus. Children are one of the priority groups recommended to be vaccinated as the first doses become available. Priority groups for the initial doses include:

- pregnant women,
- people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age (these children are too young to receive the vaccine),
- health care and emergency services personnel,
- persons between the ages of 6 months through 24 years of age, and

- people from ages 25 through 64 years who are at higher risk for novel H1N1 because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems.



South Dakota is expected to receive its first doses of vaccine as early as mid-October. The state Department of Health is now working with health care providers, school and community groups to organize vaccine clinics and you can expect to hear more as the flu season approaches.

Parents are also encouraged to vaccinate their children for seasonal flu through the state's annual free childhood flu vaccination initiative. The H1N1 vaccine will not protect against seasonal flu, nor will the seasonal vaccine protect against H1N1, so it's important that children get both vaccines.

In addition to vaccination, it's also important that parents practice good personal hygiene and teach their children to do the same. Make it a routine to wash your hands often with soap and water. Cough into your elbow or into a tissue, not in your hands. Stay home if you're sick, and start planning now in the event that one of your kids gets the flu. These basic steps can help prevent seasonal and pandemic influenza, colds and other respiratory diseases.

Learn more at the department's web site, <http://doh.sd.gov/H1N1/>. No one knows what the impact of the fall flu season will be until we're in the middle of it. But how severe the flu becomes this fall will depend on how seriously each of us takes action to reduce the risk now.

Prepared by Barb Buhler, Information Officer, South Dakota Department of Health

Family Mealtime – Three Tips to Saving Money on Food

If you are looking for ways to save a few dollars on your grocery bill, consider these money-saving ideas.

1. Don't pay a premium price for convenience. You can save a lot of money on groceries simply by washing your own lettuce, peeling your own carrots, slicing your own cheese, and chopping your own onions. In addition, foods also



lose freshness and nutrients when they are pre-washed and processed.

2. Skip the junk food aisle. Chips, sodas, and sweets are very costly; especially when you consider that they don't contribute any real nutritional value to your diet. Instead, spend that money on nutritious treats like nuts, sunflower seeds, and dried or fresh fruit.



3. Make it yourself and save. You can spend \$3 on a liter of ice tea or you can make your own with about 10 cents worth of tea bags. And, skip the meal kits. A pasta salad kit that contains about 80 cents worth of macaroni and a packet of seasonings may cost \$3.50. Save over \$2 by starting from scratch. An added plus is that you can control the amount of salt and sugar in the food!

Sweet Potato Oven Fries and Coins

4 pounds sweet potatoes as purchased will yield about 18 servings (1/2 cup)



To make fries, cut up fresh sweet potatoes in strips like French fries and spray with low-fat cooking spray. Place on baking sheet and bake at 375 degrees F for 20 minutes or until done. Sprinkle with a

purchased seasoning mix and lemon juice if desired.

Sweet potato coins can be made by slicing sweet potatoes 1/2" thick, spraying with cooking spray and sprinkle with cinnamon. Bake the same as fries above.

Serving suggestion:
Serve 1/2 cup sweet potato coins



or fries and 1/4 cup nonfat cottage cheese and water. Calories, 87; Fiber, 3 g; Total Fat, .1 g; Saturated Fat, 0 g.

Suggested Reading - Eating the Alphabet: Fruit and Vegetables from A to Z by Lois Ehlert

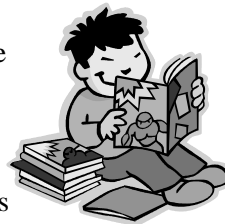
Prepared by Sandra Namken, Extension Educator/Family and Consumer Sciences, Hamlin County, South Dakota State University
Source: *South Dakota Physical Activities and Healthy Snacks for Young Children*; Iowa State Extension Service: *Spend Smart, Eat Smart*

Books and Baby – The Importance of Storytelling

Every day family life provides a variety of experiences that help infants and very young children to develop early language and literacy skills. Storytelling is an important part of this – providing an opportunity to bring the past into the present while emphasizing family culture, tradition and memories.

It might seem hard to believe that young children can tell repeat stories that they have heard, even as young as 2 years of age – but research suggests that this can and does happen. Although children are born with no language, within 24-30 months most have learned the basics of storytelling which include how to organize events, putting a place and time to the story and promoting the main characters. In fact, storytelling is possibly one of the most powerful ways that human beings begin to organize experiences. It can provide a link from the past, and also help youth understand relationships and feelings in his/her own family.

Play is a very important part of young children's language development and storytelling experiences. For example, let's look at Jenny who is 20 months old. Through her play with a pony she is learning the basics of storytelling. As she is holding the pony and pretending he is running, she drops him. "Oh no. Poor Horsey. Horsey is sick but here comes his mommy. She will make him better with medicine." If we look back at this example, Jenny, who is not even 2 years old yet, is telling a story. There is a sequence of events or actions, a main character, emotion and an ending.



Other ways that young children can benefit is by talking about past experiences with family members. Even before a baby can talk about his or her past, parents and other family members can share stories and memories. One way to do this is through photographs and scrapbooks. For example, showing little Johnny a picture of him eating his first piece of birthday

cake and describing things like how much he enjoyed it, how messy his face was, etc. Even if Johnny's family doesn't realize it, they are teaching him about what makes a good story.

Remember, even at a very young age, children are paying attention to what is being said, facial expressions, body language, and books read to them. Stories do not only come in a book, however. As they grow and develop they can begin to participate and perhaps add more facts (true or fictional) to a story. By the time most children are three years old they can tell a whole story by themselves and are usually eager to do so!

Prepared by Deb Rombough, Extension Educator/Family and Consumer Sciences, Lawrence County, South Dakota State University
Sources:
www.zerotothree.org
Engel, S. "The Emergence of Story Telling During the First Three Years", 1997 Zero to Three Journal
<http://www.earlyliteracydevelopment.org/>
"Promoting Early Literacy with Infants and Toddlers", 2003
National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families
"Everyday Ways to Support Your Baby's and Toddler's Early Learning", 2007

From a Parent's Perspective – Creating Family Memories

On a sticky note attached to my computer screen is the question “How do you want to be remembered as a parent?” I would like my son to look at me as someone who provided love, stability and support no matter what. I want him to remember the things I did to make him feel special. For examples, a child might look forward to an encouraging note in the backpack, a little treat sitting on the car seat after a long day of school, or dancing around the kitchen while making supper. These seemingly little things can add up to create a self-confident, caring and independent individual.

Family rituals and traditions are a special way of strengthening the family. The routines and

rituals we experience, individually and as a family, on a regular basis build family unity and create a loving, stable and comforting foundation on which to grow. A family's values and beliefs are often reinforced through their traditions and rituals.



Next week, we will celebrate our son's first birthday. I, of course, am the one that is the most excited and have planned a small party with family and friends. But the party is not what I am most excited about. I am excited about initiating our own ritual specifically for the birthday morning. I purchased

Dr. Seuss' *Happy Birthday to You* book for us to read in bed while my son chows down a birthday cupcake complete with one candle. Who cares if there are crumbs in the bed or frosting in his hair? These things are washable, but the memories of celebrating a special day will be lasting and cherished memories. Think of traditions that you would like to carry on or start with your children. Make time for these things and your child will feel like he or she is part of something special – your family.

Prepared by Amanda Larson, Extension Educator/Family and Consumer Sciences, BonHomme County, South Dakota State University

Source: “*Family Rituals and Traditions*” from *Parenting 24/7* at the University of Illinois Extension, www.parenting247.org

The **Bright Start UpDate** is a monthly publication for South Dakota parents with young children under the age of five. It is brought to you as part of Governor Rounds Bright Start Program, an early childhood initiative with a number of different programs. **Bright Start UpDate** is published by the Office of the Governor 4,470 copies of this publication were printed at a cost of \$.46 per copy. You are welcome to make copies and distribute as needed. You can reach us by calling 1-800-305-3064 or check our web site at: <http://www.sdbrightstart.com>

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