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*List complete as of Nov. 1. Our apologies  
for any errors or omissions.*

**Comfort in Crisis**

**Steps for Helping Your Child**

By Elisabeth Tullis, M.F.T.

Imagine driving down I-95 on your way to a family gathering for the holidays. Another vehicle cuts across your lane and within seconds you are part of a multi-car accident. You, your spouse and your kids seem okay, and your car is banged up but fixable.

Two weeks later, your six-year-old son is not sleeping through the night. Getting him into a car becomes a tug-of-war as he creates many reasons to stay "safe" at home. Meanwhile, your daughter won't sleep in her room – she insists on crawling into bed with mommy and daddy and though she has been potty trained for over a year, she is suddenly wetting her pants again. You now wonder what to do next.

**What is a Crisis?**

It seems almost inevitable that our children will experience traumatic events at some point in their lives. None of us could have foreseen the disasters of September 11<sup>th</sup>, Hurricane Katrina, the tsunami in Asia or the quakes in India and Pakistan. And then we close our eyes in the face of the unthinkable closer to home: a house fire, a car accident, or a death in the family.

When crises happen, they affect you and your children. As a parent, you can take steps to help your child readjust to life after a crisis or trauma.

**Ordinary Kids, Extraordinary  
Circumstances**

A traumatic event is an extraordinary

one – something unexpected and unplanned. These events happen to ordinary people with ordinary skills and coping mechanisms. So remind yourself when your child's behavior changes in response to a trauma that he or she is trying to handle an extraordinary circumstance with ordinary skills. He will need your help and guidance, and perhaps the help of others, to build the skills to handle this extraordinary experience. Be prepared for your child's struggle and recognize that how you respond to him can make a big difference.

**Steps for Helping Children Handle  
a Crisis**

◆ **In the moments during and immediately after a crisis, your response will have a significant impact on your children.** If you are sobbing uncontrollably in their presence, it will be harder for them to feel safe and reassured. It is okay for them to see that you may be scared or sad; however it is important that they also see you taking control of the situation as quickly as possible. Your children look to you for security and comfort. Your response to a situation models to a child how he or she should respond. If Mommy seems to think the car accident was scary and unsettling but also shows that she will get back in a car and carry on as normal, the kids are more likely to follow suit. Alternately, if Daddy is

*(continued on page 2)*



(continued from page 1)

having trouble leaving the kids in the morning, calls them all the time from work to see if they are okay and insists that the family needs the largest car possible to protect his family, the kids are more likely to stay agitated and afraid.

◆ **Crisis creates unusual situations and often creates a sense of disorder.**

Suddenly the routine of life is interrupted and uncertainty reigns. Strive to get your children back into their old routine or into a newly established routine as soon as possible. Routine and consistency create the safe harbors in a child's life. When there is no routine, a child is left to guess when he might eat or where she will sleep. Even in temporary situations, such as living in a hotel after a house fire, it is possible to develop routines. Eat at the same time every night. Make sure the same person drives the kids to school in the morning. Develop rituals around homework and family time.

◆ **Help your child talk about what happened.** As hard as it may be for you to relive a trauma, it is even more difficult for your child with his or her age-limited developmental and cognitive abilities. Talking about a crisis often decreases its power in our minds. Let your child know that she can ask questions, then listen and respond calmly. If children don't ask questions of an authority figure, they are more likely to come up with their own scenarios, and more often than not, they are far from accurate. For instance, many children who saw the pictures and media replays of September 11<sup>th</sup> in the months that followed believed that another plane was crashing into yet another building. Can you imagine the ongoing terror of a child who began to think that "bad people" were crashing planes into buildings on a daily basis? Help your child direct his creative thinking toward more positive, hopeful endeavors.

◆ **Although the media is a good source for information, it can be very**

**dangerous to children, especially younger children.** Children are inundated and stimulated all day long with sights and sounds that can evoke strong emotions. Try to limit media exposure so that your child isn't at risk of seeing things that may further agitate him or her. A seemingly innocent TV sitcom could have an episode on a car accident or building fire that re-traumatizes your child. When your child does see something horrific on television or in a headline, use these as opportunities to discuss the situations with him.

◆ **Look for signs of distress through physical and behavioral changes.** If your child suddenly has severe headaches or cannot concentrate on homework, he may be distressed and doesn't know how to verbalize it. If this happens, encourage your child to ask questions that will help him verbalize his feelings; most likely, this will lead to a decrease in physical and behavioral symptoms. If it doesn't, then you may wish to seek the advice of a professional.

◆ **Don't make promises you cannot keep.** Parents, naturally, want to protect their children physically and emotionally. When a child is fearful of a robber or a car accident, many parents are inclined to make promises such as "that won't happen to us." Making these statements may be unwise, because we cannot always guarantee or predict outcomes. What you can do is tell your child what actions you already take to keep him safe. If a child is afraid of intruders, assure him that there are locks on the windows and an alarm system that protects the house. Show him how quickly you can get to his room when he is frightened.

◆ **Finally, share information with**

**other important people in your child's life.** Teachers, for example, spend tremendous amounts of time with your children. If your child has experienced a loss or a trauma, tell her teacher or guidance counselor so that the school may support your child in healthy and appropriate ways.

**How to Talk To Your Child**

Many parents are concerned about how to talk to their children in a crisis situation. Feeling uncertain, they often avoid conversation rather than engage in it.

There are some helpful practices that can make communicating with your child much easier and smoother – for all of you. As mentioned previously, allow your child to ask questions. Questions may be concrete ("What happened?") or more

theoretical ("Why?"). A child may also ask the same question numerous times, almost as if previous conversations didn't happen. Answer your child's questions directly, but do not add unnecessary information. Answer

only what was asked and be honest.

It can be hard for a parent to simply listen. It is a parent's empathetic nature to comfort and offer support and encouragement. Let your child do the talking. Prompt him with open-ended questions that allow him to evaluate his own thoughts and feelings. It will not only help him, but it will also clue you in to what he's thinking. Then use this information to dispel misunderstandings.

**When to Get Help**

Regardless of the care and attention a parent gives to a child after a trauma, sometimes, people outside the family can offer additional support in an extraordinary circumstance. So when is it time to make that call?

If your child's behavior following a

*"In the moments during and after a crisis, your response will have a significant impact on your children."*



trauma impact his or your family's normal living activities for an extended length of time, then outside help may be necessary. Some signs that a child might need professional help include persistent feelings of guilt or depression; long-term denial of the event; destructive behaviors; a high level of anxiety for an extended time; and an inability to receive care and comfort from others.

For example, if the daughter who wants to sleep with mom and dad the week after a car accident returns to her own room by week three, this behavior is probably not out of the ordinary. On the other hand, if two months later, she is still unable to sleep on her own, you may need to talk to a professional about how to help her get back to her previous patterns.

Crises take kids out of their typical cycles and may cause a temporary shift in their behavior. The majority of children will return to their previous patterns relatively quickly. Ultimately, you know your children best. If you sense that they are not adjusting well, trust your "gut instinct" and seek outside help to hasten their return to healthy development.



*Elisabeth Tullis, is a marriage and family therapist at Family Centers, a United Way partner agency in Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan and Stamford. Visit [www.familycenters.org](http://www.familycenters.org) or call 869-4848 or 655-0547. Some information presented in this article is from *Caring for Kids After Trauma and Death*, New York University Child Clinic. See [www.aboutourkids.com](http://www.aboutourkids.com).*

## Answering Your Children's Questions About Sexuality

1. There is no such thing as starting conversations too early. There is age-appropriate information for you to share with your children. It's important to talk with your children about your values as well.
2. There is no such thing as too much information. Your children will tune out what is not relevant. Keep communication accurate, honest and simple. Ask them open-ended questions, "So what have you heard about \_\_\_\_\_?"
3. Honesty is the best policy. If you don't know the answer to a question, say that you don't know but you will find out. Likewise, if a question makes you feel uncomfortable or embarrassed, say so. It is fine to say, "I'm a little embarrassed by that question, but I'm glad you asked and I'll try to answer in spite of my blushing." This tells a child that it is okay to talk about sex even if you are embarrassed.
4. When discussing the facts about any topic, be sure to discuss your feelings, values, and attitudes as well. It is your right and responsibility to share your values and expectations with your child. Tell your son or daughter what you believe and what you want for them. This does not mean your children will accept all your values. Especially during adolescence, children begin to reject some of their parents' values in search of more independence. However, if you have told your children what you believe, what you expect and why, they will have a basic foundation of values to draw upon when faced with peer pressure.
5. Take advantage of teachable moments: a friend's pregnancy, a TV show, song lyrics. These events can be the springboard into meaningful dialogues.
6. Be a good listener. When your children approach you with a question, find out what they are thinking about before you answer. For example, after a difficult question you might ask, "That's an important question. What have you heard about that?"
7. Answer questions in simple, clear terms, giving your children the vocabulary they need to continue asking more questions.
8. It is important to maintain clear boundaries about your personal sex life. Like everyone else, parents have the right to privacy. Explain that to your children if they ask questions about your behavior. Try to get to the "question behind the question." Remember too, they deserve similar privacy.
9. If you aren't sure what your child is really asking, you might say, "Well, tell me what you know about that."
10. After giving an answer to a question, you might say, "Sometimes I'm not as clear as I think I am. Would you explain to me what I said?" "What other questions do you have?" or "How else can I help?" Leave your child with the feeling that you are available to answer additional questions or just chat about things in the future.
11. Be certain to ask your children what they think about the topic being discussed. This helps them understand that you value their opinions and ideas, whether you agree with them or not.
12. Remember to use your sense of humor.



For more information visit [ppct.org](http://ppct.org).



# WINTER FAMILY CALENDAR



## December

1 Thursday

### Christmas in Connecticut

House Hours  
Bush-Holley Historic Site, Cos Cob  
Step back in time and celebrate Christmas like the Holley family did in 1910. Thru 1/8/06. \$6 for adults, \$4 for children.  
869-6899

### Greenwich Board of Education Work Session

7 PM  
Havemeyer Building, Greenwich  
625-7400

### "It's A Wonderful Life"

8 PM  
The Rich Forum, Stamford  
Stage version of the holiday favorite film. Visit [www.onlyatsca.com](http://www.onlyatsca.com) for other dates and times. \$25.

2 Friday

### School Start Time/Sleep Study Forum

9 AM  
Town Hall  
Discussion sponsored by the League of Women voters.  
629-1554

### Tree Lighting Ceremony

3:45 - 4:30 PM  
Town Hall, Greenwich  
Come and kick off the holiday season at this annual tree lighting event. Free.  
622-7830

### Kid's Night Out

6:30 - 10:30 PM  
YMCA, Greenwich  
Activities for kids in grades 1-6. Includes gym games, free swim, movies, and pizza for \$2 a slice. \$14 for first child, \$12 each additional child.  
869-1630

3 Saturday

### Rudolph's Holiday Workshop

9 AM - 4 PM  
Round Hill Community House  
Children and family activities to help get you into the spirit of the holiday season, including live reindeer and photo with Santa. Free.  
869-6901

### The World of Evergreens

2 - 3:30 PM  
Explore the world of conifers, hollies and other touches of green and look at their habitats, leaves, fruits, cones and the animals that feed on them. This program is family-friendly and includes a winter walk outdoors.  
869-5272

9 Friday

### "The Steadfast Tin Soldier" Puppet Show

4 & 6 PM performances  
Bush-Holley Historic Site, Cos Cob  
Hans Christian Anderson story with puppet show. Appropriate for all ages. \$12, \$10 for members. Reservations recommended.  
869-6899

10 Saturday

### Gingerbread House Workshop

10 AM - 1 PM  
Bush-Holley Historic Site, Cos Cob  
Make a replica of the Bush-Holley House in gingerbread. \$30, \$25 for members. Reservations required.  
869-6899

### "The Nutcracker"

5 PM  
The Palace Theater, Stamford  
Enjoy the only CT production of George Balanchine's choreography. Also 12/11, 17-18. Visit [www.onlyatsca.com](http://www.onlyatsca.com) for other performance dates and times. \$42 - \$62.

11 Sunday

### Jingle Bell Jog

9 AM  
Tod's Point, Old Greenwich  
3-mile run sponsored by the Threads and Treads. \$12.  
661-0142

13 Tuesday

### Public Night at Bowman Observatory

7 - 9 PM  
Grounds of Julian Curtiss School, Greenwich  
Sponsored by the Astronomical Society of Greenwich, weather permitting. Also 12/27. Free.  
869-6786

15 Thursday

### Greenwich Board of Education Meeting

7 PM  
Greenwich High School  
625-7400

### Safe and Sound

7 PM  
Greenwich Hospital  
Learn and ins and outs of child safety. Free.  
863-3655

16 Friday

### Kid's Night Out

6:30 - 10:30 PM  
YMCA, Greenwich  
Activities for kids in grades 1-6. Includes gym games, free swim, movies, and pizza for \$2 a slice. \$14 for first child, \$12 each additional child.  
869-1630

18 Sunday

### "Miniature Animals in Winter" Family Fun Day

1 - 4 PM  
The Bruce Museum, Greenwich  
Activities will include miniature animal crafts and gallery hunts. At 3 PM there will be a shadow puppet show.  
869-0376



27-30 Tuesday - Friday

### December Vacation Workshops: Animals in Winter

10:30 - 11:30 AM  
The Bruce Museum, Greenwich  
Art activities for children in grades 1-3 related to "Animals in Winter" exhibition. Children will explore the exhibition and create related crafts. Reservations required. Members \$5, non-members \$7, per child, per day.  
869-6786



# January 2006

12 Thursday

**Greenwich Board of Education  
Work Session**  
7 PM  
Havemeyer Building, Greenwich  
625-7400

14 Saturday

**World of Coyotes and Foxes**  
2 - 3:30 PM  
The Audubon Center, Greenwich  
Get up-close to real coyotes and foxes and search outside for signs of these local residents. \$7, \$5 for members.  
869-5272

16 Monday

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration**  
10 AM - 4 PM  
The Bruce Museum, Greenwich  
David Parker, the "Pied Piper of Sign," will perform at 11 AM and 1 PM. Show will combine humor, music and movement with American Sign Language.  
869-0376

21 Saturday

**Winter Wildlife Tracking**  
2 0 3:30 PM  
The Audubon Center, Greenwich  
Learn how to recognize footprints, chew marks and other signs of animals. Ages 5 and up. \$7, \$5 for members.  
869-5272

26 Thursday

**Greenwich Board of Education  
Meeting**  
7 PM  
Glenville Elementary School  
625-7400

28 Saturday

**"Ben Franklin's Curious Mind" Exhibit**  
Museum Hours  
The Bruce Museum, Greenwich  
Exhibit highlights some of Franklin's accomplishments as printer, writer, scientist, inventor and statesman. Hands-on interactive displays. Thru 4/23. \$7 for adults, \$6 for children.  
869-0376

# February

2 Thursday

**Greenwich Board of Education  
Work Session**  
7 PM  
Havemeyer Building, Greenwich  
625-7400



11 Saturday

**"How to Build Youth Character  
Through Sports" Discussion**  
8 - 9:30 AM  
Greenwich High School, Greenwich  
Panel featuring local coaches and a family therapist. Sponsored by the Greenwich Coalition to Combat Underage Drinking.  
Free.  
625-8900

**Historic Valentine's Workshop**  
10 AM - Noon  
Bush-Holley Historic Site, Cos Cob  
Learn about the history of Valentine's Day and create your own Victorian valentines. Reservations recommended. \$7, \$5 for members.  
869-6899

13 Monday

**Parents Together Program**  
9:15 - 11 AM  
Cone Room, Greenwich Town Hall  
"Promoting Student Success: Help Your Child Become Self-Aware and a Self-Advocate" with Angela Chan, M.D.  
329-2243

16 Thursday

**Greenwich Board of Education  
Meeting**  
7 PM  
Cos Cob Elementary School  
625-7400

18 Saturday

**Astronomy Family Day**  
1 - 4 PM  
The Bruce Museum, Greenwich  
Activities and crafts will focus on stars and planets. STARLAB! Planetarium will run shows throughout the day featuring our local night skies.  
869-0376

19 Sunday

**Music at the Bruce:  
2006 Young People's Concert**  
2 PM  
The Bruce Museum, Greenwich  
Jim Douglas Yankee Doodle and his Cousins: Songs of Colonial America. Designed for children in 1st - 5th grades and their parents/guardians.  
869-0376

21-23 Tuesday - Thursday

**Children's Art Workshops:  
Three Days of 3-D**  
10 - Noon or 1 - 3 PM  
Bush-Holley Historic Site, Cos Cob  
Young artists can learn new art skills while working with clay, carved panels and origami. Recommended for children in grades 2-6. Reservations required. \$12, \$10 for members.  
869-6899

25 Saturday

**"Dora the Explorer" Live**  
2 PM and 5 PM  
The Rich Forum, Stamford  
Join Dora and her friends as they embark on an exciting trip to Treasure Island. Also 2/26. \$17-\$37. Visit [www.onlyatsca.com](http://www.onlyatsca.com) for further information.

27 Monday

**Celebrating Ben Franklin Day**  
1 - 4 PM  
The Bruce Museum, Greenwich  
Fun educational activities for the whole family. At 3 PM "The Courage to Dream: The Amazing Life of Ben Franklin" will be presented.  
869-0376



# Childhood Physical Fitness

## From A to Z

By Bill Bogardus, M.S.E., C.P.T.

**A is for activity.** Any activity! Just get those bodies moving!!!

**B is for breakfast.** The most important meal of the day. And keep it low in sugar. Children will be more alert and on-task in school with proper morning nutrition.

**C is for cardiovascular endurance.** One of the components of physical fitness. It is the ability to deliver and use oxygen under the demands of intensive, prolonged exercise or work. For many children this would be running a mile.

**D is for diet.** Not the Atkins Diet or South Beach Diet! Make smart choices from every food group. Find a balance between food and physical activity. Get the most nutrition out of your calories. Make healthy eating a way of life.

**E is for exercise.** Children should get at least 60 minutes a day of physical activity.

**F is for fun.** Fitness should be fun. Children should be introduced to a wide variety of sports and activities and participate in those that they truly enjoy.

**G is for goals.** Work with your child to create realistic and achievable goals. Keep them motivated to reach short-term goals while working towards a major long-term goal.

**H is for healthy lifestyle.** Children must learn at an early age the importance of living a healthy lifestyle and the benefits of daily physical activity.

**I is for involving the entire family.** Involving the entire family is a great way to motivate children to be active. They look for role models.

**J is for jumping rope.** This is one of the best ways to get your heart rate up to begin increasing your cardiovascular endurance. Rope jumping is a training tool used by professional athletes in many sports. Why do you think basketball players jump so well?

**K is for kickboxing.** Cardio Kickboxing is a great activity to get the heart rate up and exercise. Introduce your child to traditional activities such as basketball and soccer, but also be sure to include a wide variety of non-traditional activities such as kickboxing and step aerobics.

**L is for long walks and bike rides.** Get outside and enjoy Mother Nature while you improve your physical fitness.

**M is for muscles and bones.** Start educating your kids about their bodies. Explain what body parts each exercise is working and why it is important to have enough calcium in your diet.

**N is for nutrition.** It is important to educate your children on how to make healthy choices about their eating habits. Bring your children food shopping with you and read food labels together.

**O is for obesity.** Exercise and good eating habits help children grow to become healthy adults and avoid the harmful effects of obesity and diseases such as diabetes, asthma, and heart disease. Get regular checkups from the doctor to make sure your child is growing up as healthy as possible.

**P is for pedometers.** Use gadgets such as pedometers and heart rate monitors as a way to increase your child's interest in exercise. They are great motivating tools for children.

**Q is for quick and simple exercises.** Children need to get up and be active.

"Children must learn at an early age the importance of living a healthy lifestyle..."

They can do quick and simple exercises such as mountain climbers, push-ups, blast-off sit-ups, and cross country skiers anytime and anywhere.

**R is for running.** Running is a great lifelong activity. People of any age can run. Introduce the amazing world of running to your children by signing them up for a local youth running event or youth triathlon.

**S is for stretching.** Flexibility is an extremely important component of fitness. Make sure your child warms up and cools down properly during every training session.

**T is for television.** TURN IT OFF! Children, on average, watch up to four hours of TV per day. Limit the watching of TV and playing of video games. If children are busy being active, they will not miss it.



## Did You Know?

**U is for unfit kids.** A recent study reports that this generation of kids is becoming so unhealthy that they will not reach the life expectancy of their parents' generation. We need to change this statistic.

**V is for vegetables.** Be sure to feed your children a wide variety of veggies everyday. Cut-up celery, broccoli, or carrots with dip are an excellent after-school snack.

**W is for water.** Children should be drinking at least eight glasses a day. Proper hydration is very important for everyone.

**X is for xtreme sports.** Let your children participate in a wide variety of sports and athletics. Rollerblading, rock climbing, skateboarding, and kayaking are all exciting adventures for people looking for a great workout.

**Y is for yoga.** Introducing children to yoga helps them get in touch with themselves and learn about their bodies. They discover a peaceful mind, a healthy body, and a creative spirit.

**Z is for zzzzzz.** Make sure your children are getting enough sleep. Poor sleep habits will have a negative effect on all aspects of their lives including academics and athletics.



*Bill Bogardus is a Physical Education Instructor at North Street Elementary School in Greenwich, CT. He is also an Adjunct Professor at Manhattanville College. Bill is co-founder and personal trainer for the Greenwich based fitness company, Project Fitness. In addition, he coaches numerous youth organizations in Greenwich and has participated in many endurance events, including the Iron Man Triathlon. For additional information, you can e-mail Bill at [bill@projectfitnessonline.com](mailto:bill@projectfitnessonline.com).*

- ◆ Children in the United States today are less fit than they were a generation ago and are showing early signs of cardiovascular disease risk factors such as weight gain, high blood cholesterol and cigarette smoking.
- ◆ Inactive children, when compared with active ones, weigh more, have higher blood pressure and lower levels of heart-protective high-density lipoproteins.
- ◆ 33% of high school students are not engaging in recommended amounts of physical activity.
- ◆ If all health trends remain constant, about 35 million of today's 83 million children will eventually die from heart and blood vessel disease.
- ◆ Between 16%-33% of children and adolescents are obese. Overweight children and adolescents have a 62% to 98% chance of being overweight at age 35, which increases their risk of heart disease.
- ◆ Children in the United States watch an average of 3-4 hours of television per day. By the time of high school graduation, they will have spent more time watching television than being in the classroom.
- ◆ Nine million children live with at least one smoker and are exposed to secondhand smoke.
- ◆ Every day, 2,000 young people in this country under the age of 18 become smokers.
- ◆ Children in the United States consume twice as much soda as milk.
- ◆ Soda has no nutritional value. It provides unnecessary calories, sugar and caffeine.
- ◆ Every day, American adolescents get 11% of their calories, or 15 teaspoons of sugar, from soft drinks.
- ◆ Per capita, soft drink consumption has increased almost 500% over the past five years.
- ◆ According to the Public Health Institute of California, "children receive no extra benefit from consuming sports drinks unless they are extremely active." Water provides adequate rehydration for student athletes and others.
- ◆ Less than 25% of children eat the recommended five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day.



Source: [www.childstats.gov](http://www.childstats.gov); [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

### Parents Together Programs

**February 13, 2006**

Angela Chan, M.D., "Promoting Student Success: Help Your Child Become Self-Aware and Be a Self-Advocate." 9:15 AM, Cone Room, Town Hall. For details call 329-2243.

**March 6, 2006**

9:15 AM, Cone Room, Town Hall  
Topic TBA

**May 15, 2006**

Lucy Hedrick, "Getting Organized in the Digital Age." 9:15 AM, Cone Room, Town Hall. For details call 329-2243.

## Who We Are

**Parents Together** is an independent nonprofit organization in Greenwich, CT, that offers ongoing opportunities for parents to communicate, share, support and learn together. We work in cooperation with the Parent Teacher Associations of the public, private and parochial schools in town. The *Parents Together* organization and delegates from Greenwich schools plan programs for parents of children in grades K through 12. We also publish two quarterly newsletters: *Parents Together Primer*, for parents of children from birth through fifth grade, and *Parents Together*, for parents of adolescents.

**Distribution:** *Parents Together Primer* is distributed to parents through their children's preschools and elementary schools. *Parents Together* is sent to parents of children in grades 6 through 12 in all Greenwich public and independent schools.

**Newsletter Subscriptions and Correspondence:** We invite parents and all other readers interested in local parenting issues to subscribe to either or both newsletters.

For an annual subscription, please indicate which newsletter you wish to receive, and send your name, address and \$10 for each subscription in a check payable to *Parents Together*, P.O. Box 4843, Greenwich, CT 06831-0417. Correspondence may be mailed to the same address.

### Contact Us!

Do you have a story idea, writer suggestion or comment for the *Parents Together Primer* staff? You may fax it to 698-3376 or e-mail it to [ptprimer@optonline.net](mailto:ptprimer@optonline.net).

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## Preventing the Flu

You can still protect yourself from the flu even if you are not included in a priority group to receive a vaccination for the flu season this year, or if no vaccines are available. These simple actions can stop the spread of germs and help protect you from getting sick:

- ◆ **Avoid close contact.** Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- ◆ **Stay home when you are sick.** If possible, stay home from work, school and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- ◆ **Cover your mouth and nose.** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- ◆ **Clean your hands.** Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.
- ◆ **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.
- ◆ **Develop good habits.** Other good habits, such as getting plenty of sleep, engaging in physical activity, managing stress, drinking water and eating good food will help you stay healthy in the winter and all year.

*Source: Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For more information visit [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu).*

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