

# LINK-AGES

Resources and Information for All Families

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## January, 2007

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**Pueblo Initiative for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren**

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As you may have realized, I don't usually use my own family as a base for articles in this newsletter. This newsletter is research-based information that is for everyone to use. However, as you will see on the last page, I had an experience that made me aware of a need for written family medical histories. There was no danger to anyone, but I realized that I had not done a complete job of "educating" my own

children. Communication is an important aspect of all facets of family life, but in the medical field it is often ignored. Do your part to help your family be good communicators with doctors, who may not ask the questions that you need asked.



Lois Illick,  
 Extension Agent,  
 Colorado State University  
 Cooperative Extension

## Toy Action Guide – What types of toys do you offer?

Are you constantly faced with decisions about what toys to buy and what toys to avoid? Do the toys you offer enhance children's natural ability to engage in imaginative, meaningful play, allowing them to use their own imaginations, creativity, and problem solving skills?

**TRUCE, Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment**, has developed a Toy Action Guide, intended to help adults promote children's creative and constructive play by making informed choices about toys, and by working with others at home, school and in the community to promote positive play and toys.

A sampling of ideas from the Toy Action Guide:

Avoid toys that:

- Lure infants and toddlers into the electronic media culture
- Make violence themes the focus of play
- Exploit parents' desire to be "good parents"
- Turn TV into the controller of play

Choose toys that promote:

- dramatic play,
- manipulate play with small play objects,
- support creative arts.



To learn more about TRUCE, The Toy Action Guide, visit [www.truceteachers.org](http://www.truceteachers.org)

## LINK-AGES GRANDPARENT SECTION

## 10 Suggestions for Effective Parenting

Don Schmitz & The Grandkids and Me Foundation

- 1. Parents who care about the well being of their children will spend time with them.**  
This may mean fewer hours at work, with your friends or less time with your own partner. There is no substitute for time together.
- 2. Discipline is essential.**  
Discipline involves teaching your children to make choices. Choices require trust and patience. Reminders may be necessary about the choices your child has made.
- 3. Home is a place for peace and relaxation.**  
The feeling of being safe and secure makes a house a home. Children should look to their home as a haven, a place to be themselves and accepted.
- 4. Education is to children as cat is to mouse.**  
A parent's responsibility is to provide the education. The teachers, schools, and libraries are all part of the education that the parent manages. School is for parents as well as students; attend school regularly.
- 5. Parents are the first call for help.**  
If your child has a problem, all other commitments need to be put aside. Make time for children's needs first.
- 6. Friendship is a must for all children.**  
Make an effort to support your child's relationships. Friendships include adults as well as their peers. Parents can encourage friendships by welcoming children into their homes for play dates and sleep-overs. Saturday mornings are great time to invite some friends over for breakfast.
- 7. Parent's make the rules.**  
Discussion about rules and reminders are a must. Time out and removal of activities are effective methods of teaching children that not following guidelines comes with a consequence.
- 8. Parents lead by example.**  
The old rule, "It's not what I say, but what I do" is most important. Grandparent's can be wonderful mentors for your children. Encourage the involvement of extended family and friends.
- 9. Parents respect your own parents.**  
When we respect our parents, we provide the example for our children to treat their parents with respect and our grandchildren will do the same.
- 10. Talk with your children every day.**  
Children need time to talk with their parents each day. Encourage their thoughts by asking open-ended questions. Listen carefully with an open mind.



## How does second-hand smoke affect my children?

Children are especially vulnerable to secondhand smoke exposure because their bodies are not yet fully developed, including their lungs. Children are growing and, per pound of weight, drinking more water, eating more food and breathing more air than adults. Therefore, children absorb greater doses than adults from the same exposure levels.

Children's enzyme systems, which break down toxins in the body, are also not fully developed, so they have a harder time processing the cancer-causing chemicals. In addition, children are closer to the floor than adults where heavier chemicals tend to collect.

Children who breathe secondhand smoke are more likely to have:

- ear infections
- wheezing and coughing spells
- asthma attacks
- allergies
- bronchitis and pneumonia



Secondhand smoke exposure can also lead to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) as well as behavior and learning problems in children.

Children with asthma are especially at risk from exposure to secondhand smoke because it can trigger asthma episodes and increase the severity of attacks. The number of children in the United States with asthma has nearly doubled over the past several years, reaching epidemic proportions in preschool and school-aged children.

**"Take it Outside"** Colorado STEPP (State Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership)

## Food Conflicts Common with Preschool Children

Knowing what to expect could prevent many food conflicts between parents and their preschool children. Preschool children are learning to do things for themselves. The things they like to do can change from day to day. The foods they will eat or like to eat also change from day to day.

Or, preschoolers may want to eat the same food again and again. These are called "food jags." These behaviors are common and usually change or disappear in a few days or weeks.

To handle a food jag, the following may be helpful hints: give the child

attention that does not center on eating behaviors. Serve a variety of foods in small amounts. Include a favorite food in a small amount as one of several healthy food choices. Do not bribe or threaten. Quietly remove the uneaten food at the end of the meal. Do not scold for not eating.

Be consistent at every meal or snack and the child will learn mealtime is for eating and not a time for attention getting.



*preschoolers may want to eat the same food again and again*

Family Matters CSU Cooperative Extension  
October 2006

## Snowman Soup Cocoa Mix

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups powdered milk
- 2 cups powdered sugar or Splenda®
- 1 cup baking cocoa
- 2 tsp cornstarch
- 1 tsp salt

Mix all ingredients together and sift.

One mix recipe will yield about 22 3-tablespoon servings.

### Additional ingredients to prepare individual Snowman Soup servings:

- Small wrapped or unwrapped candy canes
- Mini-marshmallows
- Hershey's Kisses
- Snack-size plastic zip-top bags

Place 3 Tbs of mix in a snack-size zip-top plastic bag. Place a small candy cane, a few mini-marshmallows and a Hershey's Kiss or two in another snack-size bag. Put bags into a treat sack (available in the candy making sections of hobby and craft stores), cloth bag or mug, and label as "Snowman Soup". Attach preparation instructions or the poem.



Snowman Soup

I was told you've been real good this year  
 Always glad to hear it  
 With freezing weather drawing near  
 You'll need to warm the spirit  
 So here's a little Snowman Soup  
 Complete with stirring stick  
 Add hot water, sip it slow  
 It's sure to do the trick!



Snowman Soup

When it's so cold that you holler and whoop,  
 It's time to bring out the Snowman Soup!

Pour the packet in a mug. Add the snowballs too.  
 And throw in the kisses from the snowman to you.

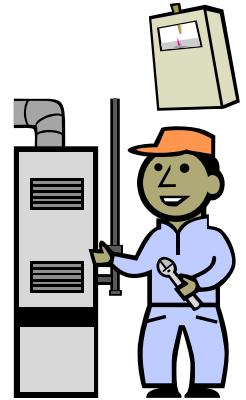
Now fill with hot water and use the cane to stir it.  
 Sip slowly and soon you'll feel the warm winter spirit!

## Winterization Checklist

The following checklist was provided by RE/Max Alliance:

- Seal open areas around doors and windows
- Seal any holes or gaps in drywall
- Replace old windows with energy efficient windows
- Make sure your attic is properly insulated
- Check your furnace filter
- Check your thermostat; consider replacing with setback thermostat that will program the temperature of your home

- Check your heating vents and vacuum if necessary
- Have your fireplace inspected and cleaned
- Replace loose shingles on roof
- Blowout outdoor irrigation
- Clean water and leaves out of gutters
- Retro-fit your vaulted ceiling insulation if necessary



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## Electric Safety Tips – Indoor Safety

Make sure all electrical cords are in good condition, not frayed or cracked. Put them in a location that is out of the way, but never nail or staple cords to any surface.

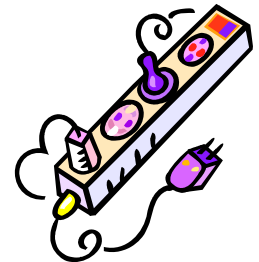
Remember that extension cords are meant to be temporary sources of power. If you need a permanent power source have a licensed electrician rewire the circuit.

Make sure light bulbs are the appropriate wattage for each fixture and that circuit breakers and fuses are the correct size. Failing

to do so can create a fire hazard.

Halogen floor lamps operate at higher temperatures than other lighting, so keep them safely away from combustible materials, and don't leave halogen lamps on when you leave the room or when you are not home.

Source: Aquila



## Calendar:

January is: Chicken Soup Month  
Oatmeal Month  
Hot Tea Month

Try to keep warm!!!!

January 9<sup>th</sup> – Start “Strong Women Strong Bones” class CSU Cooperative Extension  
January 10<sup>th</sup> – Colorado City Grandparents Raising Grandchildren group meeting  
January 13<sup>th</sup> – Better Kid Care 9 a.m. Head Start building Rm 209 – call 583-6566  
January 17<sup>th</sup> – Grandparents Raising Grandchildren 9 a.m. – Hope for Children  
January 18<sup>th</sup> – Children in the Middle (Divorce education) 6 p.m. – Call 583-6566 to register  
January 20<sup>th</sup> – Plastics recycling day – State Fair Grounds (#1 and #2 plastics only)  
February 3<sup>rd</sup> – Eagle Day at the reservoir  
February 24<sup>th</sup> – Presentation on Sensory Integration in Children 9 a.m. – PCC



## Resources and Information for All Families

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**Don't Forget! A new Grandparents Raising Grandchildren group is starting January 10<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. in the Colorado City Recreation Center, 5000 Cuerno Verde Dr. Call Judith (560-5886) or Dee Rebensdorf (686-3804) for more information.**

## Family Medical Histories

I got a rude awakening from my grown son this fall – he didn't know our family medical history! As unimportant as that sounds, familial diseases such as diabetes and heart disease all bear watching by doctors, even in younger people. I had kept all the family history but it never occurred to me that I hadn't completely communicated this to my children.

The Surgeon General has implemented a new free website that helps alleviate this problem. At <http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory> you can enter your history from grandparents down to children for the major threats of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, colon cancer, breast cancer and ovarian cancer. You are also able to enter other diseases that affect your particular family. The program is private; not saved on the website; and very user friendly. The results can be printed in a family tree format or a chart format for easy reference by you, your doctor or by children. This is well worth the short amount of time it takes to do this, in order to help your whole family be better medical advocates for themselves.



*Give a copy of your family history to your doctor for your medical file.*