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Co-Parenting that Puts the Child First

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VOL. 18. ISSUE 3



COVER STORY **Co-Parenting that Puts the Child First**

The best co-parenting relationships involve the parents putting their personal feelings aside in favor of giving their child what they need emotionally and physically. Brian and Whitney eloquently share where their priorities lie.





Important Reasons to Vaccinate Your Child

Vaccines are given to children only after careful review by scientists, doctors and healthcare professionals. Check out the 2023 recommended schedules for children from birth through 18 years of age.

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WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

Send us your suggestions for health topics you would like to see in *Our Health Matters*. Also share what you enjoy about the magazine. Email us at info@kcourhealthmatters.com or write to us at *Our Health Matters* PO Box 5425

Kansas City, MO 64131

Are the Kids OK?

ur world is filled with chaos, uncertainty and perplexities in every segment of society, including local and national governments, schools, universities, our homes, workplaces and the communities in which we live. What kind of future lies ahead for our children when some of the highest offices of government pass divisive and unethical policies; when our way of life endangers the planet we inhabit?

We say *children are our future.* What does that mean to you, and what do we want it to mean to our children? We should want children to experience better physical and mental health; to learn from our mistakes and make fewer of their own. We should want them to live healthier, receive a quality education and experience the "good things" this world has to offer. We should want them to emulate good behavior, empathy, love and positive interactions with others. To accomplish this we have to "put kids first."

In this **Children's Health edition**, we introduce parents Brian and Whitney and their daughter Luna, a charming three-year-old whose parents, although living separately, put aside their differences and declared their daughter their top priority.

August is National Immunization Month. Our Children's Health edition sponsor, Children's Mercy Hospital, shares a few instructions that help comfort and prepare children to get vaccinated (page 16). We also spotlight individuals, families and organizations who are investing in the education, physical and mental health and success of children.

As summer ends in a few weeks and children prepare to go back to



school, we encourage you to put children first. Our future depends on this investment.

Have a safe and healthy summer.

amsly

Ruth Ramsey, Publisher and CEO

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By Brenda Bohaty D.D.S., M.S.D., Ph.D. Professor and Chair, Pediatric Dentistry -UMKC School of Dentistry

Director, Residency Program in Pediatric Dentistry -Childrens Mercy Hospital

Age One Dental Visits Are Important

child's oral health depends upon regular visits to the dentist. Dental visits that happen rarely or only when there is a perceived problem can jeopardize a child's overall health and their ability to eat, sleep and function daily.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and the American Dental Association agree on the oral health benefits of "age one" dental visits.



Preparing for a child's first dentist visit

This visit should be scheduled when the child is 12 months of age or no later than 6 months after the first tooth erupts in the mouth. During this examination, the dentist can detect early signs of decay and educate parents and caregivers about proper tooth development, home care and diet.

Methods used to examine a child younger than three years old

Dental exams for children younger than 3 years of age is often done using **knee-to-knee positioning** whereby the dentist and parent sit knee to knee on chairs that are facing one another (Figure 1).

To position the child for the exam, the parent or caregiver holds the child in their lap with legs straddling the parent's waist using the **"bear hug" positioning**. The parent then leans the child's head back into the lap of the dentist (Figure 2). This position allows the dentist and the parent to get a good look at what is going on inside the child's mouth. It also helps the dentist to examine the teeth and gums in a way that is comfortable and safe for the child and parent. It isn't unusual for a child to cry during the examination, much like they may cry for a diaper change or exam with a pediatrician. Crying actually helps the parent and the dentist visualize the teeth and gums better.

After the initial visit, the dentist will determine a checkup schedule appropriate for the child. With each six-month visit, the dentist and parent gradually help the child move to the traditional dental chair to receive the care needed, including tooth cleanings and x-rays.

The University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Dentistry provides dental examinations for children under 3 years of age free of charge using the technique described in this article. For more information or to schedule an appointment call 816-235-2145.



PREPARING CHILDREN FOR A LIFETIME OF SUCCESS!

Did you know 90% of all human brain development happens by age five?

At birth, the average baby's brain is about a quarter of the size of the average adult brain. Incredibly, it doubles in size in the first year. It keeps growing to about 80% of adult size by age 3 and 90% - nearly full grown - by age 5.

Early childhood education helps little ones develop skills to think, read, learn, remember, reason and pay attention. It also teaches attentiveness, motivation and self-control, which children need to be healthy and productive adults.

Start at Zero (SAZ), a 501(c)3 nonprofit founded in 2013 by two Kansas City mothers, was established to implement best practices and holistic approaches to achieve comprehensive health, education and childhood development. The staff consists of experts and professionals in child development, parent education and early childhood.

5506 Troost, Kansas City, MO 64110 info@startatzero.org Call or text: 816-600-4932 **[]** [] @ @startatzerokc



Programs offered include:

- Nationally Recognized Parents as Teachers[®] Home Visiting and Developmental Screenings
- Group Connections (evidence-based Kaleidoscope Play & Learn[®] model)
- Legacy Leadership Institute (coaching for parents and professionals serving children and families)

Who they serve:

Start at Zero programs and services are free for parents and caregivers of children from prenatal to five years who reside in Kansas City.

How you can help:

At Start at Zero volunteers of various skillsets are essential to support staff, children and families. They help with calls, scheduling, monitoring children and assisting instructors with activities.







Empowering Great Futures

Education and Career Development Programs at Boys & Girls Clubs

Begin and the specific needs of each child ensures that the specific needs of each child ensures that the strong to the specific needs of each child ensures that every young member has the chance to blossom into an educated, well-rounded young adult with a bright future.

One of the most significant advantages of Boys & Girls Clubs is the strategic placement within the heart of neighborhoods where children need support the most. By being an integral part of the community, the Clubs can offer consistent support, often becoming a comforting home away from home to Club members.

PAVING THE PATH TO SUCCESS

The cornerstone of Boys & Girls Clubs' offerings is the Education and Career Development program, designed to ensure youth stay on track for high school graduation. Through homework help and tutoring, children receive the academic support they need to thrive. Youth are exposed to potential job opportunities, career exploration, college tours and scholarship opportunities.

Three additional program offerings comprise the Clubs' Whole Child Program model strategically crafted to help children round out their educational, emotional, physical, and moral development. These program areas include the Public Speaking, Character and Leadership Development program area, Healthy Lifestyles program area, and Technology program area.

WHATEVER IT TAKES TO BUILD GREAT FUTURES

The Boys & Girls Clubs have achieved a remarkable strategic vision for the past seven years: ensuring 100% of active Club members graduate from high school on time with post-secondary plans. They have 11 locations across the Kansas City metropolitan area including Kansas City, MO; Kansas City, KS; KC North; South Kansas City; Independence; and Olathe.

Membership is affordable, and scholarships are available to ensure financial constraints do not hinder access to the Clubs. To learn more, visit www.helpkckids. org or call 816-361-3600. Stay connected on social media by following @helpkckids.



What Does Your Child's School Counselor Do? A Lot.

They serve students and families in many ways.

By Jeanene Dunn, OHM Staff

id you know school counselors serve students at all grade levels? Helping high school students plan class choices and prepare for life after graduation is not the sum total of their job. Most start their careers as classroom teachers and pursue additional education to become counselors.

Martha* says she became a counselor to better serve students. "I knew based on my own past experience, I could be more effective as a counselor," she explains. "I saw students who needed more help than I could give as a classroom teacher."

Martha is now retired but spent more than 20 years helping children and families. "I was able to get a fuller picture of factors that can affect a student's ability to perform well in the classroom," she continues. "And help families connect to resources and support."

What are a school counselor's duties?

As defined by the American School Counselor Association, "school counselors are certified, licensed educators who design and deliver school programs that improve student outcomes." Their programs must align with the school's academic goals and plans to serve students. And they are expected to adhere to the ethics codes and standards of the profession.

They have a charge to manage, deliver and assess. Direct services to students include, but are not limited to:

- INSTRUCTION. Develop grade-level appropriate lesson plans. They may select an area of focus; bullying, for example, and build a lesson around the topic.
- ADVISING. Work with classroom teachers, students, families and administrators to evaluate student transcripts and align class schedules with academic requirements.
- COUNSELING. Serve as an open door to listen to students' concerns.
- ADVOCACY. Serve as a voice for students at IEP (individual education plan) meetings

Certified counselors are also mental health professionals. They are qualified to help you find resources or mental health services outside of what the school can offer.

What parents can do.

You know your child better than anyone. Get to know your child's counselor. They are part of the team that works with your child. Like you, they want your child to succeed and be their best. Ask how you can support them.

Make time to find out who they are and introduce yourself. If you don't know who that person is, start with your child's teacher or school administrator.

*Not her real name Source: The American School Counselor Association



What Children Need — A Champion and a Palacana

was sitting in a Mexican ice cream store on Southwest Boulevard when a four-year-old wearing a raspberry shirt came through the door. The shirt read, "Girls can do anything." Her father encouraged her to open her jacket and let me take a picture.

Sienna is a nine-year-old who walked along the top of my retaining wall, using it as a balance beam. She was sure-footed and confident. Her five-year-old brother trotted along the sidewalk in his cowboy boots and sang happily. Their dad, a construction worker, dumped dirt piles for them to climb atop.

Ariana is a seven-year-old who was tagging along with her dad, a single father, as he measured a wall. In one hand, she grasped a stuffed toy; in the other, the tape measure. She quite capably held one end of the tape as her dad walked the boundary line.

Jenny was an anxious four-year-old when I first saw her in my clinical practice. A breakthrough happened one day as I held her on my lap and read from *The Little Engine That Could*. She stopped me at the part where the little engine was saying, "I think I can." She wanted to say the words herself. "I think I can." Jenny stopped me again and asked me to reread the passage. "Dr. Rae," she asked, "is the engine a girl?" I answered yes. She asked me if I was a girl; I said I was. "And I am a girl!" she exclaimed. "I think I can!"



By Rae Sedgwick Ph.D., J.D. Clinical and Consulting Psychologist Attorney at Law

I have a friend who, after delivering a sermon, drives across

the state of Kansas to watch her great-nephews participate in basketball, football or track. She never fails to attend.

What these youngsters share is a Champion for their cause—one who walks alongside to guide them and cheers them on no matter what their talents, gender or gifts.

And what children need — when the day is hot and long — is someone who takes them for a Palacana (homemade Mexican ice cream).

Dr. Rae Sedgwick is a published author, nurse, clinical psychologist and attorney in private practice. Sedgwick is a graduate of the Postdoctoral Training Program in Clinical Psychology of the Menninger Clinic.



KC DiversAbility College and Career Fair co-sponsored by Sherwood Autism Center and Down Syndrome Innovations.



A BETTER FUTURE BELONGS TO EVERYONE

Students meet with employers, college administrators and non-profit organizations.

The lived experiences of Kim Riley, founder of the Transition Academy and her developmentally disabled son, revealed far too many gaps in systems designed to support young people with autism or developmental disabilities. Riley knew firsthand about the challenges that awaited her son and others like him, as they prepared to transition from high school to life as an adult. She set out to remove the barriers.

In 2019 Riley established The Transition Academy (TTA) to improve the success rates of students with autism or developmental disabilities as they explore college or career options. TTA serves Kansas City Public Schools and Charter schools. It is outcome-focused on making economic inclusion a reality, especially for young people of color who have historically been failed by educational and healthcare systems.

The Transition Academy offers free support services detailed in its Greater Kansas City DiversAbility Guide to Success After High School.

Resources include:

- Identifying Higher Education Resources
- Exploring Career Planning
- College Tours
- Job Training Tours
- Parent/Caretaker Advocacy Training
- Information about Independent Living and Day Programs

Because everyone deserves a brighter future, the Transition Academy helps with determining disability eligibility and benefits, figuring out education and career opportunities and community connections.

To learn more, visit: www.thetransitionacademy.org and subscribe to their newsletter for program updates.



816-837-0744 info@thetransitionacademy.org



Co-Parenting that Puts the Child First

Every child deserves a loving and supportive family.

ne definition of co-parenting that makes it plain says...Healthy co-parenting involves two parents who are not together raising their child (or children) jointly to ensure they have a safe and loving environment to grow up in. To work, co-parenting requires that both parents not only contribute to their child's care, upbringing and activities, but that they also interact frequently and respectfully with one another. The best co-parenting relationships involve the parents putting their personal feelings aside in favor of giving their child what they need emotionally and physically.

Our Health Matters™ (OHM) is always seeking people whose personal stories reflect perseverance, resilience, love and hope. For me, this article about

Brian and Whitney, the parents of three-year-old Luna, highlights just how important it is to put a child first. Brian and Whitney eloquently share where their priorities lie. Not being together as a couple hasn't hindered them from forging ahead to make sure their daughter has a wholesome, happy and balanced life.

The following highlights their actions to put their daughter, Luna, first.

OHM: What contributed to your decision to co-parent your daughter?

Brian: I grew up in a family where my parents did not get along. I remember the arguments, and I knew that I did not want that for Luna. Luna was brought

My goal has always been to make decisions that I will still feel good about 5, 10, 15 years down the road, when our daughter has questions. - Whitney

> into this world out of love, and just because Whitney and I did not work out does not mean Luna should suffer for it. I wanted our daughter to never feel like a mistake or a burden in our lives. Luna is the best thing to happen to us!

> Whitney: Our decision to co-parent Luna was based on our mutual respect and love for one another; it was a conscious choice, and one that we continue to make as Luna gets older. Brian and I both come from loving families and understood the importance of providing a strong family for our Luna. We wanted her to understand that we loved her most, that any challenge we faced was worth it to provide her a stable, loving childhood and family system.

OHM: What challenges did you have to overcome?

Brian: The biggest challenge I would say is when either one of us has a different belief, agenda, or idea on something. We are learning in certain situations that it's give and take and the willingness to be open-minded. Bottom line, no matter what it is as long as it's the best for Luna, that is the way we'll approach things. In the end, it's worth it to see Luna happy.

Whitney: Luna was born right at the beginning of shutdown during the pandemic in March 2020. We had navigated our breakup earlier that year, in January, and had come to an understanding about how her birth and early parenting would look. However, the pandemic turned all our plans upside-down. We had to make difficult decisions about her delivery and quarantine that were wildly different from what anyone could've predicted.

OHM: Did you seek the assistance of a counselor or third party? If so, why and what type?

Brian: I personally talked to other parents in similar situations. My sister-in-law has two daughters from a previous marriage. She was a huge help. Alissa expressed things that she wished she would've done earlier and differently. I had conversations with both my parents to get as many points of views as possible. In the end, I realized it was taking a little bit of everything and adjusting it to my situation and desire. Just because it works for one couple does not mean it will work for another. It is about learning every step of the way and truly putting effort into the relationship.

Whitney: I consulted a lawyer to help us with the difficult process of custody and family courts. It was helpful to have an outside person's perspective during the process, because they are able to see beyond fleeting emotions or reactions that may cloud a person's judgement. Many people tried to help with their advice, but it's better to get the facts straight from someone who understands how the system truly works.

OHM: How similar or different is your "vision" for your daughter's future?

Brian: Our vision for our daughter has its differences in the smaller details such as: Whitney danced as a kid, and I played sports. So of course, I want her to play sports. We just want Luna to be happy and do whatever makes her happy. Whether that is dance, sports, or being a standup comedian, I know both of us will be there supporting Luna no matter what she chooses.

Whitney: We both want Luna to be happy and loved. We are open to whoever she decides to be and whatever

paths she'll take to get there. One of the things I appreciate most about Brian—he's open-minded about Luna's future and only wants the best for her.

OHM: What priorities have you agreed on and are satisfied with?

Brian: The plan we have in place is designed for all of us to spend time with each other. Life changes, and so does our plan. When things come up, we immediately talk to one another to get on the same page. I am proud of us for how hard we have worked on our plan. We want nothing but the best for Luna, so we adjust when needed.

Whitney: A big priority we agree on is that Luna should spend time with both of our families. We do our best to make sure that she sees both sides of her family for every major holiday. We spend lots of time with our own families when we have Luna, and we also make it a priority to spend time with the three of us (Mom, Dad, and Luna) when we do drop-offs and pickups throughout the week. Luna regularly sees us sitting at the table, drinking coffee, and catching up about her school day or family time. I'm really happy that Luna sees us as a family, even if it looks different from the traditional nuclear family.

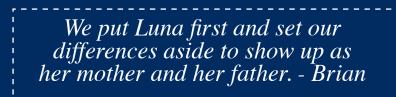
OHM: How is Luna adjusting to two different households?

Brian: Luna has adjusted to living in two different households really well. She knows "momma's house" and "dada's house." Whitney and I are fortunate to have our parents help with picking Luna up from school and watching her until one of us gets off of work. It truly does take a tribe to raise a child, and I could not be the father I am today without the help of Luna's grandparents.

Whitney: Luna is a happy girl, and I'd like to think it is in large part because of the communication across our households. Because we are in regular communication, we have the opportunity to provide her with the same goals and expectations. It can be harder at times, because transitions are already tricky for this age! Some days she is grumpy about going back and forth between homes, but her father and I are a united front and support one another during those times.

OHM: What advice would you give other parents facing the challenge of co-parenting?

Brian: The best advice I can give is put your pride aside and have open communication. This is a twoway street, and it only works when both parents work together and respect one another. It's easy to get



mad and be selfish, but that hurts the child. I am so proud of what Whitney and I have accomplished. It is all because of the love we have for Luna. We put Luna first and set our differences aside to show up as her mother and her father.

Whitney: My best advice is to "think big picture," not the "right now" feelings of co-parenting. My goal has always been to make decisions that I will still feel good about 5, 10, 15 years down the road, when our daughter has questions. And of course, I want others to know that we are human, we make mistakes, and we carry on. Forgiveness and grace, for ourselves and our co-parent is very important!

It is **Our Health Matters**' hope that every parent who finds themselves at the crossroads of deciding what is best for their children will borrow a few takeaways from Brian and Whitney. It's true children are our future, and they need parents who are physically and mentally healthy and committed to making their child's future as successful as it can be.



Comforting Children With Vaccine Appointments

Children's Mercy Kansas City works to comfort children before needle procedures like routine vaccines or blood work, and they're sharing ways parents can help prepare kids.

- TELL KIDS AHEAD OF TIME. Parents often ask if they should tell their child they'll get a vaccine before the appointment – yes! As a parent, you know your child best. Lean on past experiences to decide how far in advance to tell your child they will be getting a vaccine.
- CHOOSE THE RIGHT WORDS. Words can have different

With back to school and flu immunizations on the horizon, many children may experience anxiety or discomfort around vaccinations.

owers les.

meanings. Children can hear a word and be confused or not understand the way it was meant. Try to say poke instead of shot, as it helps to clearly share what they may feel.

• LET KIDS TAKE PART. Children as young as one can participate in their health care practices. When a child chooses parts of their procedure, like which arm to receive the vaccine, a numbing technique or a comfort position, it provides a sense of control and helps them cope with future health care events.

may help.

AGE O to 12 Months	WAYS TO NUMB Try a cold spray or a ShotBlocker® to help distract pain signals to the brain. Breastfeeding or sugar water on a pacifier also helps children feel less pain.	COMFORTING POSITION Swaddle or hold your child during the poke to help them feel close to you.	USE A DISTRACTION Books, music, toys with noise, singing, cooing and making eye contact.
1-5 Years Old	Try a cold spray or a ShotBlocker® to help distract pain signals to the brain.	Having your child sit upright will let the child feel a sense or control. Or hold your child in your lap and keep them still.	Pop up books, music, light up toys. Help them take deep breaths, pretend to smell flower or blow out birthday candles.
6-18 Years Old	Try a cold spray or a ShotBlocker® to help distract pain signals to the brain.	Having your child sit upright will let the child feel a sense or control. Hold or be next to your	Phones, music, video games or talking to your child about an upcoming special event

child, or if they are older, ask

them what position feels best.

ACE

Keeping kids as healthy as possible is about more than ER visits and diagnosing rare diseases. We want to be there for your parenting questions, from the breakfast table to your biggest fears. Because when we partner together, we can clear new paths for every child's potential. Learn more at childrensmercy.org/imagine.



Because T've got Someone to be.

Imagine the Potential



Children's Mercy

Important Reasons to Vaccinate Your Child

Immunizations can save your child's life.

veryone knows about the importance of car seats, baby gates and keeping firearms and medicines away from children. Along with injury prevention, parents need to make sure their children have all required vaccinations.

Advances in medical science have helped to protect against more diseases than ever before. Some diseases that once injured or killed thousands of children have been eliminated completely, and others are close to extinction primarily due to safe and effective vaccines. Polio was once America's most-feared disease, causing death and paralysis across the country, but today, thanks to vaccination, there are no reports of polio in the United States.

Vaccinations are safe and effective.

Vaccines are given to children only after a long and careful review by scientists, doctors and healthcare professionals. Vaccines will involve some discomfort and may cause pain, redness or tenderness at the site of injection, but this is minimal compared to the pain, discomfort and trauma of the diseases these vaccines prevent. Serious side effects following vaccination, such as severe allergic reaction, are very rare. The diseaseprevention benefits of getting vaccines are much greater

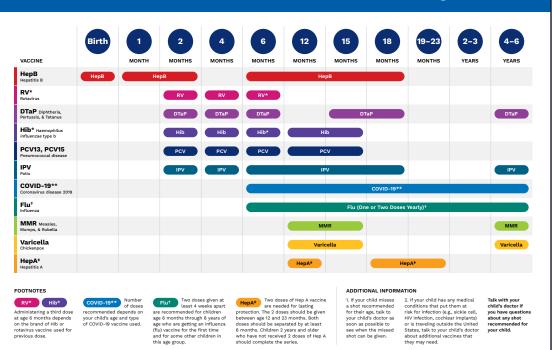
IF WE CONTINUE VACCINATING NOW, AND VACCINATING COMPLETELY, PARENTS IN THE FUTURE MAY BE ABLE TO TRUST THAT SOME DISEASES OF TODAY WILL NO LONGER BE AROUND TO HARM THEIR CHILDREN IN THE FUTURE.

than the possible side effects for almost all children. This not only protects your family, but also helps prevent the spread of these diseases to your friends and loved ones. Check with your child's pediatrician to stay up-to-date on immunizations.

For more information about the importance of infant and adolescent immunization, visit www.cdc. gov/vaccines.

Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) https://www.hhs.gov/ immunization/get-vaccinated/for-parents/ five-reasons/index.html

2023 Recommended Immunizations for Children from Birth Through 6 Years Old



KEY

2023 Recommended Immunizations for Children 7-18 Years Old

	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	KEY
	YEARS	YEARS	YEARS	YEARS	YEARS	YEARS	YEARS	YEARS	YEARS	YEARS	YEARS	YEARS	Indicates when the vaccine is recommended for all children
RECOMMENDED VACCIN	NES												unless your doctor tells you th your child cannot safely receiv
COVID-19* Coronavirus disease 2019						cov	D-19*						the vaccine.
Flu**	Flu (One	e or Two es Yearly)**					Flu (One D	ose Yearly)					•
Influenza	Dos	es real ty)											Indicates the vaccine series c begin at this age.
Tdap Tetanus, Diphtheria, & Pertussis					To	ap							
HPV [†] Human papillomavirus					н	oV†							Indicates the vaccine should it
													given if a child is catching up missed vaccines. A vaccine se
MenACWY Meningococcal disease					Mer	ACWY				MenACWY			does not need to be restarted regardless of the time that ha
MenB											MenB		elapsed between doses.
Meningococcal disease										<i></i>	MenB		
CATCHING UP ON MISS	ED CHILDH	100D VACCI	NATION [#]										Indicates children not at incre
MMR Measles,													risk may get the vaccine if the wish after speaking to a provi
Mumps, & Rubella						м	MR						wish area speaking to a provi
Varicella						Var	icella						ADDITIONAL INFORMATIO
Chickenpox													 If your child misses a shot recommended for their age, ta to your child's doctor as soon possible to see when the miss
HepA Hepatitis A						н	epA						
НерВ													shot can be given.
Hepatitis B						H	epB						If your child has any medica conditions that put them at ri
IPV						IPV							for infection or is traveling out the United States, talk to your child's doctor about additiona vaccines that they may need.
Polio						IPV							
ONLY IN PLACES WHER	RE DENGUE	IS COMMO	N — MUST I	nave a labor:	atory test c	onfirming p	ast dengue i	nfection					Talk with your child's doctor i
Demonster							ngue	1					you have questions about any recommended for your child.
Dengue						Del	ngue						

If your child misses a shot recommended for their age, talk to your child's doctor as soon as possible to see when the missed shot can be given.

If your child has any medical conditions that put them at risk for infection (e.g., sickle cell, HIV infection, cochlear implants) or is traveling outside the United States, talk to your child's doctor about additional vaccines that they may need. Talk with your child's doctor if you have questions about any shot recommended for your child.

SOURCE: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules; www.hhs.gov/immunization/ get-vaccinated/for-parents/five-reasons/index.html

Understanding Juvenile or Type 1 Diabetes (T1D)

f your child has been diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, you probably have questions. It usually develops in children, teens, and young adults, but it can happen at any age. Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease that strikes both children and adults suddenly. It has nothing to do with diet or lifestyle. There is nothing you can do to prevent it. And, at present, there is no cure. Sometimes, kids don't have diabetes symptoms yet, and the condition is discovered when blood or urine tests are done for another reason.

What Is Type 1 Diabetes?

People who have type 1 diabetes can't use glucose (the body's main type of sugar) for energy because their body has stopped making the hormone insulin. Normally, after we eat, the amount of glucose in the blood (blood sugar) goes up. When it does, the pancreas (the organ that produces digestive juices and insulin, as well as other hormones that affect digestion) sends insulin into the blood. Insulin works like a key that opens the doors of the body's cells to let the glucose in, giving the cells the energy they need.

Without insulin, blood sugar can't get into cells and stays in the blood. It builds up in the bloodstream, which

leads to high blood sugar. Having too much sugar in the blood isn't healthy and can cause problems. Some problems happen quickly and need treatment right away, while others develop over time and show up later in life. Having a family history of T1D puts people at higher risk of developing the disease.

Symptoms may include:

- Being very thirsty
- Urinating often
- Feeling very hungry or tired
- Losing weight without trying
- Having sores that heal slowly
- Having dry, itchy skin
- Losing the feeling or having tingling in your feet
- Having blurry eyesight

Make an appointment to see your child's doctor if they start to experience any of these symptoms. A blood test called the A1C can check to see if a child has diabetes, and if so, how well they are managing it.

Sources: www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/ what-is-type-1-diabetes; www.jdrf.org/ t1d-resources/about/

kc**healthykids**

Give Mindful Eating a Try



By Shelby Mocherman, LMSW, KC Healthy Kids

indful eating is a habit that can help kids and adults slow down and listen to their bodies. Listening to our bodies helps us know when our bellies feel full or if they are "out of fuel." It also helps us better understand what types of foods our bodies like and need. Mindful eating can encourage kids to develop

lifelong healthy eating habits, focus and emotional regulation when practiced regularly.

In his 2017 article, *Mindful Eating: The Art of Presence While You Eat*, Joseph B. Nelson says mindful eating means using all of our five senses and paying attention to our food on purpose, moment by moment, and without judgment.

How Do We Practice Mindful Eating?

To practice mindful eating, we can think about where our food comes from (source) and explore each of our senses (sound, sights, touch, smell taste), while eating purposefully. Try asking these questions at snack or meal times.

Source: We encourage kids to think about where their food comes from. (Think about how the food got from the farm to our plate. Imagine who put the seed in the ground and made sure it got the water and sun it needed.)

Sound: What does it sound like when we are preparing this food? Is our food making any sounds before we get ready to eat? (Think "sizzles in the pan.")

Sight: What does the food look like? What colors and shapes do we see? (Maybe a purple eggplant with flecks of white.)

Touch: How does this food feel in our hands? What is the texture of this food? Before chewing, how does this food feel on our tongue? (Such as a piece of lettuce that feels cold and crunchy.)

Smell: What does our food smell like? Is it a familiar

indful eating is a smell, or a new smell? (Something smells sweet, like habit that can help warm spices!)

Taste: How does this food taste? Does the taste change as you chew it? What happens in your body as you eat the food? (At first it tastes salty, but perhaps there is a bitter after taste.)

These kinds of serve-and-return interactions have a positive impact that can last a lifetime.



About KC Healthy Kids

KC Healthy Kids connects communities to close health gaps. We invest in community education, local and regional advocacy and direct support. Our work addresses systemic obstacles through solutions-based focus areas of youth advocacy, food policy, mental health, local food and active communities for kids and their families.

MENTAL HEALTH

Can Lead to Serious Mental Health Consequences

CBT Skills to Heal from the Personal & Intergenerational Trauma of Racism

AN INSTANT HELP SOCIAL JUSTICE BOOK FO

THE

RACIAL TRAUMA

HANDBOOK

FOR TEENS

TÁMARA HILL, LPC Foreword by Erlanger A. Turner, PhD

acial trauma can cause a lot of anxiety when it isn't addressed properly. It can also lead to something more serious like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which is a condition of persistent mental and emotional stress that occurs as a result of injury or severe psychological shock. It typically involves disturbance of sleep and constant vivid recall of the experience.



By Támara Hill MS, NCC, CCTP, LPC

The brain responds to racism by activating certain parts of the brain to act like a flashlight. The amygdala, a part of the brain that is primarily associated with emotional processes, responds to emotional triggers such as racism, bad memories, dreams or being bullied. It does this by constantly searching your environment to see if anything could potentially harm you.

Research from the American Psychological Association (2021) reported that racial trauma can cause inattention, anxiety and anger for anyone who experiences it. I see teens who experience racial trauma frequently in public places, at school, in extracurricular activities, and even in their own families.

Some areas we work on include:

1. Having open communication. Internalizing thoughts and feelings and not talking to a trusted adult can make it difficult for teens to cope in a healthy way.

2. Learning about racism. Learning about how racism impacts other people, where it started, and why it exists is a great way to validate the experience of racism.

THE RACIAL TRAUMA HAI

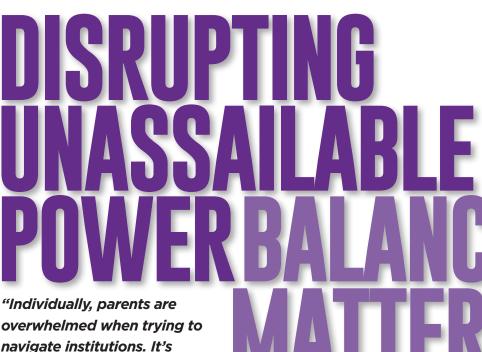
- **3. Normalizing the experience.** Most teens fear no one will understand them when they are the victims of racism. Understanding they are not alone can truly be healing.
- 4. Understanding the source. When teens believe they are the reason for the racism, it becomes more difficult to heal.

The American Psychological Association recommends the following to protect one's mental health:

- Tap into social support and connection. Lean on friends and family and participate in culturally affirming activities. Connect with your faith community, neighbors or other support networks.
- Let yourself feel hope. While it can be difficult to tap into hope at such times, it's important to acknowledge small signs of change and believe that those small changes will lead to something better.
- Seek therapy. If you are struggling, talk to a racial trauma-informed therapist about what you are going through. They can help you work through your feelings and strategize ways to cope.

Támara Hill, MS, NCC, CCTP, LPC., is an Internationally Licensed Child & Family Therapist & Board Certified Counselor; Certified Clinical Trauma Therapist and author of the newly released The Racial Trauma Handbook For Teens, www.anchoredinknowlege.com.

Source: American Psychological Association, www.apa.org





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Health Forward

"Individually, parents are overwhelmed when trying to navigate institutions. It's apparent that we need a strong Parent institution to neutralize the inherit power imbalance."

> — Spark Bookhart, Convener, The Parent Lab



At what point is it necessary to question educational experts' leadership? When inequities and systemic silencing of the collective parent voice in urban public education is evident, it's time to act. Spark Bookhart, founded The Parent Power Lab because he believed school systems, from legacy traditional public schools to the most innovatively designed public charter schools, vastly miss the opportunity to utilize parents to attain transformative outcomes for their children. It takes a grassroots organization such as The Parent Power Lab to disrupt the status quo by mobilizing and training parents to demand change.

POWERFUL PARENT TEAMS

Parents are powerful; they're just not organized. The Parent Power Lab helps parents in the Kansas City Public School region to release the Power that is already present.

WHAT DOES THE PARENT POWER LAB DO?

The Parent Power Labs build Parents' leadership capacity by facilitating a series of Parent training modules: Jump Start Training, PowerBOOST Training and the Parent Organizing Institute. After training, Parent participants go on to build strong teams called Parent Power Circles. Parent Power Circles research, author and advance transformative school policy at the school level and system wide.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, EMAIL INFO@PARENTPOWERLAB.COM AND VISIT: WWW.PARENTPOWERLAB.COM 2804 CHERRY STREET, KANSAS CITY, MO 64108 (816) 226-7327



2-STEP CHICKEN SERVING SIZE | MAKES 4 SERVINGS

The ultimate in simplicity, this recipe calls for chicken and cream of chicken soup. Pair it with a salad or roasted mixed vegetables for a colorful dinner. Even better, 2-step around the kitchen while it is heating up, getting some physical activity while you cook!

INGREDIENTS

- > tablespoon vegetable oil > 1 can (10 oz) cream of chicken soup, reduced sodium
- > 2 boneless chicken breasts > 1/2 cup water

Nutrients Amount
Total Calories154
Total Fat7g
Saturated Fat 1g
Cholesterol 45mg
Sodium 476mg
Carbohydrates6g
Dietary Fiber 0g

Total SugarsOg
Added Sugars included Og
Protein17g
Vitamin DN/A
Calcium 17mg
Iron 1mg
Potassium152mg

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Heat oil in a skillet at a medium-high setting.
- 2. Add chicken and cook for ten minutes.
- 3. Remove chicken from pan and set aside.
- 4. Stir the soup and water together in the skillet and heat it to a boil.
- 5. Return the chicken to the skillet. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for an additional 10 minutes, or until the chicken reaches an internal temperature of 165 °F.

NOTES

This recipe uses reduced sodium cream of chicken soup.

Source: Simple Healthy Recipes Oklahoma Nutrition Information and Education, ONIE Project

Understanding Childhood Cancers

aving cancer brings many changes to a child's life. You can help your child by keeping her life as normal as possible.

A cancer diagnosis is upsetting at any age, but especially so when the patient is a child. It's natural to have many questions, such as who should treat my child? Will my child get well? What does all of this mean for our family? Not all questions have answers, but the following information provides a starting point for understanding the basics of childhood cancer.

Types of Children's Cancer

In the United States in 2023, an estimated 9,910 new cases of cancer will be diagnosed among children from birth to 14 years, and about 1,040 children are expected to die from the disease. Although cancer death rates for this age group have declined by 70% from 1970 through 2020, cancer remains the leading cause of death from disease among children.

The most common types of cancer diagnosed in children ages 0 to 14 years are leukemias (cancer of the body's blood-forming tissues, including the bone marrow and the lymphatic system), brain and other central nervous system tumors, and lymphomas (cancers that start in cells that are part of the body's immune system).

Treating Childhood Cancer

The types of treatment that a child with cancer receives will depend on the type of cancer and how advanced it is. Common treatments include: surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, immunotherapy, and stem cell transplant.

Children are often treated at a children's cancer center by healthcare teams that consist of primary care physicians, pediatric oncologists/hematologists, pediatric surgical specialists, radiation oncologists, rehabilitation specialists, pediatric nurse specialists, social workers, and psychologists.

Finding support for children's cancer

Adjusting to a child's cancer diagnosis and finding ways to stay strong is challenging for everyone in a family. The National Cancer Institute (NCI) offers information on supporting families when a child has cancer, such as talking with children about their cancer and preparing them for changes they may experience. They suggest ways to help siblings cope and provide steps parents can take when they need support, and tips for working with the health care team.

Source: National Institutes of Health - National Cancer Institute, nih.gov www.cancer.gov/types/ childhood-cancers

Because everyone deserves to breathe easier this summer.

Air pollution can cause a variety of problems in healthy adults, including chest pains, coughing, nausea, throat irritation and difficulty breathing. Exposure to high levels of pollution is especially harmful to children, older adults and people with asthma and other respiratory diseases.



Help keep your family and friends healthy this summer:

- Follow the SkyCast at AirQKC.org for the daily ozone pollution forecast.
- When elevated pollution levels are predicted, consider scheduling outdoor activities before 10 a.m. or after 7 p.m.
- Tell your child's caregivers about the SkyCast and health risks of air pollution.

- Provide support to seniors, children and those with respiratory problems such as asthma or emphysema, as they are most often affected by air pollution.
- Help keep our air clean.
 Walk, bike, carpool or ride the bus to reduce emissions.

Clean Air • We've got this! @ AirQKC.org





KEEPING FAMILIES CLOSE Ronald McDonald House Charities of Kansas City gives a family with a sick child what they need most — each other.

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Kansas City (RMHC-KC) serves families who have critically sick children seeking care at local hospitals. They have three Houses and two Ronald McDonald Family Rooms, totaling 91 bedrooms that keep families together during their most critical, stressful and vulnerable moments.

The families staying at RMHC-KC each night have babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) or children battling pediatric cancer, organ transplants, major surgeries or other often life-threatening medical issues. In addition to their 91 bedrooms, 87 of which are located on Hospital Hill, they often rent hotels to accommodate families when their rooms on campus are full. The additional four bedrooms are located inside Overland Park Regional Medical Center, serving families with a baby in the NICU.

The majority of the families (93%) served at RMHC-KC have a patient at Children's Mercy Hospital, but RMHC-KC serves families with children at all area hospitals, including University of Kansas Medical Center, St. Luke's, Advent, Ability KC and at their four-bedroom NICU-focused House inside Overland Park Regional. The average family stays nine nights, but many are there for months.

RMHC-KC strives to take care of as many of a family's needs as possible. This includes providing transportation, meals, clothing, hygiene products, activities, haircuts, emotional support and other resources that alleviate the burden of battling severe childhood illness.

Currently, family requests to stay are greater than at any time in the organization's 42-year history. Last year, RMHC-KC served over 5,000 families. This year, they're on pace to serve more than 6,000.

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Kansas City relies on the support of the community to help families. To learn about volunteer opportunities and ways to support, visit: www.rmhckc.org. If there were a vaccine against cancer, wouldn't you get it for your kids?

HPV vaccine is cancer prevention. Talk to the doctor about vaccinating your 11–12 year old sons and daughters against HPV.

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/teens



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention





SECOND EDITION • NOVEMBER 2023

HEALTH COMMUNITY AND HOPE

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Health Forward

SWODEHEALTH

Our Health Matters and **Swope Health Center** invite you to join the conversation as we present the **2ND EDITION** of **Black Men Speak: HEALTH, COMMUNITY and HOPE** this November.

Sponsors receive broad exposure and will be counted among invaluable partners, all working to support and improve the life and health of Black men and boys in the Kansas City region.

To request SPONSORSHIP and ADVERTISING information email your request to: Ruth Ramsey, Publisher at: ruthramsey@kcourhealthmatters.com or call 816-361-6400 | www.kcourhealthmatters.com

JERON L. RAVIN, CEO, SWOPE HEALTH | 2ND EDITION, EDITORIAL DIRECTOR RUTH RAMSEY, PUBLISHER, OUR HEALTH MATTERS

OCTOBER 2023 Women's Health and Wellness Edition

According to the National institutes of Health, stroke affects 55,000 more women than men each year. Women face unique health concerns across their lifespan. According to the CDC, Black women are three times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than white women.

In the October 2023 issue, we feature trending studies, news and information about some of the most prevalent health issues impacting women across their life span. Learn what healthcare providers and organizations are doing to provide culturally competent care, improve health equity and eliminate health disparities. We also share resources to support women's health and wellness needs.

#womenshealthmatters

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IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, CALL 911.

CALL 988: Every person nationwide can dial "988" to reach trained crisis counselors who can help in a mental health, substance use or suicide crisis.

CALL 211: United Way 211 is our city's 24/7 connection to agencies and resources for anyone in a time of need. Calling 211 connects individuals to free and confidential help—from basic needs to mental health resources to utility assistance and more.