



NEWSLETTER

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Focusing on what we can control at home

To say that we are living in uncertain times would be an understatement. At this point, we are months into the COVID-19 pandemic and daily life has changed for many of us - and in a variety of ways.

Even with the start of a new school year literally just weeks away, there appear to be far more questions than answers.

At the same time, we find ourselves witnessing growing tensions across the country regarding social justice issues.

Watching the news or scrolling through social media these days can take a definite

toll on our emotional and mental well-being - and children certainly have their own questions and worries about these events.

While much of this is out of our immediate control, there are things we can do as parents and caregivers to ensure that our homes are safe, supportive and nurturing.

The recommended guidelines for personal safety and prevention of the spread of coronavirus have been well-documented. So, consider this a friendly reminder to: wear masks when you are in public places, wash your hands regularly, and maintain social distancing whenever possible.

Our team has decided to focus this month's newsletter on some of the social and behavioral issues that are common (but

perhaps more challenging given the current situation) in most homes.

You'll see that we've included a follow-up to last month's article on trauma. This time, we're highlighting resiliency and some of the internal and external assets that can help our kids grow up healthy and happy.

We also have advice on how to handle tattling - something that probably every household with more than one child experiences at some point.

The article below addresses bullying and how we can teach children to be helpers and not just bystanders.

Granted, these issues may seem insignificant given our nation's current challenges, but as we often hear, "It starts at home!"



WISDOM

The Gift of Problem Solving

Wise parents only step in when they are certain that their child has a problem that's too big or dangerous to solve on their own.

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Help your kids develop strategies for addressing bullying behavior

Have you ever witnessed an act of bullying? How did it leave you feeling? That feeling was probably dependent on the action (or inaction) you took.

Inaction can lead to helplessness. As parents, it's important for us to help our children think about how they would respond when they see bullying. Having a plan can help them cope with events as they come up.

Bullying is aggressive behavior with the intention of causing harm that happens repeatedly over time and involves an imbalance of power that makes the target feel unable to defend him/herself. Bullying behaviors can include physical and/or verbal aggression, threats, spreading lies and false rumors, and purposely excluding someone from groups or activities.

Often, when bullying begins, witnesses take on various roles. Have you heard the phrase, "If you aren't part of the solution, you are part of the problem?" While some bystanders support the bullying, data clearly shows that most children and youth do not like bullying and feel they should do something to intervene; however, they often don't know what to do. Meanwhile, the target of the bullying often feels fearful and alone, as there are so many witnesses doing nothing to help.

Finally, we have the defenders - those who dislike the bullying and stand up for the target of the aggression or report it to an adult. These defenders are part of the solution; the rest are part of the problem.

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Some suggestions on how to handle ‘tattling’

If you are the parent or care provider of a child, you have most likely been on the receiving end of a “tattle” or “report” or “telling on.”

Depending on the nature of the behavior being reported, the method of delivery (whining, yelling, crying, or just telling), and the number of tattles/reports per day, these announcements often become exhausting for the adult receiving the information. And we know what happens when we are tired, stressed, or unsure of how to stop a situation: We’re less likely to respond appropriately.

The next time you are encountered with a tattle, report, or telling-on, keep the following in mind:

Pause: Try to resist the urge to have a knee-jerk reaction. Maybe you’re a “fixer” by nature and want to “nip it” like Barney Fife would. Perhaps you have an incredible amount of empathy, and want to save the “victim,” or maybe you are so annoyed by another tattle that you tell the reporting child to handle it themselves and to stop tattling.

When confronted with childhood politics, we need to avoid these responses. By handling the problem ourselves or chastising the tattler, we are teaching the child two things: 1) You can’t solve problems on your own, or 2) Stay silent.

Do we want our kids to become adults who can’t solve problems and who stay silent?

Consider this an opportunity for learning! When you respond with a “teachable moment” attitude, you are empowering

your child to develop problem solving skills that will last a lifetime.

Lock in empathy and validate feelings. Ask, “Are you okay?” to check on their emotional state. *Allow them to have their feelings so they can learn they are capable of dealing with them.* Then ask, “Did you tell them to stop?”

Brainstorm solutions. Perhaps the “reporter” needs to confront the “offender.” You can offer support by suggesting words they could use. Encourage those involved to have a conversation.

Take the *time* to work out the problem

and find a solution. (Or save it for a family meeting!) With older or more experienced children, let them know you trust them to solve the issue and that you are willing to guide them through the process if necessary.

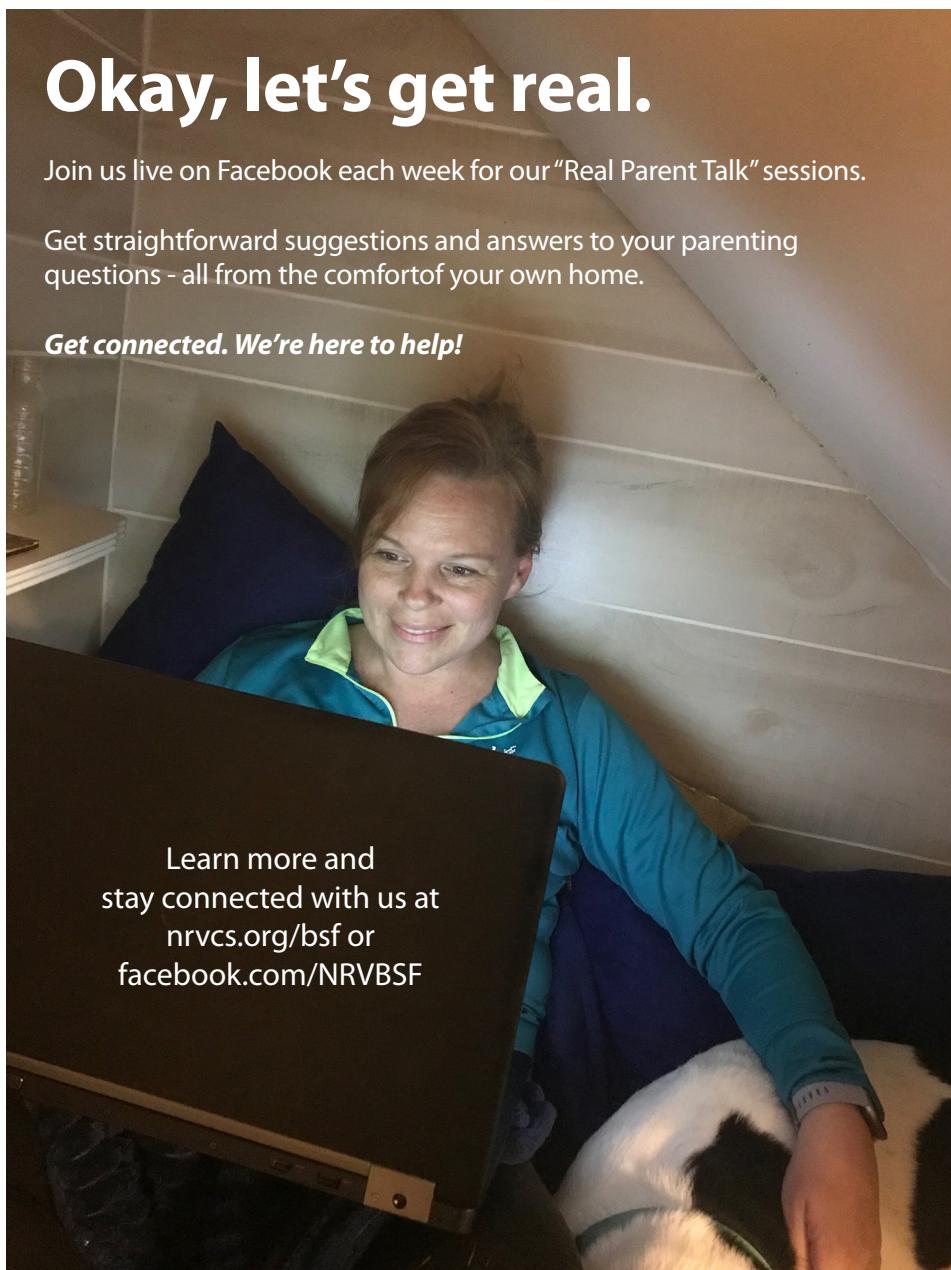
It’s often easier to solve the problem or stop the issue ourselves. But if we take time to empower our children to develop problem solving skills and focus on solutions, we are one step closer to raising a confident and capable *adult* who is willing and able to speak up when they see injustice and to find solutions effectively.

Okay, 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!



Learn more and
stay connected with us at
nrvc.org/bsf or
facebook.com/NRVBSF

BSF Feedback

Do you have feedback or parenting questions? Email Leslie at lbeasley@nrvc.org or Caroline at csnullins@nrvc.org.



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

So, what *is* resiliency?

Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from adversity, including adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and other forms

of trauma.

The Search Institute has identified Building Blocks of Healthy Development, which

includes both internal and external assets.

A summary of both internal and external assets is included below:

Internal Assets	Examples
Support	Loving and supportive family with positive communication, supportive relationships with other competent adults, a caring neighborhood and school
Empowerment	Youth feels safe, serves others, feels valued by his/her community
Boundaries & Expectations	Family, school and neighborhood have clear expectations for behavior, positive adult role models, positive peer influence, and high expectations to do well
Constructive Use of Time	Creative activities (art, music, etc.), youth programs, connection to a religious/spiritual institution, and time at home

External Assets	Examples
Commitment to Learning	Motivation to achieve, engaged in school, cares about his/her school, reads for pleasure
Positive Values	Places high value on helping others, promotes equality and social justice, is honest and responsible, has integrity and believes it's important to practice restraint to avoid alcohol and drug use and sexual activity
Social Competencies	Positive interpersonal skills, such as friendship skills, decision making, planning, ability to empathize and resolve conflict peacefully, able to resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations
Positive Identity	Has sense of power over things that happen to him/her, healthy self-esteem, feels a sense of purpose in life, is optimistic about his/her personal future

These assets provide the foundation for children and youth to grow into happy, healthy, caring, competent and successful adults. What more could a parent desire for their child?

For more information about the Search

Institute and the 40 Developmental Assets for different age groups (including FREE

downloadable resources), visit the link provided below, or at nrvcs.org/resilience.

<https://page.search-institute.org/40-developmental-assets>

Bullying

From Page 1

Bystanders can be helpful in many bullying situations:

- If you feel safe, call the behavior out: "That's bullying!" or "You just kicked him!"
- Say or do something funny that diverts the aggressor's attention away from the target.
- Walk with the target (safety in num-

bers) away from the aggressor.

- Enlist other youth to stand up to the bullying in a safe, nonviolent way.
- Report the bullying to a trusted adult.

As parents, we can prepare our children to become helpers rather than bystanders by communicating the importance of empathy and using the strategies listed above

if they witness bullying. Remind them of examples of helpful bystanders who have shown courage and made a difference.

Most importantly, model the kind of behavior you want them to develop to become part of the solution rather than the problem. Bystanders who speak out can play a key role in preventing or stopping bullying.

In the Kitchen

Leslie's Comfort Food Corner: Brownie Pizza

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

5 Foods You Need in Your Pantry

As these unprecedented times are navigated, it is important to maintain a nutritious diet at home – something that can be done with simple recipes with common, long-lasting ingredients found in your pantry. It's important to focus on shelf-stable, mix-and-match type recipes that can keep you well-fed.

Here are five 'go-to' (and inexpensive) items you should have on hand whenever possible:

Beans

Beans are great to add to your pantry because they are high in protein and fiber. They will last a long time in your pantry and are easy to add to many dishes.

Tip: Buy canned beans to reduce the amount of prep time for a meal. Rinse the canned beans with water to reduce the amount of sodium, or buy low or no salt added varieties.

Make with beans: Breakfast burritos, soups, salads

Brown Rice

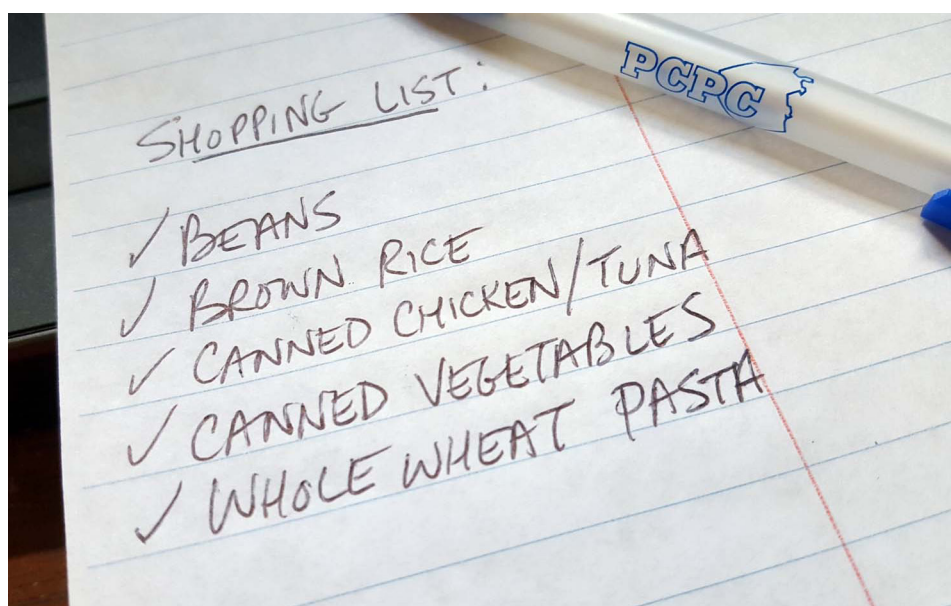
Brown rice is a healthy carb that can be used in many meals. Keep brown rice in your pantry because it stays fresh for a long time.

Tip: Get your family used to eating brown rice by mixing it with white rice.

Make with brown rice: stir-frys, side dishes, desserts

Canned Chicken/Tuna

Canned chicken/tuna is amazing to keep in your pantry for meals that need more protein. Protein is important for children's growth and development, and will keep your family full longer.



Pantry basics: Adding these pantry foods to your grocery list will help you stay within your budget, and give you peace-of-mind knowing you have healthy foods that will feed your family. (Photo: Mike Wade/NRVCS)

Tip: Buy canned chicken/tuna that is canned in water.

Make with canned chicken/tuna: dinners, burrito bowls, homemade chicken nuggets

Canned Vegetables

The daily recommended amount of vegetables is 1 to 3 cups a day. Canned vegetables will help your family meet the daily recommended amount of vegetables without having to worry about them going to waste.

Tip: Buy canned vegetables with "No Salt Added" on the label.

Make with canned vegetables: casseroles, soups, one-pan/one-pot meals

Whole Wheat Pasta

Adding whole wheat pasta to your meals will make your meals healthier, and keep your family coming back for more.

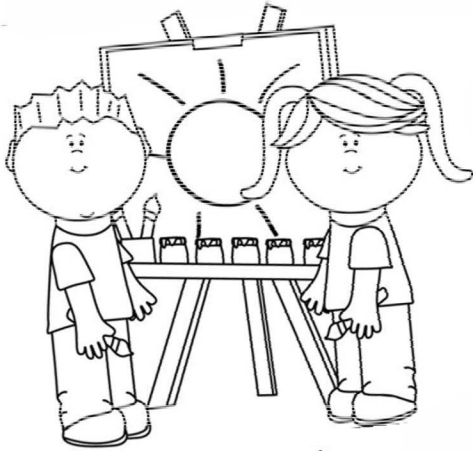
Tip: Don't add your pasta to the water until it is at a full boil. If you add it before the water is boiling, then your pasta could be under- or over-cooked.

Make with whole wheat pasta: pasta salad, lasagna, sides

Adding these pantry foods to your grocery list will help you stay within your budget, and give you peace-of-mind knowing you have healthy foods that will feed your family.

Jenelle's Twisters & Tricksters

No 'twists' or 'tricks' this time around - just color in your favorite activities!



Paint or draw



Listen to music



Count to ten



Stretch

**When I feel
upset, sad, or
disappointed, I
can...**



Give someone a
hug



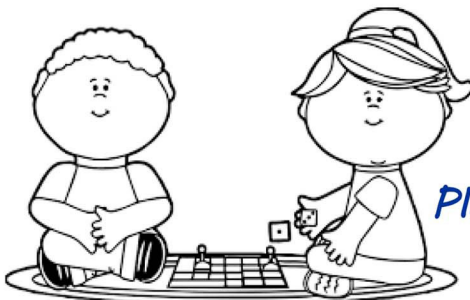
Read



Write in my journal



Go Outside



Play a game

Sources:
<https://classroomclipart.com/>
<https://www.dreamstime.com/>

MAKE FUN MEMORIES *with Caroline*

One of my favorite memories as a child was sitting beside my dad in church. He knew I was wiggly, so to keep me entertained and quiet he would find a blank spot on the back of the bulletin and draw the profile of a face. Then he would hand his pen to me so I could add on a facial feature.

This exchange happened over and over until we were both satisfied with a final and very silly product!

Here is a dice game you can use to create your own fun and silly memories:

You will need:

1 dice
Paper
Drawing utensils

How to play:

Roll the dice. Look for the number

on the dice and match it to the dice pictured in the first row. If you're on the first turn and you rolled a three on the dice, you will draw a triangle shaped face.

Continue on turn two and so on until you have completed all 6 turns.

Have fun using various colors of markers or pencils!

Post your silly face creations on our BSF Facebook page!



ROLL-A-FACE

1st Turn Face Shape						
2nd Turn Eyes						
3rd Turn Nose						
4th Turn Mouth						
5th Turn Ears						
6th Turn Hair						



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FAMILY

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

- Unknown