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ONE DAY AT A TIME

In JANUARY, renew and refresh by focusing on Health and Wellness!

Director's Corner by Suzanne Bowers -

"Welcome to 2016"

Welcome to 2016! I hope everyone has plans to make this New Year one of laughter, good health, and great memories.

As parents of students with special needs, I remind you to enjoy making new memories with your children.

There’s so many “extra” things that we do just to ensure our children get a proper education. It can be easy to get caught up in what NEEDS to be done next, instead of what we WANT to do.

Take time this year to enjoy the fun things in life and enjoy your children while they are still willing to spend time with their parents.

Our website has a Parent Involvement calendar that has ideas of fun things to do with your children every day of the month.

Modifications can be made to the activities in order to better suit your lifestyle and your child’s abilities, or you can come up with your own idea for the day.

So as we ring in 2016, I urge you to make a New Year’s resolution to take time making memories with your child that will last a lifetime!
Early Childhood Corner by Lakeshia Yancey - "Health Habits Start at Home"

It is never too early to teach your child how to lead a healthy lifestyle. The most natural way to do this is through everyday choices demonstrated by the family as a whole. Remember, children are always watching and imitating. Encouraging physical activity over screen time is a great place to start. Keep in mind that many of our children have very limited recess or outdoor time at school these days. Some students may only participate in physical education class once a week for 30-40 minutes. Ensuring that your child is able to have opportunities to develop their gross motor skills is critical for them in the long run.

Another way to promote healthiness is to enroll your child in team sports and activities. This is not only important for physical health, but mental health as well. Team sports enable children to be a part of something bigger than themselves. Through teams sports, children can learn and practice social skills and teamwork. Children who are engaged in these activities also show higher levels of self-esteem. According to the January 2016 issue of the Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, “Children develop self-esteem by age 5, much earlier than previously thought, according to new research that suggests children gain either positive or negative views of themselves before they begin formal schooling.”

Play is a very important aspect in child development. Play is the natural way in which children learn. They get to work on motor, cognitive, and social skills all while having fun. If you remember the fun of making mud pies, playing “family”, or hanging upside down from the monkey bars, then guess what; so will your kids!!

We have become a very technologically driven society, children are constantly plugged in. This can result in many negative factors, such as a child becoming overweight, not developing proper gross motor skills, and not learning how to interact with other children. It can also cause a disconnect with family members. So how can you help facilitate your child's play?

“We don’t stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.” – George Bernard Shaw
PEATC Supports Our Service Members by Lisa Wakeman - "Healthy Military Families"

The military family is as much a part of the military as the service member they so steadfastly support. Only 1% of our American population has ever served in the military and of that, roughly 130,000 active duty personnel call Virginia their temporary home. Military families serve their nation with courage, commitment and strength, but it is not without sacrifice. As we say goodbye to one year, we look to the next with hope and possibility. Wellness and nutrition must be incorporated into our daily lives – this is the key to our resiliency.

We all tend to make New Year’s resolutions that include getting in shape, eating better and exercising regularly. Wellness isn’t a goal or an end result. It’s about becoming aware and actively choosing a healthy and fulfilling life. A healthy life improves self-esteem, physical endurance, lowers stress and improves mental well-being.

For our military families:
❖ Have you heard of the 5210 Healthy Military Child Campaign? This military-wide campaign represents four behaviors that children should achieve every day to maintain health.
  • 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables
  • 2 or fewer hours of screen time
  • 1 or more hours of physical activities
  • 0 sweetened beverages
You can learn more at: http://5210.healthymilitarychildren.psu.edu/

❖ Did you know that Military Families can obtain a free annual pass for all national parks? Across America there are 410 national parks, 21 parks right here in Virginia. National Parks have something for everyone and for all abilities. Whether it’s taking a walk, going for a hike, learning to kayak, picking crabs, maybe going for a swim or fishing, our national parks offer miles and miles of outdoor activities.
You can learn at: https://store.usgs.gov/pass/military.html
You can obtain your free pass at: https://store.usgs.gov/pass/PassIssuanceList.pdf

❖ Did you know that the commissary has a wealth of information on healthy living? Topics such as healthy habits, healthy eats, resources and cooking tips are available. The website also has an entire recipe section with dishes such as Jerk-Spiced Shrimp with Spinach, Chutney Turkey Burgers, and Turkey Bacon Breakfast Burritos.
Check out all that the commissary has to offer at: https://www.commissaries.com/healthy-living/index.cfm

❖ Also, you may not have been aware that the commissary offers a program called Click 2 Go. This feature allows you to complete your grocery shopping online, select your pick up time and date. The commissary will then deliver your groceries to your vehicle curbside. Fort Lee is the only commissary in the state of Virginia that offers this service.
Find more information at: https://www.commissaries.com/click2go/index.cfm

❖ Don’t forget to check out your Moral Welfare and Recreation. Military families can obtain reduced rates for parks, activities, events and equipment rental. There are also links to all installation bowling alleys, aquatic centers, water parks, and fitness centers.

❖ Finally, each branch of Service offers a program called “Give Parents a Break”. This program was designed to give family members a short break from parenting so that they can deal with the stressful situations such as deployment, Temporary Changes of Station (TDY), those families with an ill, injured or wounded warrior, those on unaccompanied PCS, Families of the Fallen (and in the Navy’s case, other reason’s may be identified by the command). The program provides up to 16 hours of free care each month. Part of wellness is taking the time to take care of yourself!
Learn more:
Army @ http://usa.childcareaware.org/
Air Force @ http://www.afas.org/child-care-programs
Rural Perspectives by Summer Sage -
"New Year Resolutions"

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”
– Ralph Waldo Emerson

If you are like me, or most moms for that matter, part of taking stock includes a list of what I should be doing versus what I have been able to do for my family. Year after year I always have a surplus in the "should" column and seem to have very little to add to the "done" column. To be honest, the mental routine of listing my shortcomings has become such a habit that I do it without realization. It’s exhausting and doesn’t light the fire for the sorely needed energy; so why do we do it?

I can only answer for myself; I want the best for my family. We all want the best for our families and for some reason think that putting everyone else first will accomplish the task. For those of you I had the privilege of meeting this summer during the PACL trainings you may have heard me share about my own “ah ha” moment where I decided to write my own IEP, I have to tell you that it has been a life changer for me and my family. Taking the time to recognize past achievements and creating short term measurable goals for myself that effect the peace and happiness of my family sounds like a lot of work and about as practical as our annual New Year’s Resolutions but we ask the same of our children, why not us?

Instead of making resolutions this new year, I challenge you to put the same effort into you that you do your children and write a few IEP goals for yourself. I like to think of it as my Individual Expectations Plan, an opportunity to look at my strengths and build growth opportunities that lead to my own inner peace and well being as well as my family’s.

Make it fun and remember measurable and attainable goals! For example one of my new IEP (Individual Expectations Plan) goals is that 1 night out of every week will be family movie night. I know my family so I put in little notes like the following: the film should be something NEW and does not need to be watched all the way through in one sitting but must include popcorn or pizza and laughter. I tend to get too serious and it’s healthy to sit down and engage my kid in a new experience with reasonable expectations for both of us. I am not going to try to make a meal and force him to sit through a new movie and call it family fun night! I am going to expect to spend quality time with my son laughing, having a treat, and trying something new, even if we only make it through the first 15 minutes of the film.

We all have different journeys and no two paths are alike but we have to remember that it is the journey itself that we are living and taking care of YOU will determine the experience. I’d love to hear what kinds of personal goals you came up with. Email me or send them on Facebook and we can all encourage each other this New Year.

Comments or questions about this article? Please contact Summer Sage at: sage@peatc.org
Latino Corner by Arianna Sweeney

Terapia de alimentación y nutrición: Qué es y cómo funciona

No hay duda que tener una dieta saludable es buena para los niños. Cuando una dieta nutritiva se combina con ejercicios, ayuda a los niños a mantener una buena salud general. Además, ayuda a disminuir el riesgo de obesidad y condiciones como las enfermedades cardíacas y la diabetes.

Basado en estudios por expertos - Algunas personas creen que evitando ciertos alimentos y añadiendo suplementos nutricionales pueden reducir o incluso “curar” los síntomas del trastorno por déficit de atención con hiperactividad o (ADHD) por sus siglas en inglés. Esta es conocida como una terapia de alimentación y nutrición.

Existen dos tipos principales de terapias de alimentación y nutrición:

**Dietas de eliminación:** La idea detrás de estas dietas es que los síntomas del ADHD mejorará eliminando ciertos alimentos de la dieta del niño. Por ejemplo, eliminar ciertos tipos de alimentos que contienen aditivos, edulcorantes artificiales y sustancias químicas. Otras dietas de eliminación incluyen eliminar de la dieta del niño sustancias como el azúcar, la levadura o el gluten. Luego, los alimentos son añadidos gradualmente para determinar si reaparecen los síntomas del ADHD.

**Suplementos nutricionales:** La teoría detrás de este enfoque es que los niveles de ciertas vitaminas y minerales son bajos en los niños con ADHD. Los que apoyan el uso de suplementos nutricionales afirman que agregando suplementos que contienen esos elementos a la dieta de los niños mejorará los síntomas del ADHD.

La terapia de alimentación y nutrición está proporcionada por la familia ya que es ella la que está a cargo de la alimentación de sus hijos y necesita ser supervisada por un profesional para poder controlar el progreso del niño. Los padres necesitan educarse acerca los tipos de terapia de alimentación y nutrición que pueda ser la mejor opción para la dieta de sus hijos y sus síntomas. Algunas dietas son complejas y requieren que los familiares compren materiales para informarse de los detalles. Otras dietas de eliminación pueden buscarse en libros o en la Internet.

Hay puntos muy importantes que necesita tomar en cuenta, si usted piensa que su hija podría ser sensible o alérgica a ciertos alimentos, o que le falten ciertos nutrientes. Puede ser difícil asegurar que una dieta realmente funciona. Especialmente cuando los familiares quieren ver resultados y que le aporten a la dieta los cambios positivos que observan en sus hijos.

En conclusión, tener una dieta saludable es tan importante para los niños con ADHD como para cualquier otro niño. Si usted quiere probar una terapia de nutrición y alimentación, discúltelo con el doctor antes de hacer grandes cambios en la dieta de su hija. Es importante que investigue antes de comenzar cualquier terapia o tratamiento.

Food and Nutrition Therapy: What It Is and How It Works

There’s no doubt that eating a healthy diet is good for kids. When combined with exercise, a nutritious diet helps kids maintain good general health. It can also lower their risk for obesity and conditions like heart disease and diabetes.

Based on studies done by experts, some people believe avoiding certain foods and adding supplements can reduce or even “cure” the symptoms of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), this is known as food and nutrition therapy. The idea is to use food therapy instead of medication to treat symptoms such as over-activity, impulsivity, lack of self-control and short attention span.

There are two main forms of food and nutrition therapy:

**Elimination diets:** The idea is to get rid of foods containing additives that can trigger some or all ADHD symptoms, for example artificial sweeteners and other chemicals can be removed from a child’s diet. Then, certain foods are gradually added back to see if ADHD symptoms return.

**Nutritional supplements:** The theory behind this approach is that kids with ADHD have low levels of certain vitamins and minerals. Supporters claim that adding supplements that contain those elements to a child’s diet will treat symptoms of ADHD.

This kind of therapy has to be provided by the parents since it involves their child’s daily diet and supervised by a professional to control the progress. Parents need to educate themselves about the types of foods and nutrition therapy that would fit best for their children’s diet and symptoms. Some diets are complex and require parents to buy materials to get the details of the plan. Other elimination diets can be found in books or online.

There are important signs you might need to watch out for and certain foods your child may be sensitive or allergic to. It can be hard to tell if a special diet is really working but parents who want to see results may credit the diet for any positive changes they see in their children.

Bottom Line, a healthy diet is important for kids with ADHD, just as it is for all kids. If you want to try food and nutrition therapy, check with your child’s doctor before making any big changes to your child’s diet. It is very important to investigate a little before starting the therapy.
Mental Health Desk by Caroline Gendelman - "Eye on Eating Disorders & Nutrition"

The wrapping paper is picked up, company has gone home and our children are back in school. Long cold days close around us. We think about what we are putting in our bodies and what we feed our family. Many of us have made “resolutions” to clean up our family’s eating habits and shed some holiday pounds. While this can be good, there are other aspects of eating and nutrition that we should be aware of in order to keep the children who depend on us safe and healthy.

Eating disorders are a difficult and even taboo subject. They are too often misunderstood, misdiagnosed and undertreated. If a child has developmental or intellectual concerns it brings another dimension of worry. Whether a child is typically developing or has special concerns, it can be tough to know how to recognize a disorder and where to go for help. A caregiver may experience a range of emotions; frustration, anger, fear, embarrassment and guilt.

Eating disorders often arrive in the company of depression and anxiety. Stress in the child’s life often triggers this combination. A parent/caregiver must be attuned to the signs that this could be happening. A drastic change in body weight could indicate an eating disorder. A child may refuse his favorite foods, increase physical activity, resist family meals and avoid the school lunchroom. Hoarding food and not being able to stop eating can be as troubling as a refusal to eat. It is hard to keep your emotions in check as a parent/caregiver at every minute but shaming or placing guilt will only serve to stress the child more.

Pica is a concern in a child with Down’s syndrome or autism. Children who have this disorder are driven to consume non-food items such as chalk, dirt, leaves or sand. This can lead to nutritional mayhem. Anemia, metal poisoning and choking are some of the possible results. The parent/caregiver needs to stay in connection with individuals who associate with their child on a daily basis during the school day in order to monitor what behaviors are showing. Persons responsible for the child MUST know where heightened attention is needed and report unusual or new behaviors to the other. This site explains PICA further: http://www.webmd.com/mental-health/mental-health-pica

It is imperative to never ignore warning signs of an eating disorder. Anorexia Nervosa (nervous loss of appetite) carries the highest mortality rate of any mental illness. Estimates put it between 4-5% and that does not include where the depression and anxiety have led to suicide. Developing organs and neurological system are a fragile balance and lack of proper nutrients can have debilitating impact. Relapse is also a real concern. http://www.eatingdisorderhope.com/information/anorexia/anorexia-nervosa

If you suspect an eating disorder, consult your primary care doctor immediately. A calm one-on-one conversation could open a window into understanding your child’s struggles. Be careful not to badger, accuse or shame your child for his/her behavior. This is a serious issue requiring therapy and understanding. With support and treatment your child and family can overcome this and develop a healthy relationship with food, for life.
Fatherhood Corner by Derek Flake - "Be the Best Dad You can Be in 2016"

As a Father of three daughters ages 14, 18, and 21, I have definitely learned some valuable lessons on my journey. If you would allow me a quick second to be transparent, I admit that each day in the classroom of life as a Dad and Husband I experience new victories and face old challenges. Dads and Moms are different.

For example, I read in a pamphlet by Channing Bete Company entitled “Be the Best Father You Can Be” (2009 edition) mothers often pick up and carry their infant children in a way that they can see the child’s face. On the other hand, fathers more often than not pick up and carry their infant child with the child facing the rest of the world. The 2009 edition of “Be the Best Father You Can Be” goes on to reference Moms as typically being more gentle and calming when they interact with their children. In comparison, Dads might tickle their children first in a playful manner as they approach them. Dads often playfully engage with their children. On the other hand, mothers may do more verbal playing with the child by using visual and facial games. This can be very soothing and consistent with the mother’s attribute of being a nurturer.

In general, Dads more or less have a nature that coaches the child to interact, experience, and learn by doing. Fathers and mothers are both teachers. They teach in different ways. We should celebrate one another as being different but appreciate one another as holding irreplaceable value. Mothers are experts at teaching by using words and fathers are experts at teaching by doing. In my opinion, the important thing to remember is that both parents have value and contribute to the overall mental, physical, emotionally, social, and spiritually development of that child. Therefore, whether the parents are in a relationship, marriage, or single, mutual respect and patience should be the standard for all interactions because the children need both parents to be fully engaged in their development.

As we embark on a new year I challenge every dad to go the extra mile in 2016 to be the best dad you can be! As a mentor to younger parents and someone who has faced many challenges in parenting three daughters while mentoring countless of “at-risk” young men I have learned that being a Dad is a full-time job. It requires overtime, night, holiday, and weekend work. The shifts are 24 hours a day each and every day. Oftentimes the job comes with much sacrifice, disappointment, and uncertainty. The benefits sometime take years to manifest. There is no such thing as a probationary period on this job as a Father!

I hope you can join me for PEATC’s February 25, 2016 Families Engaging Families Monthly Call at 12:30pm est. as we discuss opportunities to be engaged and tips to help fathers be more visible, valuable, and vocal as a member of their child’s educational team.
Family Engagement Corner by Tina Norris -

"Families Embrace Wellness and Nutrition"

We as a society work to ensure that our children are growing up in a world in which they are educated, healthy and happy. As we work towards this goal, living in nurturing families while thriving within the community should remain our highest priority. Parents may find themselves encouraging their children a little more to stay both physically and intellectually active as we enter the winter season.

Embracing wellness provides great opportunities for all families to connect not only together, but with community partners, to build strong and collaborative relationships. Through these networks, families can learn creative ways to infuse physical activities and nutrition into their daily routine.

It can be easy making movement fun while learning strategies to help reduce the stress in your life. Parents can engage in exercise as a time of family bonding. Other simple techniques you can try include lighting candles, burning essential oils and meditating all of which are great ways to reduce stress.

Healthy eating is not just about upholding a strict diet or depriving yourself of your favorite foods. It is merely feeling great, having more energy and improving your overall outlook on life. Eating healthy can also affect your mental and emotional health. Food can be fun! Adding fresh fruits and vegetables to your diet, cooking meals at home and monitoring your sugar and carbohydrates can improve your overall health.

Children with disabilities may have health issues that can directly impact their eating habits. Therefore, selecting and preparing foods that give them a variety of nutrients is essential.

In 2016, let’s aim for our families to be healthier and physically fit!
PEATC On Demand & In the Spotlight by Kristin Kane - "Wellness"

There is no question exercise and sports can offer physical, psychological, social, and cognitive benefits to those with ADHD.

In this presentation Jeff Copper, founder of DIG Coaching Practice, will talk about why exercise and sports should be prescribed as part of all ADHD treatment programs. He’ll share insights around why so many with ADHD struggle to exercise regularly and why many shy away from sports.

You will have with a better understanding of the challenges they have faced in the past and specific strategies to look for when engaging in sports or physical activity in the future.

Copy and paste the link into you browser: https://youtu.be/b4ydkO5qfwQ

PEATC Workshops and Initiatives - Families Engaging Families Monthly Networking Call

January’s topic WAIVERS
Presenter, Summer Sage, Regional Information Specialist, PEATC
January 28, 2016 ~ 12:30pm to 1:30pm
What's a waiver? Who is eligible? What are the steps to getting screened? How can a waiver help my family? Join us to learn if waivers are an option for your family and get your questions answered about the process and an update on what the changing face of the waiver system in VA will look like in 2016. Register at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9FS3S5Z

February’s topic DADS Organized & Engaged (DOE)
Presenter, Derek Flake, Community Outreach Specialist, PEATC
February 25, 2016 ~ 12:30pm to 1:30pm
This month’s call will be unique. Derek will be connecting with dads empowering them to become more visible, valuable and a vocal part of the schools educational team. He will share information about upcoming trainings, leadership development; peer mentoring opportunities that will promote effective advocacy skills for men. Register at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/T3PQMFX

March’s topic Resources for Dyslexia
Presenter, Kristin Kane, Information Specialist, PEATC
March 24, 2016 ~ 12:30pm to 1:30pm
Join us in March for a discussion on dyslexia. Let’s talk about where to find the basics. Is there a new diagnosis or do you have concerns? What happens if you think your child may need special education? And how can effective advocacy lead to successful outcomes? We will take a look at the resources available both locally and online, and how and where to connect with other families on this journey. Register at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TGTYCX5

~Mark your calendars! You don’t want to miss these calls~