



# NEWSLETTER

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WISDOM

### The Gift of Problem Solving

*The next time one of your children tosses you a problem, experiment with the following steps:*

- 1. Provide a strong and sincere dose of empathy.*
- 2. Lovingly hand the problem back. "What do you think you will do?"*
- 3. Ask if they would like to hear what other people have tried. If they say no, tell them to let you know if they change their mind.*
- 4. Provide a brief menu of ideas and help them evaluate each.*
- 5. Allow them to learn from solving or not solving the problem.*

## School's done! Now what?

Congratulations! You made it to summer! The stresses of making sure your child's assignments were completed, communicating with teachers, and learning Google classroom that were thrust upon you about three months ago are now behind you.

This doesn't mean that summer won't bring new challenges. This summer is going to look and feel a bit different from what may have been envisioned back in February as we deal with the disappointment of cancellations of trips, vacations, camps, and other traditions. We might be holding summer camps in our living room and having "staycations" on our deck. This is indeed a stressful time in history.

In this edition of the BSF Newsletter, we bring you some fun and healthy ideas for you to share with your family - along with some ways for you to celebrate Dad or any father figure for this Father's Day. We're also sharing insight about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and what can be done to support an individual who has experienced trauma or toxic stress in their life.

Here's to making the best of things during these trying times!

## Landmark ACE Study points to long-term implications of trauma

This month, we will be sharing information about the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Study and its potential impact on public health. The findings from this study may be the largest health discovery of our time!

*...the study showed that people who had experienced significant trauma during childhood were more likely to face health and social problems in their lifetime.*

The "ACE Study," which began in the 1990s and lasted 20 years with over 17,000 people, was a research project conducted by epidemiologists at the Centers for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente, a managed care consortium in San Diego. The study was designed to determine how traumatic childhood events can have lifetime effects, especially when exposure to ACEs occurs during sensitive periods of development.

ACEs are defined as "frequent or prolonged exposure to experiences that create toxic stress that can damage the developing brain and can affect overall health." So what exactly constitutes ACEs? For the purpose of the research project, the effects of child abuse and neglect, as well as exposure to domestic violence, parental mental illness, substance use disorders and incarceration, were studied.

In a nutshell, the study showed that people who had experienced significant trauma during childhood were more likely to face health and social problems in their lifetime. In fact, the greater the number and intensity of adverse experiences, the greater the likelihood of developing problems. The study also showed that the negative effects of ACEs can be inter-generational, passing from parents to their children and grandchildren.

**Continued on Page 2**

**Words of Wisdom:**

# The ‘pillars’ of building resilience in children

“Kids are resilient.” Most likely, you have heard or even used this phrase more than once in your life. It is a saying that can provide us comfort in times of trauma or crisis. It’s often used as a reminder of hope in times of uncertainty.

There is a lot of truth to the saying, “kids are resilient.” But how? Are they just resilient because “life goes on?” Aren’t we being a bit dismissive if we are solely relying on nature to take effect?

To be resilient means the individual is doing better than expected for whatever they have endured or are enduring. In order to “bounce back” or to have resilience, people need an adult in their life who believes in them unconditionally and holds them to expectations of being compassionate, generous and creative.

As parents and caregivers, it is important to find ways to provide support to those in our care during these trying times. Community Resilience Initiative offers the following “pillars” to promote resilience:

**Celebrations:** Family celebrations have been identified as powerful ways to provide stability during times of stress and transition. Reasons for celebrations could include achievements, surviving another week of quarantine, “graduating” to the next level of

school, or even the pet’s birthday. Be creative and have fun with it!

**Affirmations:** The support of a caring, affirming adult is one of the strongest protective factors to help individuals rise above their circumstances. Be sure to give yourself affirmations as well! Words of affirmation can include: You worked so hard on that! You did great! You tried hard. I’m proud of you. You are so good at that. I’m here if you need me and am willing to support you in any way I can. You look great!

**Regulation:** Our nervous systems are influenced by our experiences. So finding ways to regulate how we respond to experiences is important to our mental and physical well-being. Approaches to Regulation can include physical exercise, practicing mindfulness, finding a partner to call on when you need to calm down or find focus (this could even be a pet!)

**Expectations:** Setting clear expectations allows individuals to feel more confident, engaged and connected to the family. Using Love and Logic® strategies is a great way to set and stay consistent with expectations.

**Education:** Educate all family members about the findings of brain science and the connection between emotional, physical, and psychological reactions to trauma.

Knowledge is a powerful tool!

**Restoration:** Communicate with family members to address grievances or conflicts in the family. Family meetings, talking things over when everyone is calm, and using lots of empathy are important pieces in the resilience puzzle.

Of course, creating resilient kids isn’t a one size fits all solution. Finding various ways to connect with your family members will help you figure out which strategy is helpful for their personal needs. Keep striving, and they will know they have a supportive person in their life. This support has the potential to make a giant impact on their future!

If you would like to learn more about the Community Resilience Initiative, visit [CRIresilient.org](http://CRIresilient.org).



WISDOM

## The Gift of Problem Solving

*When we solve all of our children's problems, they become insecure and resentful. When we guide them toward solving their own problems, they become secure and more respectful.*

## ACE Study

**From Page 1**

So what does this information mean for us? As Dr. Robert Anda, one of the two principal investigators of this study said, “What is predictable is preventable.” As a community, we must do a better job at preventing adverse childhood experiences by better identifying struggling families and provide support they need to prevent ACEs. As parents, we must first understand that ACEs can be long lasting. Even if children who have experienced significant trauma are acting ‘normal’ today, it does not mean that they have not been affected.

Children impacted by trauma need to have a caring and competent adult to talk to about the experience(s) and their feelings. As a parent, you can help them understand that there is nothing wrong with them, but that something wrong happened to them. This will help the child better understand his/her reactions, and be more open to learning healthy ways of coping and regulating their emotions.

While ACEs can have lasting, negative impacts, resiliency can lessen the effects of trauma. Resiliency occurs as a result of the accumulation of protective factors— and a loving, competent parent/caregiver is the greatest protective factor of all!

Much has been discovered about ACEs and resiliency in the past two or three decades. Stay tuned for next month’s issue to learn more about the 40 Developmental Assets to build resiliency in your children.

## BSF Feedback

Do you have feedback or parenting questions? Email Leslie at [lbeasley@nrvc.org](mailto:lbeasley@nrvc.org) or Caroline at [csnullins@nrvc.org](mailto:csnullins@nrvc.org).



The Building Strong Families newsletter is published by NRVCS Community Wellness & Outreach

# A creative way to avoid being bored

It's officially summer break!

It was a bit of an anticlimactic transition from school to summer, but we should celebrate nonetheless!

Create a Summer Bucket List or a "Corona Kit" with your family to help beat boredom and summertime blues! Use a jar or a bucket to put all of your ideas into and write each idea on either a Popsicle stick, craft stick, or piece of paper.

Each day, or each time your family is feeling bored or without direction, pull out an idea from the jar!

## Summer Bucket List Ideas

- Make a back yard obstacle course
- Pizza making night
- Movie Night (with popcorn!)
- Go on a scavenger hunt
- Go on a nature walk
- Watch home movies
- Learn a new skill from a YouTube tutorial
- Make a fairy garden
- Plant some flowers
- Family charades
- Make a birdfeeder and watch for birds
- Stargaze
- Write a letter to someone
- Learn a new card game
- Paint rocks and hide around town
- Dance party!
- Tie Dye some shirts
- Bake some cookies
- Hula hoop contest
- Wii tournament
- Have a photo shoot
- Make playdough
- Family Kickball
- Fill a box with toys to donate
- Work a puzzle
- Make fresh squeezed lemonade
- Make a smoothie



**Corona Kit created by Sam Mullins**

- Have a silly fashion show
  - Make S'mores
  - Have a water day
  - Build a fort and read books in it
  - Find a new recipe to try
  - Do a fancy restaurant night at home
  - Make a time capsule and bury it
- As you can see, the possibilities are endless! Challenge your kids to come up with their own ideas - or log your completed "bucket list" activities in a journal or scrapbook.

# In the Kitchen

## Leslie's Comfort Food Corner: Crusty Cream Cheese Poundcake

- 1 Cup Butter or Margarine (softened)
- 1/2 Cup Shortening
- 3 Cups Sugar
- 1 8 oz. Cream Cheese (softened)
- 3 Cups Sifted Cake Flour
- 6 Eggs
- 1 Tb. Vanilla

Cream butter and shortening, gradually add sugar, beating well at medium speed. Add cream cheese - beating well until light and fluffy. Alternately add flour and eggs beginning and ending with flour. Stir in vanilla.

Pour batter into a greased and floured 10" tube pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour and 15 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pan 10 minutes, remove from pan and let cool. Optional: top with powdered sugar or serve with strawberries and whipped cream.



Photo: Leslie Beasley /NRVCS

## Dee's Delicious Dish: Skillet Eggs with Sweet Potato Hash Browns

### Ingredients:

- 2 sweet potatoes or yams peeled and diced small
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil plus one teaspoon
- ¾ cup diced red bell pepper
- ¾ cup diced green bell pepper
- ½ cup red or white onion
- 2 tsp garlic minced
- 1 tsp jalapeno pepper minced, seeds removed
- ½ tsp sea salt
- 1 tsp oregano fresh chopped or ¼ tsp dried
- ½ tsp black pepper
- Pinch of paprika
- 4 eggs preferably omega-3
- 1 bag leafy greens like spinach, kale or swiss chard

1. In a large pot, bring water and salt to a boil. Add sweet potatoes or yams. Cook for 3 minutes or until slightly tender. Drain water and set aside.



Image - healthybrains.org

2. Heat ¼ cup of olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the peppers, onion, garlic, jalapeno pepper and salt. Saute for 10 minutes until vegetables are soft and slightly brown.

3. Heat the remaining olive oil in a large, nonstick skillet over medium heat. Gently

crack eggs in skillet, one at a time. Cook until the whites are set. Gently turn eggs over and cook for about 2 more minutes.

4. Spoon sweet potato hash on plates. Top with 2 eggs. Serves 2.

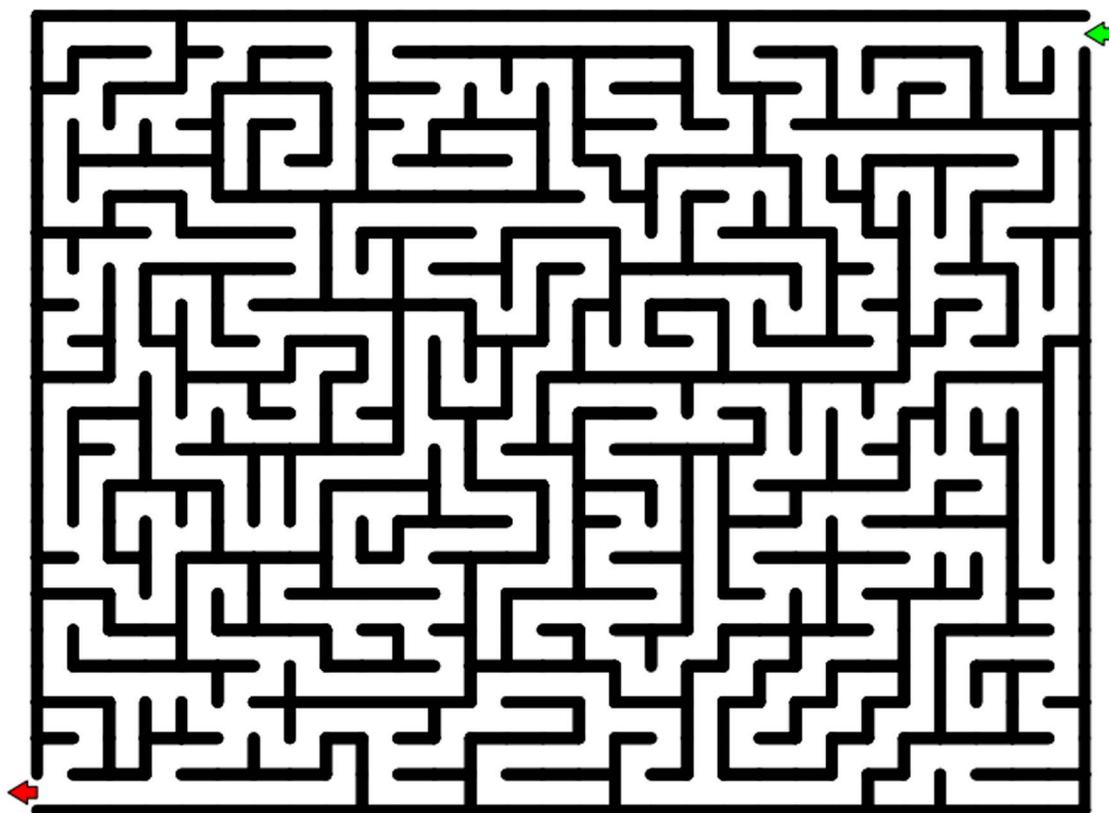
5. Sauté greens in a large skillet with a teaspoon of olive oil. Add to plate.

Recipe & photo taken from <https://healthybrains.org/skillet-eggs-with-sweet-potato-hash-browns/>

# Jenelle's Twisters & Tricksters

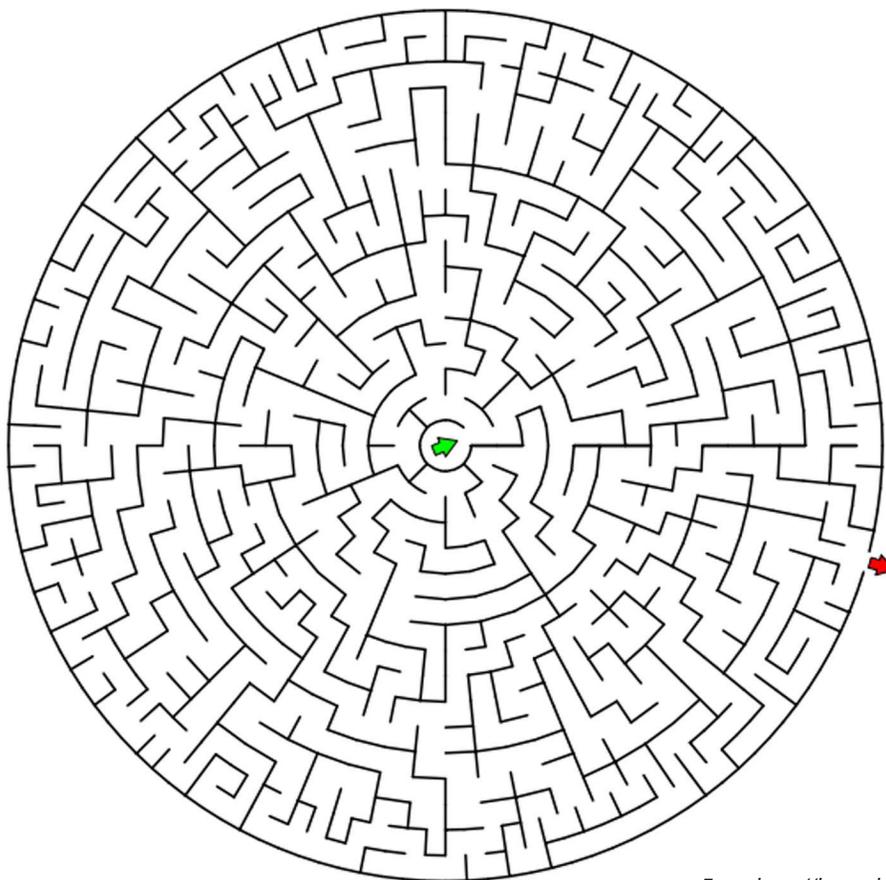
**Can you find  
your way  
through  
the maze?**

*(Start at the green arrow)*



**Looking for  
more of a  
challenge?  
Give this one  
a try!**

*(Start at the green arrow)*



From <http://krazydad.com/mazes>



# MAKE-IT-FUN with Caroline



**DAD**



His name is \_\_\_\_\_!

\* My favorite memory of my dad is:

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\* My dad is \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

\* He is so good at:

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\* This is what he ALWAYS says:

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\* When he comes home from work, he likes to:

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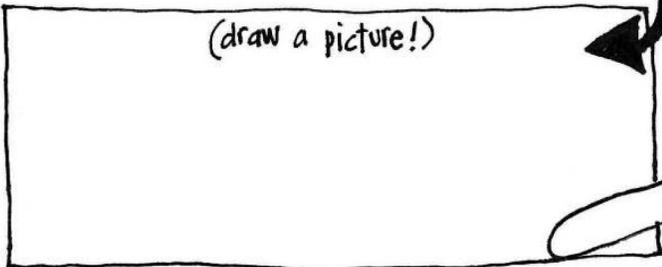
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\* Here is his favorite thing to eat

(draw a picture!)



\* This makes my dad Laugh:

\* My dad's pockets are full of:

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Learn more and stay connected with us at [nrvcs.org/bsf](http://nrvcs.org/bsf) or [facebook.com/NRVBSF](https://facebook.com/NRVBSF)

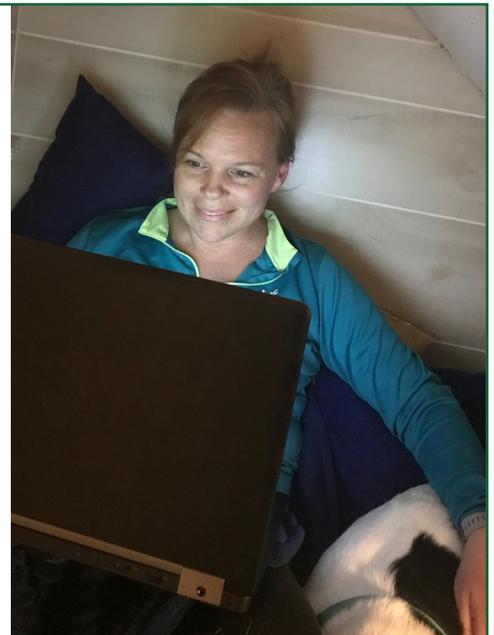
## Let's get real.

Join us live on Facebook each week for our "Real Parent Talk" sessions.

Get straightforward suggestions and answers to your parenting questions - all from the comfort of your own home.

***Get connected. We're here to help!***

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## FAMILY

"Like branches on a tree, we all *grow* in different directions. Yet *our roots* remain as one."

- Unknown