

GRG Newsletter



Montana's First Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Conferences

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Montana State University Extension, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, AARP, the Brookdale Foundation, and the Montana Children's Trust Fund, is organizing the first ever Montana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Conference for the coming summer.

The goal of the conference is to provide information to grandparents and other interested persons about the challenges faced by grandparent-headed families as well as resources that are available to them.

Several professional speakers have been lined up to address many of the difficult issues grandparents face from methamphetamine addiction, to childhood diseases. A list of speakers and topics are on page 3 of this newsletter.

In an effort to reach as many grandparents as possible, the conference will be held in two locations—Great Falls on June 10th and Billings on June 17th.

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GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN PROJECT

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We're on the web!
[http://www.montana.edu/
wwwhd/grg/index.htm](http://www.montana.edu/wwwhd/grg/index.htm)

Sandy Bailey, Ph.D.: Project Director
Fonda Porterfield: Newsletter Editor
Shayna Lemke & Fonda Porterfield: Project Coordinators

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Free childcare during the conference will be offered as well.

We are also offering a limited number of scholarships for traveling expenses and registration fees. More information will be provided on the registration form.

For those of you interested in spending the night prior to the conference, a block of hotel rooms have been reserved. Please watch for additional information on how to reserve your room.

Registration for the conference will begin in March. Those on the mailing list will be receiving registration information through the mail. Those not on the mailing list can call the GRG Project office at (406) 994-3395 or email at grg@montana.edu for more information.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

In our continuing effort to support and explore the issues and challenges of grandparents raising grandchildren in Montana, we are asking anyone with questions, concerns, or ideas to please contact us at grg@montana.edu or by calling 994-3395.

If you would like to be part of our listserve, email us and write "Add me to your listserve" in the subject. We will be emailing upcoming events and news related to GRG issues.

We have updated our Resource Guide for GRG's. Email or call us if you need one sent to you.

OPEN CALL: We are looking for adults who were raised by their grandparents and would be interested in speaking at our summer conferences. If you or anyone you know are interested, please contact Fonda or Shayna at 994-3395.



Elephants and grandchildren never forget.

Andy Rooney



Summer Conference Speakers and Topics



The Montana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Project is pleased to announce the following speakers that will be offering their expertise at our first conferences. Careful attention has been given to ensure that a diverse lists of topics are covered to provide well-rounded information to grandparents who are raising their grandchildren as well as professionals working with these families.

- ♥ **Hank Hudson**, Administrator of Human and Community Services Division, DPHHS, will be holding a panel discussion at both conferences about resources for grandparents raising grandchildren.
- ♥ **Anna Whiting-Sorrell** - Family Policy Advisor to the Governor, will be the opening speaker at the Great Falls conference. She will be addressing the future of grandparents raising grandchildren in Montana.
- ♥ **Marcia Goetting, Ph.D.**, MSU Extension Family and Economic Specialist, will be speaking about financial issues faced by grandparents raising grandchildren. She will be speaking at both conferences.
- ♥ **Martina Heavyrunner**, Resource Specialist, Cascade County DPHHS, will be addressing family coping strategies at the Great Falls conference.
- ♥ **David J. Patterson**, Professor of Law at the University of Montana School of Law, will be addressing legal rights and issues relevant to grandparents raising their grandchildren at the Great Falls conference.
- ♥ **Maylinn Smith**, Director of the Indian Law Clinic at the University of Montana, will be addressing legal issues and rights on Indian Reservations at the Great Falls conference.

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Choosing Your Battles and Changing “Battle Plans”

By: Sandra Bailey, Ph.D.

Children who have experienced neglectful or abusive homes have missed out on learning to trust adults. Because of this missing trust, common parenting techniques often do not work. These children have experienced so much loss and fear that they are often hyper-vigilant and believe they need to be in control at all times -- in their minds they need to be prepared for the next crisis whether it is being hit or left alone to care for themselves. According to Keck & Kupecky authors of *Parenting the Hurt Child*, adoptive parents may need to alter standard parenting techniques in handling common parenting battles.

Temper tantrums – instead of trying to reason with the child or giving them a time out, try playing along and using humor. For example saying something like “Oh, I know you can yell louder than that” or “I rate this one a 7 out of 10.”

Refusing to follow household rules – if the school age child continually refuses to put his backpack away in the closet try praising him for wherever he puts it. For example, “How did you know that I wanted your backpack put on the couch instead of the closet – I am planning to clean the closet today.” Wherever the backpack is put each day, tell the child that is just where you wanted it.

Not being ready for school on time - if the child is continually late getting ready for school rather than making it a control battle try a different technique. For a younger child you might arrange with the school so that they know what is going on but bring the child to school however they are dressed and let them finish dressing there. Usually the child won't want this to happen again! Another strategy would be, if the child *wants* to go somewhere, take your time and make *he or she* late, without saying anything the child will get the message.

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All of these examples are cases where the child is misbehaving because they want to be in control. In the past they have not been able to count on adults to take charge. The child needs to learn to let go of the control, however, the use of standard parenting techniques may not work. Using humor in the temper tantrum takes away the power the child thought he would have with the tantrum. This is the same with the backpack. And by continuing to praise the child wherever he leaves the backpack creates a situation where he soon realizes he will never win because wherever he puts it is where you as the parent claim to want it to be.

Unlike parenting other children, parenting the hurt child sometimes requires flexibility rather than consistency. Keck & Kupecky claim that by changing what you want, the child soon realizes that you are in control not him. Once the child feels safe then moving to more standard parenting practices can be

Summer Conference Speakers Cont.

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- ♥ **Maureen McInnis, MS, LCPC**, will be speaking in Great Falls about setting boundaries with adolescents in today's society.
- ♥ **Jim Yellowtail**, Attorney at Elk River Law Office, will be speaking at the Billings conference about legal matters related to grandparents raising grandchildren on Indian reservations.
- ♥ **Jill Thorngren, Ph.D., LCPC**, Associate Professor Marriage and Family Counseling at Montana State University-Bozeman, will be speaking about families adapting to change.
- ♥ **Brenda Roche, Ph.D., LP**, Neuropsychologist/Program Evaluator, will be speaking at both conferences about struggling with addiction and the impacts on families.



"Steps to a New You" Program Helps Older Adults See Nutrition and a Healthy Lifestyle in a Positive Light

By: Lynn Paul, Ed.D

Steps to a New You helps people of all ages look at food, activity and body image in a new way. Paul says "People who have been through the program have gotten out of the diet mentality and off the weight rollercoaster. They're telling us they're thankful for helping them see nutrition and healthy lifestyle in a different way."

People said they were thankful for becoming more mindful of their lifestyle decisions. For example, they ate when they were hungry instead of out of habit, paid attention to what, and how much, they were putting in their mouths, and made choices such as walking up the stairs instead of taking the elevator.

The program doesn't prescribe a certain amount of exercise or a particular diet. Rather, it uses discussion, self-monitoring through pedometer use, and real-life demonstrations of concepts like portion size to increase awareness of activity and nutrition. Then, it invites individuals to experiment a little to find sustainable changes they can make on their own toward achieving a healthy lifestyle. Paul said, "The class is designed to seek healthy physical, nutritional and emotional changes that will work for each person."

For example, one "steps" graduate who calculated she sat 10 hours a day started walking to and from work. The increased activity reduced her stress.

After seven weeks, participants' perceptions about weight and appearance had made some healthy changes too, said Paul.

"Thankfully, most people at the end of the class realized that the true worth of a person is not measured by appearance and looks," Paul noted.

MSU Extension educators will teach the "Steps to a New You" program throughout Montana, so contact your local county Extension office.



Grandparent Support Groups Across Montana

Billings:

Bernie Mason
P.O. Box 35021
Billings, MT 59107
256-2828

The support group is on hiatus; call if you are interested. There is an educational portion of the meeting and a time to share and discuss special concerns.

Bozeman:

Shayna Lemke
316 A Herrick Hall
Bozeman, MT 59715
994-3395 or 994-3833

This support group will be starting up in March. Child-care provided.

Browning:

Carrie Jackson
Eagle Shield Center
P.O. Box 76
Browning, MT 59417
338-7257

This support group is located on the Blackfeet Reservation. The Native American Elder Family Caregiver Support Program offers group meetings once a month, usually on Tuesdays 10:00 to 12:00.

Butte:

Jeff Jensen
Butte 4C's
101 E. Broadway
Butte, MT 59701
723-4019
800-794-4061
www.butte4-cs.org
Support Group pending.

Colstrip:

Jennifer Anderson
P.O. Box 65
Forsyth, MT 59327
346-7320

New support group starting.

Dillon:

Jeff Jensen
723-4019
800-794-4061
Support group pending

Great Falls:

Geri Laubnetz
Partnership Project
1101 7th Ave So.
Great Falls, MT 59403
268-6762
Claire Delguerra
Cascade Extension
454-6980

The support group meets from 11:30-1 PM one Tuesday per month.

Helena:

Jeannette B. Mattfeldt
562 Broadway
Helena, MT 59601
442-8207

This group meets the 1st & 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:30 in the State AARP office.

Joliet

Sharon Baldwin
MSU Extension Agent
Carbon County
PO Box 230
Joliet, MT 59041
962-3522

This support group is new and just starting up in Carbon County.

Lewistown:

Denise Seilstadt
712 W. Main
Lewistown, MT 59457
New support group starting.

Kalispell:

Melody Domphe
The Nurturing Center, Inc.
146 3rd Ave. W.
Kalispell, MT 59901
756-1414

This group is on hiatus; call if you are interested.

Missoula:

Kathy Revello, MSU Extension
Missoula County Agent
256-4208
Amy Westereng
Families First Parenting Program
815 E. Front St. Suite 3
Missoula, MT 59802

This support group meets the second Tuesday of each month, October-June, 6:30 – 8 pm.

Poplar and Wolf Point:

Ardis Oelkers
MSU Extension
Culbertson, MT 59218
787-5312

This support group is just starting up, call for more information. New members are welcome.

Rocky Boy Reservation:

Evelyn Gopher
Rocky Boy Elementary School
Box Elder, MT
395-4474 ext 229

The support group meets at 4:45 pm 1-2 times per month.

What is a Grandpa?

A sharer of fun
A drier of tears
A giver of hugs
A chaser of fears.
What is a Grandpa?
It's easy to see-
A great guy to have
On the family tree.



What is a Grandmother?

She's a little bit of magic
With a twinkle in her eye
She's loving hugs & kisses
In a generous supply
She's a gift that grows more precious
As every year goes by!



Thank you to
Jeannette Mattfeldt
for providing these poems.
