



# Enriching the Parent

Information & Support  
for Families of Children with Special Needs  
Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, & Yancey counties

Fall Issue  
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## FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK OF THE HIGH COUNTRY

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**An Affiliate of  
Family Support Network-  
North Carolina**

**With Support From**

Appalachian State University  
Children's Developmental Services  
Agency—Blue Ridge  
High County United Way  
Friends of Family Support  
Network—High County  
Avery Partnership for Children  
Mitchell-Yancey Partnership for  
Children

## Loneliness As Harmful as Smoking and Obesity, Say Scientists

By Richard Alleyne

Lack of connection with others not only makes us unhappy but is also bad for the wellbeing of the body and mind, research finds. A sense of rejection or isolation increases blood pressure, stress levels and general wear and tear as well as increases your chances of developing Alzheimer's disease. It also reduces will power and perseverance, thus affecting the ability to follow a healthy lifestyle, according to scientists.

*Richard Alleyne is a Science Correspondent in Chicago for www.telegraph.co.uk*

## How We Can Help

Here at Parent to Parent FSN-HC, we are here to help you overcome the obstacles that often stand in the way of the goals you have set for your children and your family. Whether you are wanting to talk to a trained Support Parent who has a child with similar needs, need help finding information, resources and services, or would just like to know more about a particular special need, disability or diagnosis, we can help provide you with the support and understanding that are needed during the most difficult and trying of times.

We can provide information and support for families who have a premature infant, a child with a disability, emotional or behavioral challenge, chronic illness, or a family who has experienced the death of a child. We want you to know that you don't have to be alone as you work through challenges.

If you are seeking connection with someone who has lived with similar circumstances/story, we can match your family one-to-one with a trained, volunteer Support Parent who understands and empathizes with you. We also sponsor workshops, trainings and support groups so that parents have a variety of options

when it comes to seeking the care and support that they need.

At Parent to Parent FSN-HC, we promote collaboration among parents, families and service providers by supporting professionals working with families who are caring for children with special needs.

One of our current goals is to bring attention to Ability Awareness—what our children can do—by offering presentations to churches. Please let us know if that is something we can do for you. Please share this information and help us reach out to others who may not know about our services. Thank you.

## What Others Have Said:

"Parent to Parent FSN-HC took all the fear away from me in caring for my grandson... they are a wonderful resource!" -G.

"Parent to Parent FSN-HC helps parents realize that they can have a sense of humor even when they are struggling." -C.H.

"Family Support Network-HC has a way of meeting people right where they are and providing tremendous support while letting them make their own choices and learning to believe in their own strengths." -A.F.

## Become a "FRIEND OF FSN-HC"

Help us grow and increase our community connections. It is simple! We are looking for individuals in each of our counties who would like to help "spread the word" about Parent to Parent FSN-HC. Our Friends of FSN-HC support our Advisory Board and staff by making a commitment to talk about the work of our program on a regular basis with their network of friends and co-workers. The Friends members will receive our newsletters and regular communication from staff so they will always have news to share. Call today to volunteer!

**866-812-3122**

**ENRICHING**

# Telling the Kids: We Need to Spend Less

By Karen DeBord, Extension Specialist, Child Development

How is the financial crisis affecting your family? Some children may feel anxious or depressed. They see how parents respond. If parents are irritable and in constant conflict over money matters, it is more likely that children will be negatively affected.

The job loss or the loss of income can and will stress you as an adult, but you will be adding an extra layer of stress if matters are not handled correctly within the family.

## INVOLVE THE CHILDREN TO THE EXTENT THEY CAN MANAGE THE INFORMATION

1. Tell the children enough to help them understand your stress and the budgetary reality. You might say: "I am a little worried right now about work and making money. I wanted you to know what's going on. The main thing to remember is we (I) love you and am working on a plan, but I will have to say NO to many things that cost money. I hope you can understand. It's hard but we can do this together!"

2. Keep the communication door open. Kids talk with other kids, and they may hear rumors. Invite children to ask you whatever they want, and say that you will try to answer them truthfully. Let your kids know that many families are feeling the money crunch. They are not alone.

## USE THIS AS A TEACHABLE MOMENT ABOUT BUDGETS AND MONEY MANAGEMENT

3. This is really a teachable moment when it comes to understanding budgets. Invite adolescents and teens to sit with you while you write out checks and make payments to see your balance reduce. Let them use the calculator. Call it a budget or spending plan, involve them in making a list of what is NEEDED during the month, and help them research the costs for each item. Help them see how buying at a second-hand, co-op store, or at a yard sale can bring a bargain on needed items.

## SPEND MORE TIME TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

4. Admit that you are stressed, and spend more time with the family doing just family things. Parents may find this a nice escape to ride bikes, take a walk, play cards, a board game or make a batch of biscuits together.

## PLAN AND STICK TO A ROUTINE

5. As always, stick to a routine. An expected and calm bedtime routine is a great parenting practice and can be soothing and calming for parent and child. Planning bath time, limiting television, giving a back rub, and reading a book are all activities that bring parent and child closer together.

## PRAISE CHILDREN FOR COST-SAVING PRACTICES

6. Pay close attention to your child's moods. Often hope and convey that they are safe and have a plan. Praise them for contributing to the family savings and going without some things they thought they needed.

7. Think of ways that kids can be a part of the solution for the family. Ask them for cost-cutting ideas. Talk about turning out the lights and saving energy.

8. Take care of yourself. Find some quiet relaxation time. Find time to think, plan, and job hunt. Network and ask all of the people you know for job leads and to compare tips for cost-cutting.

What other ideas might you have? Have you thought about coupon clipping, washing only full loads of clothes, cleaning and replacing your furnace filters, cooking a large casserole and stew on Sunday then stretching those meals out all week long. What else?



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## Fun Family Activities

### Animals Card Game (courtesy of familyfun.go.com)

This card game is a loud version of war—simple enough for little kids, yet rowdy enough to entertain the loudest.

WHAT YOU NEED: Deck of cards

How to Play:

1. Each player chooses an animal name to play under. The longer the name, the better (e.g. hippopotamus). The cards are all dealt and placed facedown in piles in front of each player.
2. Players go around the table and turning over their top card and placing it faceup in their own discard pile. When a player turns up a card that matches one on another pile, the two pile owners race to say each other's animal name 3 times. The first to do so gets the other's discard pile. Play continues until someone has won all the cards.

VARIATION: Players make the animal's sound instead of calling its name.

### Recipe Corner: Popcorn Banana Munch-Mix (familyfun.go.com)

Here's a fun variation on granola and gorp. Simply start with cheesy popcorn, then mix in your favorite healthy snack foods.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups cheese-flavored popcorn
- 1/2 to 1 cup banana chips, broken into small pieces
- 1 cup dry-roasted peanuts
- 1/2 to 1 cup sweetened, dried cranberries



1. Measure all ingredients into a big bowl (you can substitute your family's favorite snack food, if desired)
2. Stir well. Makes 5 to 6 cups.

## Love and Logic:

### One Parent Playing the Role of Two

Raising children is a challenge to most parents, but it can be overwhelming to those who try to play the role of both Mom and Dad. Although single parents are in sharp contrast to the traditional families of our parent's generation, today's single parents are no longer unique. However, they do face special difficulties.

#### Finding Enough Time

Juggling a household, a job (sometimes two jobs), and the needs of their children is the hardest challenge for most parents. Most are frustrated by their lack of time and feelings of guilt. They feel bad about not spending enough time with their children, not making time for themselves, and the impact of their divorce on the family.

An open and honest attitude about their situation can foster a healthy parent-child relationship. A single parent says to Erica, "I'm in a real tough spot. I'd love to spend more time with you, but it's just not possible right now. How do you think we can make the best of our time together?"

When parents silently bury their feelings, their guilt rubs off onto their children. If parents come through with the attitude, "Oh you poor kids—it's sad how much I have to work to support us," children will become resentful and play on their parents' guilt. It's much healthier to say, "Aren't we lucky that I have a good job so we can have enough clothes and food? Although it's sometimes hard on us, we have lots to be thankful for." By turning the situation into a positive, children often rise to the occasion with their support.

#### Respect

Respect is sometimes more difficult for single parents who, tired and overburdened with responsibilities, might find it easier to yell at their children at the end of a hard day. We earn respect by making sure we communicate with our children in a respectful manner, and vice versa.

In the follow example, Mom earns Ritchie's respect by expressing her feelings in a calm manner: "I don't feel like being around you today if you're going to talk rudely. Why don't you go some place for a while—on a walk or to your room. You're welcome back when you decide to talk nicely." In this case mom made it clear that she wouldn't tolerate disrespectful behavior. She also modeled to Ritchie how to take good of herself as opposed to criticizing Ritchie's behavior. In so doing, she reduced a lot of personal stress, time and effort. This mother is a very effective single parent.

## Area Support Groups and Other News

**Alleghany County:** First & Third Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at The Family Resource Center, Sparta. For more information or to RSVP contact Norma at 336-246-3222 or 1-866-812-3122.

**Ashe County:** Last Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at Midway Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, 1670 Mount Jefferson Rd., West Jefferson. For more information or to RSVP contact Norma at 336-246-3222 or 1-866-812-3122. Meal provided with RSVP.

**Mitchell & Yancey Counties:** First Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at the Spruce Pine United Methodist Church. For more information or to RSVP, contact Teresa Emory at 682-4772 or 1-866-448-5781. Meal and childcare provided with RSVP. A group in Burnsville will be starting soon. Contact Teresa Emory if you are interested.

**Watauga County:** Second Friday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at Unitarian Fellowship "House" 381 E. King Street, Boone (Beside the Playhouse). For more information or to RSVP contact Kaaren at 828-262-6089 or 1-866-812-3122. Meal and childcare provided with RSVP.

**Wilkes County:** Last Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at "Our House" 203 E. Main Street, Wilkesboro. For more information or to RSVP contact Norma at 336-246-3222 or 1-866-812-3122. Snacks will be served.

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#### Involved Parent. Successful Kids. GreatSchools.net

**GreatSchools.net**, is a website dedicated to helping parents get involved with their children's education. **GreatSchools** empowers and inspires parents to be involved in their children's development and educational success. They offer preschool, elementary, middle, and high school information for Public, Private, and Charter schools nation wide.

The website has many tips on great parenting from helping with Academics, Learning Disabilities, Improving your school, and Community. There are also groups you can locate in you community that you can discuss many topics with to what other parents think about schools, to helping you deal with your child's learning disabilities.

There are many ideas and tips available from managing home life, advice columns, helping with homework, and simply managing your child.

#### Be Involved!

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We have just added a new book to our lending library, entitled Full Life Ahead: A Workbook and Guide to Adult Life for Students and Families of Students with Disabilities. It includes 18 chapters with helpful tips such as how to balance life with advocacy and true family success stories. Come check it out today!

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Please support our program so that we can continue to serve families and the community. Any help you can give will be very appreciated. Please detach this form and send any donations to the address below. Donations are tax deductible.

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