



Partners for Success
**Family Support and Resource
Center**

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Resource Center**

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**Maryland School for the Deaf
Outreach Department**

Have you ever wondered where you can find additional information about Deaf and Hard of Hearing social and sporting events, workshops, educational opportunities, and more?

The Outreach Department at the Maryland School for the Deaf is a resource for deaf and hard of hearing students, families and professionals. MSD has an email list you can subscribe to with pertinent information and resources.

Visit <http://eepurl.com/gtM-5> to sign up today.

For more information, contact Erin Buck at (301) 360-2054 or erin.buck@msd.edu.

ODHH Advisory Council, Education Sub-Committee

**FREE Family Event in
Harford County**

Saturday, December 17

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Applewood Farm

4435 Prospect Road, Whiteford, MD 21160

Activities include: hayrides, petting zoo, kiddy maze, lawn bowling, reindeer antler toss, decorative 1773 log barn, and more.

The Applewood Express Train Ride is also fun for the whole family at \$3.00 per person.

In addition to the fun that Applewood Farm has to offer, this is a wonderful opportunity for families with deaf and hard of hearing children from all over the state to gather and have a great time!

For directions, visit their website at www.applewoodfarm.org.

Translate Hebrew to ASL

If you are interested in learning how to sign or translate Hebrew to ASL visit <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/elcms/jewniverse/signing-shema.shtml>

*The Family Support & Resource
Center Wishes Everyone A Very
Happy Holiday Season!*

Maryland Makes Changes to the Infants & Toddlers Program

Beginning December, 2011, families will have the choice to continue early intervention services through an IFSP beyond age three until their child's fourth birthday. This Option is available for a family if a child has a current IFSP and is determined eligible for preschool special education and related services as a child with a disability. By a child's 4th birthday, they must transition to services through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

The Extended IFSP Option will continue to promote school readiness for young children with disabilities by fostering educational proficiency, while at the same time, providing families with the training and support they need to promote their children's development.

For more information about the Extended Individualized Family Service Plan Option for children with disabilities age three to age four, visit the Maryland State Department of Education website at www.MarylandPublicSchools.org and click on the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services and under Branches, click on the Early Childhood Intervention Education Branch.

Managing Holiday Stress

By: **Anshu Basnyat, LCPC**, www.theempoweredparent.net

It's that time of the year. Holidays! As Nepali Hindu, my holiday season started at the beginning of October with Dasain and we finished the fifth and final day of Tihar on October 28th. It is also called Bhai Tika, a day when sisters celebrate brothers for their long life, prosperity, and all things good. For others, Eid al-adha was on November 6, 2011 and soon to follow will be Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa. Many cultures celebrate with festivities including great feasts, gift giving, visiting places of worships, holiday parties, and other traditions. It is a time to celebrate and rejoice with family and friends. Unfortunately for many, it is also a time to endure lot of stress. As parents, managing our stress levels not only benefits us, but it also benefits our children. There is this vicious, circular pattern that happens when we experience stress. If parents are stressed, then our children will be stressed and vice versa. Getting a good understanding of how our stress develops and perpetuates is crucial in relieving our stress and improving our quality of life.

There are two types of stress: the good and the bad. Think of it as similar to good cholesterol and bad cholesterol in our body. The good stress is called eustress, which is minor anxiety that ignites us to perform better, experience feelings of fulfillment and other positive feelings. For example, your child may be anxious about an upcoming Math test and to prepare for it she studies effectively and the end result is that she earns a good grade on the test. On the other hand, bad stress is called distress, where we become very anxious and do not feel too good. A whole host of things may be negatively affected by distress. Staying with the same example of the Math test, let's say your child is very anxious about the test and does not feel good, may have stomach aches, thinks of how a bad grade will ruin her life, etc. Due to these uncomfortable side effects, she decides she cannot handle it so ends up either not studying at all or studies too hard to the point that anxiety overwhelms her and she does not perform well on the test. The latter type is the focus here because this is the kind that drives us crazy during the holidays!

During the holidays, the triggers of stress tend to be finances, physical demands, and relationships. Understanding these common holiday triggers can help in preventing holiday meltdowns. If you are someone like me who embraces multicultural holidays, then your stress triggers can be complicated further. But that is a whole another topic altogether. Taking a closer look at how each

of these triggers play out in our holiday routine is imperative in combating holiday stress.

Financially, the whole world is suffering more than it has in the recent past. There is so much economic uncertainty today that people are already feeling anxious. Then you consider high unemployment and inflation impacting our daily lives, the anxiety increases manifold. And then you consider the added expenses of gifts, travel, food, and entertainment, no wonder people's stress level skyrocket during the holidays. Evidence can be found when you see people running around like chickens with their heads cut off in the malls, supermarkets, schools, in their homes, and wherever else they may be.

As if financial difficulties were not enough, now we consider the physical demands that contribute to stress levels. Even the most holiday enthusiast will admit that the extra shopping and socializing can be draining. When we experience exhaustion, our body releases stress hormones that make us more susceptible to illnesses like the common cold and other unwanted medical problems. There just is not enough time in a day to get all we need to accomplish during the holidays so we start cutting corners. Ironically, sleep and exercise, which releases hormones that help to reduce stress, are usually compromised to deal with the physical demands. You can see how this perpetuates a vicious cycle.

Another interesting dynamic that occurs during the holidays involve our loved ones. As a child, I had bought into the idea that holidays were created so family and friends can spend more time together and enjoy each other's company. As an adult, the sparkles of the holidays fade away as we encounter family conflicts and misunderstandings. On top of it, we attempt to make everyone happy. Instead, everyone seems to be getting on each other's nerves and wishing they were somewhere else- "anywhere else besides here!" It happens to the best of us, doesn't it? Don't worry; there are strategies to counteract these dreadful experiences and in the process, set good examples for your children so they learn to regulate their emotions effectively.

10 Tips On Managing Holiday Stress

By: **Anshu Basnyat, LCPC**, www.theempoweredparent.net

Prioritize.

Plan ahead and make a list of all the things you want to accomplish this holiday season. Now put them into three categories (Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not too important) and allocate your time, resources, and energy accordingly.

Feel comfortable saying “no”.

It is completely okay to say no. There is no rule in life that says you have to attend every holiday party you are invited to, buy gifts for everyone you consider friends and/or family, buy gifts that are on your kids’ wish list, etc.

Set Limits.

Limits can be set by creating a budget for gifts (and sticking to it!), on your time, how much food you’ll make, etc. People who genuinely care about you will understand or get over it, including your children. If they don’t, then you may have to rethink how the relationship can change to reduce your stress.

Cut corners.

“Baked goods” does not have to mean “home baked goods.” Sure it tastes better and is more meaningful, but if you have a hundred other things you have to take care of then it is okay that baking doesn’t make the priority list. Besides, not everyone is a baker. Another way to cut corners is to send holiday cards only to those you have regular contact with. Further cut corners by writing personal notes to a few who have been there for you through thick and thin.

Maintain your healthy habits.

Eating right, exercising, and getting enough sleep are not negotiable. Additionally, attending to medical needs and maintaining a positive attitude are paramount in staying healthy during the holidays.

Take a breather.

Schedule it if you have to! Take 15-20 minutes a day to have time to meditate, listen to music, read, or whatever you enjoy doing. Self-care is mandatory to have a stress free holiday season.

Let it go (aka L.I.G.).

This is especially true when we hit bumps in our relationships. Family members get into arguments, which in the big scheme of things, are about things that do not really matter. So learning to forgive and move on is important to maintain positive, healthy relationships.

Seek professional help if necessary.

Sometimes no matter how hard we try, it is hard to escape the “blues” and severe anxiety. Some people experience Seasonal Affective Disorder during the holidays or certain times of the year, and if you suspect you are one of these people then please seek help. Remember that seeking help is a sign of strength rather than weakness.

Keep your kids busy.

Boredom leads to trouble. Keeping the kids entertained with board games, books, writing stories, arts and crafts, coloring, outside play, limited tv/computer/video game time, naps, music, dancing, having them help you in cooking, cleaning, etc. is key in maintaining your and the kids sanity. Besides, keeping the kids engaged is good for their brain plasticity, the brain’s ability to learn from experiences and make them smarter!

Have fun!

Enjoy the moments and be grateful for all the wonderful people, things, and experiences you have in your life. Love, life, and laugh this holiday season!



**Family Support and
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E-mail: partners@msd.edu

A statewide support service for families with children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and the professionals who support them.



Attention Parents!!

Rachael Plotkin, a doctoral student in Clinical Psychology at Gallaudet University needs your help in a research study focused on you and your child.

In order to participate:

- You and your spouse must be hearing parents.
- You must be raising a child who is between the ages of 3 and 10 with a moderate to profound hearing loss.

The study will involve you completing one demographic questionnaire and three self-administered measures.

The study will require approximately 35 minutes and you will be compensated \$15.

For more information, contact Rachael at Rachael.plotkin@gallaudet.edu.

Mark Your Calendar Today

December 7, 2011

Just For Mom's
7:00 - 8:30 PM

Maryland School for the Deaf - Columbia Campus
8169 Old Montgomery Road, Ellicott City, MD 21043
Denton (Main) Building, Gym
Self Defense Strategies

Learn self defense strategies from a trained instructor.
Wear comfortable clothing for this fun and interactive workshop.

December 17, 2011

FREE Family Event in Harford County
1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
Applewood Farm

4435 Prospect Road, Whiteford, MD 21160
FREE get together for families who have deaf or hard of hearing children. hayrides, petting zoo, kiddy maze, lawn bowling, reindeer antler toss, decorative 1773 log barn, and more.

January 25, 2012

Just For Mom's, Self Esteem Issues
7:00 - 8:30 PM

Maryland School for the Deaf - Columbia Campus
8169 Old Montgomery Road, Ellicott City, MD 21043
Denton (Main) Building, Multi Purpose Room

February 20, 2012

2012 Deaf & Hard of Hearing Legislative
Awareness Day

Department of Legislative Services Building
Joint Hearing Room, 1st Floor
Annapolis, MD
2:00 - 8:00 PM

Join the Maryland Governors Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) for this exciting Legislative Awareness Day. Activities include advocacy training, awards ceremony, meet with your legislators and view a House Session.

For more information, visit the ODHH website at www.odhh.maryland.gov.

April 14, 2012

8:30 - 3:00 PM

ADHD: Perspectives on Behavior & Parenting
Washington County Technical High School
Hagerstown, MD

Jason Barth will look into the various perspectives on childhood behavior, including clinical diagnostics for mental and behavioral disorders of childhood and behavior-specific interventions.
\$15 per person. Space is limited.

For more information about any of the workshops listed above, please contact Cheri Dowling at 443-277-8899 (v/text) or cheri.dowling@msd.edu.