



August 2015 ✦ Volume 12 ✦ Issue 2

Montana Lifespan Respite Coalition Introduces New Respite Voucher Program

In what is fantastic news for Montana's grandparents raising grandchildren, the Montana Lifespan Respite coalition has introduced a respite voucher program that will allow eligible caregivers to obtain assistance and "take a break" every now and then. The Montana Lifespan Respite Coalition defines respite as "planned or emergency care provided to an individual with need for support and supervision in order to provide temporary relief to the primary caregiver of that individual."



Respite is particularly important to grandparents raising grandchildren, who may need a bit of "me-time" to recharge their batteries and alleviate stress, allowing them to be better caregivers to their entire family.

This voucher program features funding based on a sliding scale according to income. Once GRGs fill out an application, they will receive a phone call within five working days to let them know if they have been approved. If approved, they will receive a respite packet in the mail and will have 90 days to use the approved amount.

To read more about the program and to apply, call 1-800-224-6034 or go to <http://dphhs.mt.gov/respite>.

The Montana GRG Project extends a huge THANK YOU to the Montana Lifespan Respite Coalition for offering this valuable service to Montana's GRGs!

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Back To School

Transitioning to Kindergarten

-Sandra J. Bailey, Ph.D., CFLE, Family & Human Development Specialist, MSU Extension

Throughout childhood, children experience transitions. Entering kindergarten is among one of the most significant for young children. Kindergarten is vastly different from child care or preschool. Before entering kindergarten, early childhood settings such as day care or preschool focus on helping children with social development. These settings can help children learn how to act in a group, share with others and experience being away

from primary caregivers for a time period. In kindergarten the focus shifts more to academic skill development. Children in kindergarten are expected to have better emotion regulation, be able to follow directions and classroom routines, listen to their teacher, and get along with their classmates. This can be challenging for young children as they shift from smaller group settings to a larger classroom. Research has found that there are many children who experience difficulties in transitioning to kindergarten. Implementing strategies to lessen problems is wise and there are many adults in children's lives who can assist.

As a custodial grandparent, you are a grandchild's first teacher and the first to provide support in the transition to kindergarten. Be involved in your grandchild's education from the start. Get to know the teachers and ask for assistance if your grandchild is having difficulty in school. Make sure your grandchild gets enough sleep. Studies have found that when children enter kindergarten the number of hours of sleep they receive is reduced to about 10 hours which is the minimum recommended for this age group. One reason for the reduction is that children may no longer be napping once they enter kindergarten. Inadequate sleep can lead to behavioral and emotional problems and poor academic performance. Lack of sleep has also been linked to poor physical health such as obesity. After the long summer days in Montana children may have difficulty going to bed earlier when school starts. Developing a consistent bedtime routine can help such as a bath and reading a story each night before your grandchild goes to sleep. Use room darkening shades if needed.

Breakfast is also an important part of being ready for school. If you are unable to provide breakfast for your grandchild, check with the school to see if there is a breakfast program in which you can enroll your grandchild, or send breakfast with your grandchild to eat before school starts. A breakfast of a piece of fruit and a granola bar will help your child be ready for the day.

Work with your grandchild's preschool or day care setting regarding the transition to kindergarten. Some early childhood programs talk with the children about the coming year and what to expect. The program may arrange for a trip to the school so that the children can see the school. *(article continues on next page)*

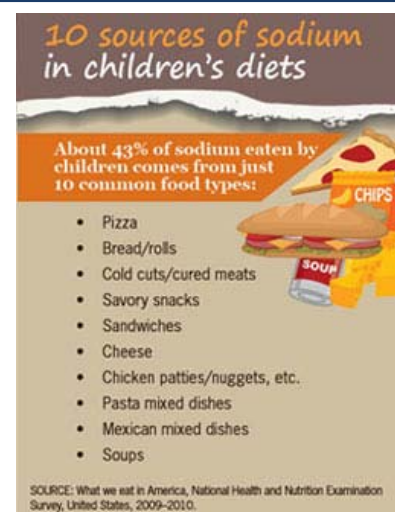
Back to School Means Back to Packing School Lunches

Many of the most popular school lunch items, like cold cuts, cheese, chips and soups, are major sources of sodium. A recent CDC report found that about 90 percent of U.S. school-aged children consume too much sodium each day. Here are some easy ways to lower the sodium in school lunches:

Read the nutrition labels and compare the sodium amount in similar products, then choose the option with the lowest amount of sodium. For example, some varieties of bread can vary from 80 to 230 mg of sodium *per slice*. That can make a big difference in lunch-time sandwiches.

For a healthy snack, pack fresh fruits and vegetables with lunch every day, like a small bag of baby carrots, snow peas, or grape tomatoes.

Encourage your child to get involved. Let them help pack their lunch, and talk about ways to make their favorite items healthy or lower sodium. Let them put their snack packs together or pick what they want for lunch the next day.



-Graphic and information courtesy of

<http://www.cdc.gov/features/childrens-diet-sodium//>



Back To School

Transitioning to Kindergarten (cont...)

-Sandra J. Bailey, Ph.D., CFLE, Family & Human Development Specialist, MSU Extension

Kindergarten teachers in some schools are able to reach out to their prospective students. They may hold open houses. Be sure to take advantage of this type of opportunity. If you are not able to attend an open house, call the teacher and ask if you and your grandchild can arrange to meet her/him. Some schools have programs where the kindergarten teachers do home visits with their new students. Again, be sure to participate in such activities.

Show your grandchild that you are excited about this next phase of her life! Discuss the opportunities and expectations for your child. Explain the behavior expectations for being in a classroom setting. Children do not typically misbehave without reason. If your grandchild does misbehave, try to find out the reason for the misbehavior. Is she hungry, tired, or ill? Often children will act out when they are coming down with a cold or flu. Children also misbehave because they do not know what is expected of them. Remind your child of the expectations – and these reminders may need to come regularly for a while. Children can also misbehave because of fears. Assure your grandchild that school is a safe and fun place to learn. If there are a variety of adults who pick up your grandchild after school, remind her each day who will be picking her up. If problems persist, talk with your grandchild’s teacher and if necessary the school counselor or psychologist.

Entering kindergarten comes with added expenses for the family. Your grandchild will most likely have a list of school supplies that she will need. If this causes a financial hardship for your household, talk to your grandchild’s teacher about potential sources of support. Some schools have funds to assist or know of local organizations who can help families with these costs.

The transition to kindergarten is a major event in a child’s life but also an exciting one. Prepare your grandchild for this new phase in life, reach out to teachers and other professionals if problems do exist and participate in your grandchild’s education throughout their school years.



Get the Facts on Vaccines and Immunizations

When preparing to send children back to school, it is important to think about immunizations. It is also important to gather facts based on medical research. Check out these resources for information on how you can protect the children in your home, your entire family, and your community.

Montana Immunization Program ~

<http://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/Immunization.aspx>

Information Includes: How to find immunization records; a large section of links to more resources and information.

Who and When ~ http://www.vaccines.gov/who_and_when/index.html

Information Includes: What vaccines are necessary and at what age; information on immunizations for seniors, pregnant women and people with chronic illness.

Vaccines & Immunizations ~ <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/>

Information includes: How vaccines prevent disease; government recommendations; basic and common questions.

School Vaccinations, Exemptions & Web Links ~

<http://www2a.cdc.gov/nip/schoolsurv/schImmRgmt.asp>

Information Includes: An interactive site where you can find state-specific school requirements for immunizations, exemptions to the requirements, and links to other state-specific information.



Parenting Skills

Why Won't My Grandchild Behave?

Grandparents raising grandchildren can become frustrated when children misbehave. Parenting children who have experienced a trauma requires patience. Almost all grandparents raising grandchildren are doing so due to a family crisis or loss. Often the children have experienced abuse, neglect, or loss of a birth parent. Living through such events influences how children develop and handle their emotions. Children may feel totally out of control of their world and try to take control whenever they can.

Young children may go back to behaving like much younger children, such as wetting the bed, sucking their thumbs or carrying around a blanket. Some may have frequent temper tantrums. This is their way of coping with the chaos in their lives. As a grandparent, you may need to be patient and support them as they struggle with these changes.

Some children will exhibit behaviors you have not seen before. For example, a grandson who hoards food in his bedroom may be doing so because he does not know if there will be food the next day. A granddaughter who lies excessively may have learned that this is acceptable behavior. She may have learned that even small "normal" childhood lies resulted in severe or inconsistent discipline.

Other children will be disobedient about everything, straining the patience of the grandparent. These children are responding to life the only way they know how. They have had to learn ways to be safe when they lived in a situation that was not safe. Rather than punishing them for such behaviors, these children need added attention, rules for appropriate behavior and love.

What is a Grandparent to Do?

- Watch to see if there is a pattern when your grandchild misbehaves. Does it occur when she is afraid? Does it happen after she has seen or talked to her birth parent? Does she become upset when there is a change? By looking at what is happening prior to the misbehavior, you will have a better idea of what the child is feeling.
- Give your grandchild control where possible. For example, he could decide what clothes to wear, or how much and which foods served at dinner he will eat. The "clean plate club" is no longer recommended. For older children, discuss with them what rules would be appropriate; for example, establishing curfews. This will help your grandchildren learn a sense of responsibility.
- Reflect on your own experiences to see if your reaction triggers misbehavior in your grandchild. Our own emotions around events that have occurred in the past influence how we respond in stressful situations. For example, does disobedience in a child remind you of how you were treated when you were young? Does this make it hard for you to respond objectively?
- Develop a daily and weekly routine for your grandchildren and try to keep to it as much as possible. When routines need changing, let your grandchild know what will be changed and why. Children may have experienced inconsistent parenting; a routine will help give them a sense of security.
- Reassure your grandchild that you have made arrangements for her care and that she will not be left on her own. A grandchild may be scared about not knowing what would happen if their grandparent becomes ill or dies. This could also be a cause for misbehaving.
- Find ways to have fun and use humor in your parenting. We need to be able to laugh and enjoy life. Mistakes are a part of life and where appropriate, laughing at our own mistakes lets children know we are human.
- Repair mistakes in parenting when needed. If you blow up and yell because you are frustrated with your grandchild, go back and talk it over when you are calm. Let him know that the blow-up was not the best way to handle the situation.



Information adapted from "Why Won't My Grandchild Behave" by Sandra J. Bailey, Ph.D., CFLE
Find this and more articles at eXtension: http://www.extension.org/family_caregiving



Resources

Legal Forms and Information are Available on the GRG Website

Since many grandparents are raising their grandchildren “informally”, or outside of the State system, questions about legal issues often arise. Several useful resources to help you navigate these issues are on the GRG Project website. The forms described below can all be accessed and downloaded at

<http://www.montanagrandparents.org/GRGsresources.html>

Caretaker Relative Affidavits

Some grandparents may need to have affidavits allowing them to make education and medical decisions. These forms are authorized by Montana Code Annotated 40-6-502 (medical) and Montana Code Annotated 20-5-503 MCA (education).

Power or Attorney (from the Montana Judicial Branch)

Some grandparents may need to seek some sort of legal control over their grandchildren who are living with them.

Guardianship of a Minor Packet (from the Montana Judicial Branch)

Some grandparents may need to seek temporary or permanent guardianship of their grandchildren who are living with them.

Grandparent Grandchild Contact (from Montana Code Annotated)

Some grandparents need information on their rights to see grandchildren who do not live with them.

And another great resource to remember... the Court Help Program

The Court Help Program is a free service provided by the Montana Supreme Court to assist people with civil, non-criminal legal problems. Their goal is to give you the information you need to understand your legal rights and responsibilities and to help you resolve your legal problems on your own if you cannot afford an attorney or if you choose not to hire one. While they cannot give you legal advice or represent you in court, they can provide you with legal information and direct you to resources that will help you help yourself. For locations throughout Montana go to

<http://courts.mt.gov/selfhelp>

How do I stay up-to-date on all the latest GRG Program Information?

Check out the GRG website—it is regularly updated with new resources and information.

<http://www.montanagrandparents.org/>

Check out the GRG Facebook page—up-to-the-minute information is posted as well as links and information from our state, regional and national partners.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Montana-Grandparents-Raising-Grandchildren-Project/930862973615169>

Call or email us with questions and information requests.
(406) 994-3395; grg@montana.edu

Sign up to receive this newsletter three times a year.
<http://www.montanagrandparents.org/newsletters.html>

COMING SOON! GRG on Pinterest!



Health & Nutrition

Find Out if Your Household is Eligible for WIC



WIC is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children; however, many grandparents raising grandchildren are not aware that their household may also be eligible to receive these benefits. **Any household with children under the age of five, if it meets certain income requirements, can claim these benefits.**

In addition to monetary assistance, the WIC program offers many educational tools to assist families in choosing nutritious meals and stretching their grocery dollars; one great resource offered, "Kitchen Safety for the Family" is reproduced below.

Check out these links (or call 800-433-4298; 406-444-5533) to get started learning about WIC and its benefits:

Learn about the program ~ <http://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/wic.aspx>

Determine your eligibility ~

<http://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/wic.aspx#148761295-how-to-apply-for-wic>

Find your nearest clinic ~

<http://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/wic.aspx#148761296-find-your-nearest-wic-clinic>

Download more educational materials ~

<http://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/wic.aspx#148761298-nutrition-education-for-participants>

KITCHEN SAFETY FOR THE FAMILY

Cooking with your children is an excellent way to help them develop new skills and create fun new recipes while learning. During your time together, be sure to keep kitchen safety in mind. Here are a few helpful tips:

- Always supervise children and first-time chefs. Never let your child cook alone.
- Develop patience. Your children will make fewer mistakes when they are enjoying the process and not worrying about being corrected for making mistakes.
- Understand fire safety.
 - Always heat oil on low heat.
 - Use baking soda to put out flames by pouring generous amounts on the base of the flame.
 - Eliminate the flames' source of air with lids or wet rags.
- Wear short sleeves and an apron when cooking.
- Use oven mitts and pot holders, instead of towels.
- Wash hands with soapy water for 20 seconds before cooking and after touching any raw meats.
- Pan handles should never extend over a hot burner or towards the floor where they can be bumped.
- Clean up spills to avoid slips and falls. Wash dish rags every couple of days or after cleaning up raw meats or spills on the floor. Avoid using sponges, because they can hold a lot of germs.
- Do not use the dish scrub or rag to wash vegetables or the counter.



- Wash the outside of fruits with a hard rind (melons, oranges, etc). Bacteria can come into the fruit when cutting the rind.

- Speed clean ups. Teach your children to clean while they wait for the next stage in preparing the food (i.e. water boils, soup simmers, etc.)
- Keep your kitchen free from fruit flies by keeping the kitchen clean, removing food scraps, and hanging rags to dry instead of wadded up in the sink.
- Thaw frozen meat in the fridge. Keep raw food separate from cooked food. Meats should be stored on the bottom shelf and fresh produce on the top shelf or in bins. Use a thermometer when cooking meats.
- Wash surfaces where raw meats and poultry touched before placing another food product on that surface.
- Clean your refrigerator out monthly. Check expiration dates; and throw away out-dated items.
- Fridge temperature should be below 41°F.
- Avoid the temp danger zone, 41-135 degrees Fahrenheit. Place leftovers in a shallow bowl to speed up cooling in the fridge. Never leave food out for more than 2 hours. If handled properly, leftovers should be good for 4 days.



Food	Minimum Inside Temperature
Poultry, Casseroles, and Reheated Leftovers	165°F
Ground Meats (beef, pork, veal, lamb, turkey, chicken)	160°F
Egg Dishes	160°F
Fish	145°F
Beef, Veal and Lamb (Steaks, Roasts, and Chops)	145°F for 3 minutes
Fresh Pork and Fresh (raw) Ham	145°F for 3 minutes
Ham (precooked, just reheated)	140 °F

Information for the table found at www.foodsafety.gov.



WIC is an equal opportunity provider.

Grandfamily Support Contacts Across Montana—By County

Blaine County—Harlem & Fort Belknap Indian Reservation
MSU Extension
(406) 353-2656

Big Horn County—Wyola
Kristy Old Coyote
LBHC Extension
(406) 638-3114
Jacinta Stewart
(406) 679-2259

Big Horn County—Hardin
Janice Eckman
Hardin Parent Center
(406) 665-4151

Big Horn & Rosebud Counties—Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation
Ryhal Rowland
MSU Extension
(406) 477-6498

Cascade County—Great Falls
Jona McNamee
MSU Extension
(406) 454-6980
Mariellen Ritts
(406) 453-3554

Custer County—Miles City
Don & Vivian Westall
(406) 234-6727

Dawson County—Glendive
Pete Bruno
Family Life Institute
(406) 939-5591

Deer Lodge County—Anaconda
Abbie Phillip
MSU Extension
(406) 563-4036

Fergus County—Lewistown
Denise Seilstad
MSU Extension
(406) 535-3919

Flathead County—Kalispell
Nikki Roth
The Nurturing Center, Inc.
(406) 756-1414

Gallatin County—Bozeman
MSU Extension Family & Human Development
(406) 994-3395
grg@montana.edu

Glacier County—Browning & Blackfeet Indian Reservation
Carrie Bear Chief-Evans/
Connie Bremner
Eagle Shield Center
(406) 338-7257

Hill County—Havre
Lea Ann Larson
MSU Extension
(406) 265-5481

Hill County—Rocky Boy Indian Reservation
Mary St. Pierre
Stone Child College & MSU Extension
(406) 395-4875

Lake County—Ronan
Nori Pearce
MSU Extension
(406) 676-4271

Lewis & Clark County—Helena
Jackie Stoeckel
DPHHS, Child & Family Services - Program Bureau
(406) 841-2402

Madison/Jefferson Counties—Whitehall
MSU Extension
(406) 287-3282

Missoula County—Missoula
Kelly Moore
MSU Extension
(406) 258-4206

Ravalli County—Bitterroot Valley
AnnaMarie White
La Paloma Agency
(406) 396-1937

Richland County—Sidney
MSU Extension
(406) 433-1206

Roosevelt County—Culbertson
Ardis Oelkers
MSU Extension
(406) 787-5312

Roosevelt County—Fort Peck Indian Reservation
Carol Bemer
(406) 768-2430

Rosebud County—Forsyth
Jennifer Anderson
MSU Extension
(406) 346-7320

Rosebud County—Lame Deer & Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation
Kay Medicine Bull
Boys & Girls Club of the Northern Cheyenne Nation
(406) 477-6654

Silver Bow County—Butte
Brenda Hergott
Butte 4-C's
(406) 723-4019
1-800-794-4061

Stillwater County—Columbus
Lisa Terry
MSU Extension
(406) 322-8035

Teton County—Choteau
Jane Wolery
MSU Extension
(406) 466-2491

Valley County—Glasgow
Roubie Younkin
MSU Extension
(406) 228-6239

Yellowstone County—Billings
Jackie Rumph
MSU Extension
(406) 256-2828



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PO Box 173540
Bozeman, MT 59717-3540

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage Paid
Permit #69
Bozeman, MT
59715

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PO Box 173540
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grg@montana.edu
(406) 994-3395
www.montanagrandparents.org



Montana State University Extension is an ADA/
EO/AA Veteran's Preference Employer and
provider of educational outreach.

Montana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Project

*Call it a clan, call it a network,
call it a tribe, call it a family.
Whatever you are, whoever you are,
you need one.*
~Jane Howard