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### **Montana GRG Project Receives Grant from Montana Children's Trust Fund**

We are excited to announce that we received a one-year grant from the **Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Montana Children's Trust Fund**. This funding will allow us to identify and train new support group facilitators as well as provide in-depth training for current facilitators working with grandfamilies.

The two-day training will cover how to teach the eight-session *Parenting a Second Time Around* (PASTA) curriculum. Additionally, guest speakers will present material on the impact adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) have on children and information on legal issues facing kinship families. The grant allows us to offer scholarships to assist agency/organization staff to participate in the training. Upon completion of the training, attendees will be expected to teach the PASTA curriculum to kinship caregivers in their communities.



**If you are interested in taking this training**, and can commit to offering the PASTA workshops in your community, please contact Debbie Albin at (406) 994-5099; [deborah.albin@montana.edu](mailto:deborah.albin@montana.edu).

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## Useful News

### Bullying in Childhood

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

Unfortunately, bullying is a common occurrence during childhood starting in preschool years and peaking in middle school. Some reports estimate that nearly one-third of school-age children experience bullying. Unfortunately, children often do not report bullying, making it difficult for parents, school staff and administrators to address the problem. Although a common experience, bullying is not a normal part of childhood!

Bullying is any kind of aggressive ongoing physical or verbal mistreatment where there is unequal power between the bully and a victim. Bullying can include spreading rumors, making threats, attacking someone physically, verbally, through social media, or excluding an individual on purpose. Bullying occurs when an individual purposely and repeatedly holds power over another with the intent of hurting another. Too often bullying can be tuned into a group process as bystanders fail to come to the aid of the victim.

Boys are more likely to engage in bullying than girls. Boys tend to use direct physical threats to their victims while girls often use indirect strategies such as spreading rumors or exclusion. Both are harmful to the child who is bullied.

Bullies can show disruptive behavior. They tend to direct their emotions and energy outward, such as acting out at school. Bullies often have problems with depression and academic problems in school. They are more socially competent than victims, yet they may also experience problems socially. Bullies are also more likely to be negatively influenced by peers.

Victims are often quiet, have fewer friends and have low self-esteem. They may be socially awkward. Victims often have negative thoughts about themselves and turn thoughts inward. They may isolate themselves and be socially rejected. Common targets of bullying are children who are perceived as different – such as different race, body weight, LGBT, and those with special needs. Children who are economically disadvantaged can also be targets of bullying.

The *Youth Voice Project* surveyed children who had been bullied. They found that **the following actions were helpful to them:**

- The adult checked in with me afterwards
- The adult gave me advice
- The teacher called me at home
- Bringing the bully in to talk with the victim with the teacher present

**Actions that were not helpful included:**

- Told me to solve the problem myself
- Told me to quit tattling
- Ignored me
- Told me if I acted differently this wouldn't happen



If you suspect your grandchild has been bullied at school, talk with him or her. Then talk with the teacher or principal. Find out if the school has an anti-bullying program. Together you can find ways to support your grandchild and prevent bullying in the future.

You can find more information and ideas by downloading this fact sheet from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—[https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying\\_factsheet.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying_factsheet.pdf) and this toolkit from the Montana Office of Public Instruction—<http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/Bullying/14BullyFreeToolkit.pdf>.



**Useful  
News**

**Helping Children Cope With Natural Disasters**

-Adapted from "Helping Children Cope With Natural Disasters;  
<http://store.msueextension.org/publications/HomeHealthandFamily/MT201302HR.pdf>

Summer in Montana means forest fires and they have begun with a vengeance! Our thoughts are with our friends in the Bitterroot as they face uncertainty that can be especially stressful when children are involved. Here are some things you can do for your family when faced with a natural disaster.

**Heed warnings.** Listen to what officials are saying about evacuations. Abide by their notices. Let your child know that you have things under control.

**Make a plan.** Let all members of the family know what you will do should you need to evacuate. Have a meeting place designated such as a school or a shelter if not at home.

**Maintain routines.** Follow routines as much as possible. This can be difficult if you are evacuated and living in a shelter as there is often little privacy and no schedule. Encourage your child to get up in the morning at his or her regular time, eat as close as possible to your regular schedule. Take walks, play games, and read to help keep your child active and his/her mind off of the crisis.

**Take care of yourself.** Just as flight attendants tell us to "put the oxygen mask on yourself before helping others," we need to do this during natural disasters. We cannot take care of our children well if we do not take care of ourselves. Make sure you are getting enough rest, exercise, nutrition, and have an appropriate outlet for your own stress and fears.

**Listen to your child.** Allow your child to express his/her feelings about the situation. Young children may need to express their feelings through drawings or play. Older children will be able to verbalize their feelings. It is important to let your child know that you are listening, not telling them how to feel, but simply saying that you understand how they feel.

**Talk to your child.** Let them know your feelings too, although limit what you say. Let them know that you are doing everything you can to keep them safe and help them get back home soon. Perhaps, this is a good time to talk with your child about what you do when you feel scared or worried.

**Accept help from others.** Montanans tend to be independent people who do not like to rely on others. During and after a natural disaster is a time when reaching out for help is necessary. Feeling socially connected helps children during disasters. By accepting help from others in the community, such as receiving food from the food bank, your child learns several lessons. These lessons include; compassion, the importance of community and being connected with others, and that it is okay to admit that we all need help at times.

**Many children, especially older ones, will want to help others during a natural disaster. Here are some ideas how your grandchildren can help in your community.**

Find out if children staying in local shelters could use books, toys, or clothing. Have your grandchild go through his things and choose some to give to the children. This can be done for families returning home after evacuations, especially if they've lost homes or possessions.

If families in the shelter have pets with them, your grandchild can put pet food into smaller bags for the families. The kids can personalize the pet food by drawing on the bags.



After the crisis, children can plant trees and plants to replace those lost in a fire.

Older children can start to learn about forest management, water conservation, and fire safety. They could share what they learn with others, possibly with a public display of drawings or poetry or essays. They may want to start some kind of campaign to save trees or water or keep families safe.



## Upcoming Events

### August

**The Montana Department of Health & Human Services, Child and Family Services is hosting a family picnic for Adoptive and Guardianship families at Centennial Park in Helena on August 20th, 12 PM–2 PM.**

Please join them for sun (hopefully), food, fun and activities! All pre/post adoptive families are invited as well as all guardianship families! Tell your friends! Come share your stories, experiences and support with our community...or just come to eat! Who knows, you might even make a friend or two!! See you there!

Please contact the Post Adoption Services Program Manager with RSVP's and questions: Kyla Rock; (406) 841-2464; [krock@mt.gov](mailto:krock@mt.gov)

### September

**The 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Governor's Conference on Aging Is Just Around The Corner.** This 2 1/2-day conference is scheduled to be in **Billings at the Billings Hotel and Convention Center, September 13-15, 2016.** This is a great opportunity for people to receive important information and education on issues impacting seniors, adults with disabilities, families and caregivers.

The conference will welcome four keynote speakers:

- Lance Robertson, Director, DHS Aging Services, State of Oklahoma & Dr. Whitney Bailey, Professor, Oklahoma State University, will speak on "How Families Can Get Ahead Of Care Choices"
- Michael Smull, The Learning Center for Person Centered Practices, will address "How To Have Positive Control Over Your Life"
- Robert Sweetgall, Creative Walking, Inc., who will present "Navigating On The Highway To Health; Choices, Crossroads And Consequences"
- Julie Beckett, advocate and author, will speak to how "One Person Can Make A Difference—The Importance Of Advocacy".

Over 20 breakout sessions are offered throughout the conference. There is something for everyone. Topics will include but are not limited to healthy aging, guardianship issues, protecting Elders from fraud and scams, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, mobility topics and activities, Alzheimer's, dementia and other related disorders, case management, advocacy, Native American topics, Lifespan Respite, caregivers, fair housing, peer supports and mental health 101.

The conference will include the annual centenarian luncheon honoring our Montana Centenarians and an awards banquet sponsored by Home & Community Based Services honoring caregivers and Direct Support programs. Registration is available online at <http://dphhs.mt.gov/sltc/aging/GovernorsConferenceonAging.aspx> or contact Jackie Stoeckel at (406) 444-6061 or [jstoeckel@mt.gov](mailto:jstoeckel@mt.gov) for more information.

### November

**November is National Family Caregivers Month.** Throughout the month of November the Montana Lifespan Respite Coalition will feature information for both caregivers and service providers on how to support caregivers of all types. Keep checking the Coalition's website for more information: <http://dphhs.mt.gov/respite>.



## Services & Agencies

### Legal & Advocacy Services in Montana

**Disability Rights Montana** is the federally-mandated civil rights protection and advocacy system for Montana. They are a federally funded non-profit with the legal authority to represent almost any person with a disability. Their mission is to protect and advocate for the human, legal, and civil rights of Montanans with disabilities while advancing dignity, equality, and self-determination. Disability Rights Montana provides non-legal advocacy and legal representation.

Their attorneys and advocates work in a variety of areas, including education, discrimination, employment, abuse and neglect of people with disabilities, assistance with accessing social security and other public benefits, assistance with accessing vocational rehabilitation services, voting access, and other areas established by their annual priorities and objectives.

**Contact them at: Voice/TDD (406) 449-2344; Toll-free (800) 245-4743; Fax (406) 449-2418**  
**Email: [advocate@disabilityrightsmt.org](mailto:advocate@disabilityrightsmt.org); Web: <http://disabilityrightsmt.org>**

**PLUK is an acronym for Parent's Let's Unite for Kids.** They began in a kitchen in Billings, Montana by two mothers; today, they are federally funded and mandated to exist under IDEA Law to serve and advocate for families that have children with disabilities. They also serve and advocate for adults to help them navigate in this complicated system. PLUK can advocate on various levels for families in schools and communities. **Call them at (406) 255-0540 to reach an advocate.**

**Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA)** is a non-profit law firm that provides legal information, advice and representation free of charge to low-income Montanans. They have offices in Helena, Missoula and Billings, as well as a full-time attorney in Bozeman and Tribal advocates on the Blackfeet and Rocky Boy's Reservations. MLSA serves clients with legal needs in the following areas:

- Family Law (dissolution, parenting plans, guardianships, adoptions)
- Domestic Violence (orders of protection)
- Housing Law (evictions, repairs, security deposits, foreclosures, mobile home issues, foreclosures, public housing)
- Consumer Law (abusive mortgage loan servicing practices, fair debts and collections practices)
- Indian Law (civil legal services, public defender services at the Crow and Fort Belknap Reservations)
- Public Benefits (SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, Medicare)
- Low-income Taxpayer Clinic (tax debts, spouse claims, audits, EITC, liens and levies)
- Please note that MLSA does not provide assistance with criminal law matters except for on the two reservations listed above.

MLSA works closely with local agencies and the legal community to ensure that those in need have access to basic legal assistance. In addition to direct representation, they offer several family law clinics across the state, including in Helena, Bozeman, Missoula and Kalispell. The clinics are a chance for individuals to meet one-on-one with attorneys, free of charge, to get legal advice. We also offer a phone advice project, which connects individuals in more remote areas with attorneys who provide legal advice over the phone. **Contact them at: (800) 666-6899,**

**<http://www.mtlsa.org/>, <http://legaladvce.biz/?id=4018242&rname=mtlawhelp.org&OptId=10>**



**Health & Nutrition**

**Make Snacks and Mealtimes Easy, Fun and Nutritious**

When children go back to school, family life can get hectic, especially during the first couple of weeks, before new routines are established. Quality family time and good nutrition don't have to suffer. Here are a few ways you can make sure after-school snacks and family meals are tasty and full of family bonding time.

**10 Tips for Quality Family Meals**

*Adapted from "A Nutrition Fact Sheet: 10 Tips for Quality Family Meals"*

<http://www.buyeatlivebetter.org/factsheets/factsheet%20family-10tipsforfamilymeals%201.16.pdf>

**Start Slow, Learn as You Go**

If you don't eat any meals together now, just add one meal a week. Breakfast, lunch, or dinner can be family meals.

**It's Not 'What' But 'How' You Feed Your Family**

Simple foods served with love and laughter will outshine gourmet food.

**It Doesn't Have to Be Hot**

Cold sandwiches, apples, and milk can be just as healthy as hot food you worked for hours to prepare.

**Involve Children in Making Meals**

Children, especially younger children, enjoy meals they help fix. If everyone is hungry and in a hurry when they get home, try preparing meals on the weekend.

**Food Choice vs. Forcing Food**

Serious family conflicts occur between parents and children when children are forced to eat. A parent's role is to offer a child safe, healthful food. Offer food on a regular schedule (every two hours for young children). A child's role is to decide to eat the food or not and how much to eat. If a child does not eat the food in a reasonable amount of time, take the food away.



**Cook it Quick but Eat It Slow**

Though you may hurry meal preparation time, allow ample time to enjoy the meal with your family.

**Talk at the Table**

Share positive things that have happened during the day. Perhaps start a mealtime ritual where everyone tells one new thing they learned that day – including mom and dad!

**Don't Answer Phones at Meals**

How often does a phone call interrupt your meals? If you can't stand to ignore a ringing phone, turn off the ringer, use voice mail, or tell people you will call back after dinner.

**Turn the TV Off**

Encourage family members to star in their own lives and relate to each other, rather than to an image on the TV

screen. Record any "absolutely must see" shows that occur during dinnertime.

**Make Mealtimes Matter**

Mealtimes are a great time to catch up on family members' lives and show your family you care about them.

**Pack a Snack Box**

Use a snack box to help you and your family choose healthy snacks. Snack boxes help your children choose a variety of foods for afterschool snacks or other snack times.

Parents or adults choose what goes in the box and children choose what they would like to eat.

1. Have two snack boxes: one for the refrigerator and one for the cupboard.
2. Figure how many snacks you need for one week. Make a list of foods to include in the snack boxes. Include a variety of foods that are crunchy, chewy, creamy, and juicy. Also include foods from all of the of food groups.
3. Each week, add snack foods to the boxes. Family members can choose a snack from the snack boxes after school, after work, or in the evening.
4. Make sure the snacks are ones that your family likes. Create a request sheet that family members can add to each week.

*Adapted from "A Nutrition Fact Sheet: Pack a Snack Box"*

<http://www.buyeatlivebetter.org/factsheets/factsheet%20children-snack%20box%201.16.pdf>

## 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

**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

**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**  
Cathy Brenneman  
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**  
Katrin Flinch  
MSU Extension  
(406) 265-5481 x233

**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  
MT Office on Aging  
(406) 444-6061

**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  
  
Jo Ann Wilson  
(406) 926-1711

**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**  
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  
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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*