

April Showers Brings May Flowers! Let's Hope!

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It is that time of year when we start to wear lighter weight clothing and perhaps not worry about having coats and gloves with us at all times. Spring is also a time of renewing ourselves and having a fresh start. The sun is out longer and the weather seems to be cooperating much more! The clean, crisp air helps us all relax a bit and excites us for the new season. I hope you all take advantage of the nice days and treat yourself to a walk or coffee with a friend outside! Finally, the kids don't have to be cooped up and can get rid of the extra energy that has been in them all winter long. As many of us know, it can snow anytime in Montana, but for right now, lets enjoy the days that the sun is warm on our face and we can get out and enjoy the blue skies and beautiful days that are upon us. We hope you all have had a great start to 2012!

I would also like to take this time to say goodbye to all of the grandparents raising grandchildren! I will be graduating this May, but will continue to advocate and support the MT Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Project. It has been an amazing experience and I would like to thank you all for being such wonderful and truly remarkable people!

~Mara Vannatta

Teach your grandkids this fun song for spring!

April Showers Song

(to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot")

Pitter patter rain drops (wiggle fingers to imitate rain)

Falling from the sky (wiggle fingers downward)

Here's my umbrella (action of opening an umbrella)

Hold it high! (hands over head)

When the rain is over (bring hands down slowly)

And the sun begins to glow (make sun with arms)

Little flowers start to bud (Kneel down)

Then grow, grow, grow!!! (slowly stand up)

Did you know...

The phrase "April Showers Bring May Flowers" goes all the way back to the mid 16th century. A poet and farmer named Thomas Tusser wrote the book, A Hundred Good Points of Husbandry and in the April Section, the following poem was written:

**"Sweet April Showers do Spring
 May Flowers."**

Information Provided by:

http://www.dltk-holidays.com/spring/april_song.htm

Information Provided by:

<http://www.spokanecounty.org/wqmp/envirokids/images/Spring%202011.pdf>

Choosing a Healthy Lifestyle

Set the Family Up for Success - Small changes in five key areas can make a huge difference and add up to real results:

1. Healthy Snacks

Fruits and vegetables are a natural source of energy and give bodies the nutrients they need to keep going. Eat fruit raw to enjoy its natural sweetness. Canned or frozen fruits and vegetables are good options when fresh produce is not available. Be careful to choose those without added sugar and syrup. It's better to eat the whole fruit because it contains the added fiber that helps you feel full.

2. Make Physical Activity Part of Your Family's Routine

The best way to increase physical activity in your family life is for you to be a part of it. Activities should be fun and something that the whole family can do together. Kids need at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day, but it doesn't have to be all at one time. Short walks, active chores, walking the dog—it all adds up! Encourage everyone to think of fun active things to do to!

3. Plan a Healthy Menu

- 'Batch cook' and divide prepared recipes into the number of servings specified before eating.
- Canned, dried and frozen fruits and vegetables are good options. Look for fruit without added sugar or syrups and vegetables without added salt or butter.
- Try these healthy recipes: <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/healthieryou/html/recipes.html>

4. Reduce Screen Time and Get Active

- Caregivers and caregivers should set rules that limit the amount of time children spend on the computer, watching TV and playing video games to reduce screen time.
- Watching TV can become a habit, making it easy to forget what else is out there. Give children ideas and alternatives, like playing outside, picking up a new hobby, or learning a sport.

5. Eat Together as a Family

When families sit down and eat together, children are more likely to eat more fruits and vegetables and less junk food. Plan and make healthy, affordable meals for the family. Keep the television off and sit at the table and enjoy!

Information Provided by:

http://www.letsmove.gov/sites/letsmove.gov/files/pdfs/TAKE_ACTION_PARENTS.pdf

2 <http://www.letsmove.gov/healthy-families>



Family Fun Activities for Spring

- ⇒ Plan a picnic at a local park.
- ⇒ Go to a park and play catch or Frisbee with your kids.
- ⇒ Take those rusty bicycles out and go for a ride.
- ⇒ Lay down a blanket and watch the clouds. See who can find the most shapes.
- ⇒ Make a homemade picture album with construction paper, glue and colored yarn to hold the paper together like a book. Check out this site for easy instructions: <http://mothersdayworld.com/>
- ⇒ Head down to a local library and check out a few books.
- ⇒ Play Hangman or Tic-Tac-Toe.
- ⇒ Play an old-fashioned game of hide n' seek or tag.
- ⇒ Make a fort of bed sheets.
- ⇒ Put together a scavenger hunt with items from your home and see who finds everything on the list the fastest.
- ⇒ Draw a mural together on the sidewalk with chalk.
- ⇒ Play dress up with your kids and have a fashion show.
- ⇒ Cook dinner together.
- ⇒ Camp out in the family room for a fun pajama party.
- ⇒ Watch old home movies or dig up pictures to add to your homemade album.
- ⇒ Make homemade cards for the next holiday or for upcoming birthdays.
- ⇒ Pick a night and have family board game night with the games you already own, or pick some up from a second hand store.
- ⇒ Take a nature hike.
- ⇒ Watch some old movies.
- ⇒ Have a closet clean up party. Then donate old items.
- ⇒ Learn the names of all the nation's presidents, past and present.
- ⇒ Play touch football.
- ⇒ Play H.O.R.S.E.



Information Provided by:

<http://www.ultrasoundtechnicianschools.org/100-fun-healthy-and-mostly-free-family-activities/>

<http://www.montana.edu/wwwhd/grg.html>

Bullying

Bullying has become a devastating pandemic in the U.S. It is important to talk to your grandchildren about it and create an open and trusting dialogue with them. The information below discusses where bullying takes place, types of bullying, and how to deal with it.

Types of Bullying

Verbal bullying – The most common type of bullying. Name-calling, offensive remarks or consistently making the person the butt of jokes.

Physical bullying – Hitting, pulling, kicking or shoving.

Indirect bullying – Is more common among girls, spreading rumors that are not true about a certain person.

Social alienation – Openly excluding someone from being part of a group or encouraging snubbing of the person amongst all their peers.

Intimidation – Verbal threats that are made that instill fear in the victim so he or she will give into the bully's demands.

Cyber bullying – With the ever present and accessible Internet and with more adolescents having cell phones, it has created positive and negative effects of technology. Adolescents can make snap judgment decisions that will have a lasting affect on the person they are bullying. Ways in which cyber bullying can take place include: Ruining a reputation through emails, blogs, forum posts, text messages, etc. Any way technology can spread messages is another way someone can commit cyber bullying.

Where are Children getting Bullied?

Schools: In the school, on the playground, in the buses. The 2007-2008 school year showed 25% of public schools reported bullying taking place daily or weekly. Middle schools reported higher percentages of bullying than high school or elementary schools.

Online: Cyber bullying or electronic aggression can take place on: Social Networking Sites, chat rooms, instant messaging, text messaging, and emails.

How to Prevent Bullying

The best way to stop bullying is to discourage it before it starts. Working with your community and school, enforce an anti-bullying policy. Encourage and facilitate training on bullying so teachers and caregivers are aware of the signs and how to better handle a bullying situation. Most importantly, supervision, the more children are monitored the less likely bullying will take place. Caregivers and schools are the two key components in the prevention of bullying.

How to Deal with Bullying

Awareness - Be aware of your child's activities, keep an open discussion with your child's school.

Monitoring – Where does your child go when they are online and what access does he or she have on his or her phone?

Personal Online Safety - Safeguard your computer by blocking sites that are not appropriate for children.

Response - Have a plan on how you will handle talking to your child if they are bullying or being bullied.

Share - Let your child know that he or she can talk to you about what is going on in his or her life. Your child may be frightened or embarrassed, assure them that you are there to help and it is not their fault.

Who is most likely to be Bullied?

Children who are most likely to become a victim of being bullied include:

- Children who have difficulties making friends
- Have poor self-esteem
- Are quiet, shy in manner, and lack confidence

Who is most likely to Bully?

Behaviors in children that are associated with a greater likelihood of bullying are:

- Impulsivity (poor self-control)
- Harsh parenting by caregivers
- Attitudes accepting violence

Why do Children Bully?

Children who bully may show signs of aggression and are impulsive. They think violence is okay and sometimes as a defense, will bully another child to show their toughness, so he will not be picked on himself. Children who are bullies may be physically abused themselves, or have caregivers who are bullies and copy that behavior at school.

**What to do if your Child is being Bullied**

Talk with your child.

- Let them know bullying is wrong.
- Tell your child it is not their fault.
- Ask your child what they think can be done to help the situation.
- Be involved in your child's school.
- Know your school's policies on bullying.
- Build a relationship with your child's teacher, let them know what it is going on so they can monitor it at school.
- If your child's school does not have a bullying policy, work to develop and enforce one.

It is important to educate yourself on the signs and warnings of bullying. If your child's behavior changes, do not ignore it. Remember, kids may not open up about what is really going on. Encourage your child to talk to you and assure them that it can be handled privately. Talk to school officials and your child's teachers to have a better understanding of what is going on in their lives and how you can help.

Information Provided by:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2011). Understanding bullying. Retrieved from: http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/Bullying_Factsheet-a.pdf
- Department of Health and Human Services (2011). Stop bullying.gov. Retrieved from: <http://www.stopbullying.gov/index.html>
- School Bullying Among Adolescents in the United States: Physical, verbal, relational, and cyber. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 45 : 368–375

Social Security - What You Need to Know

Social Security benefits aid in providing the necessities to children whose parents have died, are disabled, or retired. So, if you are unsure if you are eligible for these benefits, check out the information below to see if you meet any of the requirements.

Who can get child's benefits?

- ◆ Biological Child
- ◆ Adopted Child
- ◆ Dependent Stepchild
- ◆ Children may also be eligible for their grandparents' earnings.



To get these benefits a **child's parent(s)** must be:

- ◆ Disabled or retired and **entitled** to Social Security benefits
- ◆ Deceased, but had been working long enough where he or she paid Social Security taxes

To get these benefits, a **child** must be:

- ◆ Unmarried
- ◆ 18 years of age or younger
- ◆ 18-19 years old and a full-time high school student (No higher than a senior/12th grade)
- ◆ 18 or older and disabled (Disability must have started before age 22)

When **applying for benefits**, you will need:

- ◆ Child's birth certificate
- ◆ Parent's and child's Social Security numbers
- ◆ Survivor benefit applicants will need to provide proof of the parent's death
- ◆ Disabled child benefit applicants will need to provide medical evidence of disability

***A Social Security Representative will tell you what other documents you may need.**

ATTENTION: Children who are disabled and whose parents have little income or resources may also be eligible for Supplemental Security Income benefits.

For more information on Social Security benefits, go to:

www.socialsecurity.gov or

Call toll-free: 1-800-772-1213

Grandfamily Support Contacts Across Montana

Western Region

Flathead County

Tim Bohrer
The Nurturing Center, Inc.
Kalispell
(406) 756-1414

Lake County

Nori Pearce
Ronan
(406) 676-4271

Madison/Jefferson County

Andrea Sarchet
Whitehall
(406) 287-3282

Lewis & Clark County

Rocky Mountain Development
Council Head Start
Janet Coughlin
Helena
(406) 457-7308

Ravalli County

Brenda Fisher
Family Services
Hamilton
(406) 363-1961 ext. 107

Allison Dunne
WORD—Local Living Family Center
Florence
(406) 273-0142

Central Region

Big Horn & Rosebud County

Gail Whiteman
Crow & Northern Cheyenne
(406) 599-6944

Central Region, cont...

Cascade County

Jona McNamee
Great Falls
(406) 454-6980
Mariellen Ritts
(406) 453-3554

Fergus County

Denise Seilstad
Lewistown
(406) 535-3919

Gallatin County

MSU Extension Family &
Human Development
Bozeman
(406) 994-3395
grg@montana.edu

Glacier County

Carrie Jackson/
Connie Bremner
Eagle Shield Center
Browning
(406) 338-7257

Hill County

Rocky Boy Reservation
Stone Child College
Box Elder
Mary St. Pierre
(406) 395-4875

Phillips/Blaine Counties

Fort Belknap Reservation
Paula Enkerud
Harlem
(406) 353-2656

Central Region, cont...

Stillwater County

Lisa Terry
Columbus
(406) 322-8035

Teton County

Jane Wolery
Choteau
(406) 466-2491

Eastern Region

Custer County

Don & Vivian Westall
Miles City
(406) 234-6727

Dawson County

Pete Bruno
Montanans for Children,
Youth and Families
Glendive
(406) 939-5591

Roosevelt County

Ardis Oelkers
Culbertson
(406) 787-5312

Carol Bemer
Fort Peck Reservation
(406) 768-2430

Rosebud County

Jennifer Anderson
Forsyth
(406) 346-7320

Yellowstone County

Bernie Mason
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(406) 256-2828



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www.montana.edu/wwwhd/grg.html

www.msuextension.org

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*Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family. Whatever
you are, who ever you are, you need one.*

~Jane Howard

