

# An Ounce of Prevention

Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Council of Humboldt County

www.capcchumboldt.org

P.O. Box 854, Eureka, CA 95502

# Simplify The Season

## Spend Moments Not Money

by Christine Driscoll



The holidays are going to look very different this year, no doubt about it. Lock downs, social distancing, and juggling work/school/home have left parents exhausted. Go gentle on yourself this holiday season. Instead of worrying about what WON'T be, start planning for what WILL be. Accept that you can't do everything and **say**



**no to things that aren't a priority** to you or your family. If your family doesn't enjoy doing it, it's OK to say NO. This is the perfect opportunity for slowing down, getting creative and making new traditions with your family.

Let's face it, many of us won't be traveling to visit our families and loved ones this year. Hustling and bustling to stores and malls will be limited, and many of us will do our shopping online.

The pressure to BUY, BUY, BUY at this time of year is enormous. But money can't buy happiness, and spending money that we don't have is stressful, not just before the holiday but after the holiday when the bills start coming in. Please do not spend willy-nilly on your credit card, and think "I'll worry about it later." Why create this worry for yourself, when it can be avoided with a little creativity and planning?

Let's be honest - do you remember any Christmas gifts you received as a kid? Chances are you probably remember one or two special gifts but that's probably it. I have a vivid memory of receiving a toy truck with a plastic horse that rode in the back (I'm still horse crazy). But that's it, really. But I do remember decorating the tree with my family, taking walks in the woods and my Italian grandparents' cooking. (Oh MY!) My guess is that you would rather have this season filled with the true spirit of the holidays and family memories - not a bunch of stuff.



This year I encourage you to slow down and make memories instead of giving gifts. It's an old cliché but so appropriate – ***Instead of presents, give the gift of your presence.***

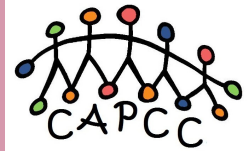
...continued on page 2



# An Ounce of Prevention

Winter 2020

Volume 20



...continued from page 1

So here are just a few ideas to inspire you:



**Get cooking!** – Involve your children in planning and preparing a special meal, or baking cookies for family and friends. I like to browse thrift stores for pretty plates that don't need to be returned.

**Make a wreath** – with an abundance of redwood, pine and cedar trees in our area, it's easy and fun to collect branches and shape them into wreaths or swags. Add a little ribbon and it's all set!

**Make homemade cards, ornaments, photo keepsakes** – let your little ones unleash their inner artist.

**Write a personal letter** – Do you have someone on your list who is super special to you but doesn't need more stuff? Take the time to write them a personal letter explaining how much they mean to you. Share a favorite memory or two of time you spent with them, and how much it meant to you. The tears in their eyes will be priceless!

**Plan a family adventure** – We are so lucky to live on the beautiful coast of northern California. Take a walk in the redwoods, drive to the lagoons, visit the Sequoia Park Zoo or the Humboldt Botanical Gardens.

**Help someone in need** – Toy drives, coat drives, donate to a soup kitchen or food bank or help an elderly neighbor with chores, shopping, or wrapping presents.

**Create a special "magical holiday" space** for your little ones. Do you have any old holiday decorations that you don't put up? Use them in their rooms, they'll love it! Or just string holiday lights around, it gives them an extra special feel.

Pick a day, any day, and make it a **Christmas movie day!** Snuggle up and watch them together as a family.

Drive around and **look at Holiday lights.** Make a game of finding X number of Santas, or put together a Bingo game of items!

**Belt out holiday songs!** Put it on repeat until your children and you both learn every single word.

**Read them one more book!** Especially holiday related ones.



Christine Driscoll works for Redwood Community Action Agency in Eureka, CA as a Financial Empowerment Educator. Her free services include family budgeting, credit repair and review, debt reduction, protecting yourself from identity theft and much more! Her program is available to anyone and she can be reached at 707-269-2016 / [cdriscoll@rcaa.org](mailto:cdriscoll@rcaa.org)



## 20 Minutes in the Kitchen

by Jennifer Mager

Playing with children can be hard work. It can be challenging to come up with play ideas day after day. That was, until I learned how much we could do at the kitchen table. Dedicating blocks of twenty minutes of full attention, plus a few scoops of rice or flour can help build in time for interaction and conversation. And this is not following a recipe or baking, though that can also be rewarding. This is pulling out an old pie tin, cookie sheet, or bowl. Or better yet, a pie tin and bowl

on top of a cookie sheet! This activity can provide exploration with different textures, using different materials such as rice, cornmeal, flour, and oats. It can also be materials from outside, using dirt, sand, or pebbles. Add in an old medicine cup or a spoon for scooping (if you're feeling adventurous, add water), and maybe a few props, such as toy race car or plastic horse to build in the imagination and provide stories. But, most importantly, make sure you also have your own bowl if the one

chosen isn't big enough for both of you. At all ages, children benefit from the back and forth of interaction. If you are also scooping, pouring, counting, describing, or storytelling, this becomes a time for both connection *and* learning. And between you and me, playing with sensory textures and materials can be calming for both children and caregivers. If we can play, connect, learn, and calm, it may be worth those extra twenty minutes at the kitchen table.

## Sensory Playtime for Under \$5!

### Oobleck

**Materials Needed:** 1 16 oz. box of cornstarch & 1-1.5 cups of water

**Tips for play:** Use a tablespoon or small medicine cup to scoop a little bit of water at a time into the cornstarch. Adding water slowly will help get to the 'just-right' consistency and will add in a little extra experimentation and language.

**Language starters:** What happens if you only add a little bit of water? How many scoops does it take to make it goeey? What do you notice when you squish it together? When you let it drip?

**Play extensions:** Add a drop of food coloring or include small plastic animals or figurines. Once done, you and your child can use an old toothbrush to give the animals or figurines a scrub bath!



### Sensory Bottle

**Materials Needed:** Empty plastic bottle with lid, oil, and water

**Tips for play:** Adding oil to the bottle ahead of time (about 1 cup depending upon the size of the bottle) makes it easier (and cleaner) for your child to add the water. Be sure to put the lid on tight!

**Language starters:** What do you notice when you add the water? Why do you think one is on the bottom and the other is on the top? What do you think will happen when you shake it?

**Play extensions:** Add a drop of blue coloring and a few shells to make an ocean bottle. Add corn syrup or another heavier liquid to create more layers. Sprinkle in some glitter for extra sparkle. Fill empty bottles with other materials to explore.

### Rainbow Water

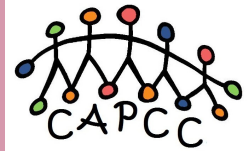
**Materials Needed:** Markers, paper towel or coffee filter, cup of water

**Tips for play:** Color the paper towel or coffee filter with one marker. Place into a cup of water.

**Language starters:** What color will you choose? What do you think will happen when you put it into the water? Why do you think it does that?

**Play extensions:** You can use this colored water for other activities if you do not have food coloring. What happens if you add two primary colors (blue and yellow, red and blue, or red and yellow)?





## Parenting During the Pandemic



From left to right: Angela Galioto- Behaviorist, Kym Lopez- Licensed Professional Counselor and Clinical Director, Jennifer "Scully" Powell- Marriage Family Therapist & Board Certified Behavior Analyst, Aimee Keiser- Occupational Therapist, Kim Kowalski- Board Certified Behavior Analyst.

During uncertain times it's important that we look for hope and offer help as much we can. Wild Souls Ranch has found hope in knowing we've gathered a highly experienced therapeutic team to support you and your family. Our therapeutic team is made up of licensed clinical therapists, behaviorists, and occupational therapists and they're here now to offer you their best tips on parenting during the pandemic.

**Kym Lopez**, Licensed Professional Counselor and Clinical Director explains, fear, uncertainty and spending more time at home can make it difficult to have a sense of calm in the home. So, it's important that children feel safe, keep healthy routines, manage behaviors and build resilience.

### Having a specific learning spot

– it's important to have an area that is separate for "school" and "home" space.

### Using brain breaks

**throughout the day** – Use brain breaks before or after zoom sessions, or when a student gets home from school. 3-5 minutes breaks are helpful when helping to focus or calm the mind. It can be exercise, a scavenger hunt, mindful breathing, chores, yard work, animal walks, etc.

**Using alerting foods** – Eating foods that have different temperatures such as drinking ice water, milkshakes, cold smoothies will help wake-up and refocus. Eating crunchy foods such as chips, carrots, celery, and apple. Drinking thicker liquids through a straw requires more effort and can be calming and regulating – milkshakes, smoothies, yogurt drinks, etc.

**Using timers** – Make sure your child is getting break/free time. With school at home, it is difficult to set aside time for just fun. Set an alarm to make sure free time occurs and to

notify when "school" is over.

Be patient with yourself. This is a trying time for everyone. It's all new and we are all learning new strategies to be successful. Make sure to take time for yourself – a walk, quiet time in the bedroom, read a book, something to help you reset.

**Address children's fears** – Have a conversation about frightening news they might be hearing. Answer their questions simply and honestly. It's ok to say that people are getting sick, but to remind them that washing hands and keeping a safe distance helps to keep them healthy and safe.

### Recognize your child's feelings

– For example, "I can see that you are upset because you can't have your friends over" "How do you think you could stay in touch with them?" It's ok to allow more screen time than prior to the pandemic due to increasing needs to connect via the internet.

### Model how to manage feelings

– Talk through how you are managing your own feelings. For example, "I am worried about Grandma since I can't go visit her. The best I can do is to

check in with her more often by phone. I will put a reminder on my phone to call her in the morning and afternoon until I'm able to see her again."

### Keep a regular routine including bedtimes

– Children often have more trouble with bedtime during any stressful period. Try to keep normal nighttime routines.

**Spend special time in** – Even when everyone is home together 24/7, set aside some special time with EACH child. You choose the time, and let your child choose the activity. Just 10 or 20 minutes of your undivided attention, even if only once every few days, will mean a lot to your child. Keep cell phones off or on silent so you don't get distracted.

### Take care of yourself

– Remember to breathe! Caregivers also should be sure to take care of themselves physically: eat healthy, exercise, get enough sleep. Find ways to decompress and take breaks. If more than one parent is at home, take turns watching the kids to take breaks.

# Regulating Stress Response in Kids: Top Five Takeaways

## 1. Cool-Down Corner

Parents are familiar with timeouts, especially as disciplinary measures. Conversely, a cool-down corner is about giving space for social and emotional self-regulation. A child may choose to cool-down for five seconds, five minutes, or an hour – it's really up to them. The decision is up to the child for when they feel they are ready to come out and resume interacting in a healthy way.

## 2. Encouraging Conscious Breathing as Mindfulness Practice

Everyone has an opportunity to regulate their stress with conscious breathing. Breath work helps us connect our emotions and our mind. Breath work can also be done anywhere, anytime, and anywhere.

## 3. Journaling for Stress Relief

We often recommend journaling for both children and parents. Similar to how a food diary can uncover health patterns that seemed mysterious and daunting, journaling emotions can help reveal patterns of behavior.

## 4. Incorporating Imagination and Visualization

One of the things we like to do with kids as they get older is ask them to use their imagination when they're upset and need time to collect themselves to get their emotions in check. Encouraging children to engage their imagination while their mind is active allows their emotions to remain calm.

## 5. Promoting Stress Management During COVID-19

Now more than ever, stress management strategies can help pediatric patients and their caregivers navigate these uncertain times.



For more information about Regulating Stress Response in Kids go to:

<https://www.acesaware.org/blog/regulating-the-stress-response-in-kids-top-five-takeaways/>

## The Science Behind Toxic Stress in Children

*Julianne McCall, PhD, from the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, discusses the science behind toxic stress in children and the importance of understanding the impact of early experiences on a developing brain.*

Studies have shown that early-life economic circumstances are predictive of various aspects of brain development in regions of the brain responsible for self-control, planning, and working memory. While our brains continue to change throughout adulthood in response to learning and new practices, this field of science opened my eyes to the impact of one's early environment on the fundamental architecture of our neural system. Exposure to ACEs and trauma, without the social and emotional supports of a caregiver, can leave an indelible imprint on the brain and body, which can then impact health in the short- and long-term. The importance of screening and treating children and adults with ACEs and toxic stress cannot be overstated, especially when individuals and families are facing prolonged stress and uncertainties associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. For Black Americans and other communities of color, who are already at increased risk for toxic stress due to countless manifestations of systemic racism, the ACEs Aware initiative is integral to mitigating long-term effects.

Everyone routinely experiences stress. Some stress is positive, like the feeling a child may have anticipating the first day of school, or the stress an adult feels who is about to give a speech. Other stress is negative, like being in a car accident or losing a loved one. Negative stress can be tolerated with the right amount of social and emotional support. But prolonged or frequent stressors, like repeated exposure to domestic violence, can have profound impacts on a child's development absent the protective buffers of a caregiver.

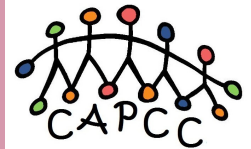
As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt employment, education, health care access, and family and community support systems, the incidence of ACEs and resulting toxic stress are likely to increase, putting individuals at greater risk for health problems at an unprecedented pace.

Our goal is to improve clinical approaches to preventing, diagnosing, and treating toxic stress and, ultimately, help reduce health disparities in underserved communities throughout California. Alongside ACEs Aware, this effort could not come at a more critical time in our state's history. The health of our children, families, and communities depends on it.

For the complete article on The Science Behind Toxic Stress go to:

<https://www.acesaware.org/blog/spotlight-series-julianne-mccall/>





## 2020 Holiday Activities

December 11	Electric Light Parade	Fortuna
December 12	Lighted Trucker's Parade	Eureka
December 20	Lighted Tractor Parade	Ferndale
December	Holiday Tree	McKinleyville

# Parent Circle "Stress in the Season"



Find ways to cope during the holidays, make new traditions, deal with the loss of old traditions and help our kids make the best of it!

December 1- Spend Moments Not Money  
 December 8- Sadder Side of the Season  
 December 15- Reducing Family Stress

All sessions 10:00-11:00 VIA Zoom



Each week we welcome guest speakers and the time to connect with those parenting children 0-8 years old during this challenging time.

Contact Katie Allen at [katiedallen29@gmail.com](mailto:katiedallen29@gmail.com) or at 970-212-6812 for the weekly zoom link



# Check out what's happening through local playgroups!

**Jefferson Community Center Playgroup** in Eureka is offering family yoga class and more. Call 707-497-6280 for more information.

**Discovery Museum** in Eureka is offering distributions and family resources. Call 707-443-9694 for more information.

**Tiny Tots Playgroup** in Arcata is offering resources and support to families. Call First 5 at 707-445-7389 or follow them on Facebook at *Tiny Tots Playgroup* for more information.

**Loleta Playgroup** is offering various resources and support to families. Call 707-733-5239 or follow them on Facebook at *Loleta Playgroup* for more information.

Though First 5 Playgroups are not meeting in person, many are still providing services to children and families. See the list below to find out what activities and services are being provided in your surrounding neighborhoods.

**Manila Playgroup** is offering toy lending, distribution, Redwood Edventures, family sharing activities, and resources. Call First 5 at 707-445-7389 or follow them on Facebook at *Manila First 5 Playgroup* for more information.

**Arcata D Street Playgroup** is offering material distributions, clothing swaps, activities, and virtual playgroups. Call 707-822-7091 or follow them on Facebook at *Arcata Play Center* for more information.

**Blue Lake Playgroup** is offering online fieldtrips, story times, weekly arts and crafts activities, and other family resources. Call 707-668-4281 or follow them on Facebook at *Blue Lake Playgroup* for more information.

**Petrolia / Honeydew Playgroup** is offering the Ages and Stages Developmental Screening Questionnaire and other family resources. Call 707-629-3348 for more information.

**Fortuna Playgroup** is offering weekly storytime and distribution. Call First 5 at 707-445-7389 or follow them on Facebook at *First 5 Fortuna Playgroup* for more information.

**Willow Creek Playgroup** is offering material distributions, family resources, and story times. Call 530-629-3141 or follow them on Facebook at *Willow Creek Facebook* for more information.

**Orleans Playgroup** is offering distributions and family resources. Call 530-627-3202 or email for more information.

## Hansel & Gretel

Dec 4, 5 & 6 @ 7:30 pm Facebook Live  
Dec 19 @ 6pm KEET TV  
Dec 22 @ 9pm KEET TV  
Dec 28 @ 1pm KEET TV

For more information go to:

<https://dellarte.com/online-season/holiday-show-2020/>



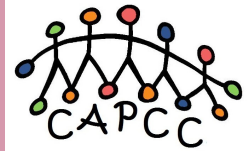




# An Ounce of Prevention

Winter 2020

Volume 20



Newsletter Edited by:  
Kathryn Walkley  
Christine Driscoll  
Jennifer Mager  
Cindy Sutcliffe

For feedback or questions contact Christine at [cdriscoll@reca.org](mailto:cdriscoll@reca.org)  
707-269-2016

*The Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Council of Humboldt County is a broad-based non profit advocacy organization that works to eliminate child abuse and neglect in our community through (1) striving to assure coordinated services and policies for the prevention, intervention and treatment of child abuse among agencies and organizations, (2) actively promoting and supporting high-quality programs that successfully reduce child abuse and neglect and (3) increasing public awareness of resources to help prevent child abuse and decrease family stress.*

## I Hear You

by Jennifer Mager

I am a mother of three children from TK to high school. I hear zoom classes in three different parts of my house while I attend a work meeting from my computer in the living room. I look behind me where I have listed the various (and many) assignments that my children will need encouragement to do and support to complete. I look beyond into the kitchen where the bread lay open from breakfast and the dishes sit from dinner.

To the mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts and uncles, guardians and providers, I hear you.

Our lives have changed, and so have the lives of our children and everyone we meet. Throughout the day, I ask myself, How can I ever think



that I'm doing enough? So, to anyone who has felt this way, cried a few tears in the bathroom, or decided that they would use their precious reserve of energy to read to their child rather than wash the dishes, I want to say I see you.

And on the days when I am Enough doesn't get you to the end of the day, be kind to

Check out our website:

<http://capcchumboldt.org/>

or on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/CAPCCHumboldt>

yourself. We are all navigating through our world in a different way right now. Reach out and connect with someone. Remind yourself that You are Strong and You Can Do This. To all of you out there, let us share the struggle together and find ways to support one another. If you need extra support and would like to reach out to talk to someone, please contact the DHHS Behavioral Health Warm Line at 707-268-2999.

