



Oregon City Pediatrics

Take Care

HEALTHY TIPS for WINTER 2025

As we welcome the new year, it's a perfect time to reflect on ways to strengthen the bond with your child and set meaningful goals to start the year off strong. Whether it's spending more quality time together or encouraging new habits, these small steps can help bring you closer together. Plus, with winter sniffles often making an appearance, we've included some simple remedies to help keep your little ones comfortable when they're not feeling their best. Here's to a happy, healthy, and connected year ahead, and we hope you take care!



Healthy Mental & Emotional Development: 4 Key Building Blocks

Children, teens and their families are facing a lot of stress and other challenges to mental wellness. The good news is that there are ways to promote mental health during tough times. In fact, parents and caregivers have powerful tools that can help kids build resilience and thrive no matter what life throws their way.

Positive experiences and safe, stable relationships help children develop skills they need to manage their emotions, solve problems, communicate and develop close connections with others. The process of gaining these and other critical skills is called healthy mental and emotional development.

1 *Safe, stable, nurturing relationships in the family*

Relational health is the ability to form safe, stable and nurturing relationships. Relational health is essential to healthy mental and emotional development. When children feel safe, secure and well connected with their caregivers, they learn to trust others, make friends and manage their feelings.

Create predictable routines.

Structured routines give children a sense of stability and connection.

- **Have meals together.** Especially with older kids, family meals are a great time to check in with each other. They may not always be possible with busy schedules, but plan them when you can.
- **Establish a regular bedtime ritual.** For young children, a bedtime routine might include a bath, brushing teeth and reading a book together before tuck-in. Bonus: prioritizing sleep makes it easier to deal with everyday pressures.
- **Encourage a homework routine.** Planning when and where to work on schoolwork are time management skills that ease stress. It also helps kids find time to practice self-care and more time to connect with family and friends.
- **Create a chores routine.** Having age-appropriate chores promotes a sense of responsibility, belonging and contribution to the family. Kids gain confidence in completing tasks, which builds self-esteem.

The Children's Health Foundation is a non-profit organization that partners with your Pediatrician to develop quality health care programs in our community. We work together to foster the highest quality care for children, to raise awareness on health issues, and to achieve better children's health outcomes. Please ask your provider for more information.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH *foundation*

5901 S Macadam Ave, Suite 220
Portland, Oregon 97239
503-222-5703 503-224-3938 (fax)
www.ch-foundation.org

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Plan time for play.

Play lets children explore emotions even before they have the words to express themselves. It also gives them a sense of control in their world. For older kids and teens, planning special family fun time strengthens relationships.

- **Dedicate 10-15 minutes two to three times a week to play** with younger kids. Name this special time after the child, like "Roberto's Time."
- **Set rules for one-on-one time.** Let your child choose the activity. Put away phones. Make the time unstructured with toys and activities that can promote cooperative play and problem-solving.
- **Focus on fun.** The goal is to share joy and connect. Play regularly—not just as a reward for good behavior. Bonds you build in these moments lay ground for healthy relationships in life.
- **Schedule time for family fun.** Mark game nights or other family activities on your calendar so that everyone can look forward to relaxing together.

Use positive parenting techniques.

Positive discipline strategies help teach children and teens to manage their behavior in a healthy way.

- **Set limits & consequences.** Have clear and consistent rules. Describe these rules in age-appropriate terms that your child or teen can follow. Calmly explain consequences if they aren't followed.
- **Model behavior you want your child to show.** When you feel frustrated, try to respond calmly. Instead of saying, "You are driving me crazy," for example, express your actual feelings: "I'm really frustrated right now." This teaches kids to say what they feel instead of critical or hurtful statements.
- **Try "sportscasting."** Provide a "play by play" of what you see your child doing. Speak in a neutral or positive tone. This conveys to the child: "I see you, I hear you and I delight in you."
- **Point out positive behavior.** Children and teens need to know when they do something wrong—and when they do something good. Praise success and good tries, and be specific. ("Wow, I love how you shared your favorite toy with your friend!" or, "I like how you cleaned up the kitchen after dinner—it's so helpful when you do that.")

2 Open communication

Feeling free to express their thoughts and feelings helps kids process emotions in healthy ways. Open communication also strengthens parent-child bonds.

Start "conversations" early.

"Talking" with your baby lays a foundation for language development, as well as expressing feelings.

- **Narrate your actions, describe objects and sing songs.** Hearing you talk—the sounds and rhythms of speech, the look on your face and the way you hold them—teach babies about emotional expression.
- **Keep the back-and-forth going.** When your baby babbles, coos or flashes you a smile, don't hesitate to respond! Make eye contact and reply with smiles, nods and other facial expressions. This makes your baby feel connected and understood.

Make time to listen.

Make yourself available any time your child wants to talk. Remember that no matter how big their problems seem, what children and teens most want is love and support.

- **Encourage open dialogue by actively listening.** Create a supportive and non-judgmental environment so they are comfortable sharing thoughts, feelings and concerns.
 - **Remember that any time can be chat time.** Chat in the car or when doing dishes together, for example. Take walks together, which offer time to talk plus physical and mental health boosts from exercise and time outdoors.
 - **Ask open-ended questions.** Instead of asking yes-or-no questions, ask ones that require more detailed answers. These encourage your child to share more thoughts and feelings.

3 Learning to understand & manage emotions

When kids learn to understand and manage their emotions, they can better avoid being overwhelmed by them. "Emotion coaching" can help:

- **Acknowledge the emotion.** (You might say, "Wow, I see that you have some big feelings now," or "I know you feel bad about having to stop your game you wanted to finish.")
- **Name the emotion.** Put your child's emotion into words. ("You look mad/angry/scared/disappointed/frustrated.") For younger children, color zones can help label emotions.
- **Validate the emotion.** Let them know that emotions are OK, even if behavior is wrong. ("It makes sense that you feel [EMOTION] because of [REASON].")
- **Meet the need of the emotion.**
 - If your child or teen is sad, provide comfort.
 - If they are afraid, provide security.
 - If they are angry, provide kindness and boundaries.

Share coping & "calm down" techniques.

Some tools that can calm body and mind during stressful times:

- **Deep breathing.** Breathe slowly to calm down body. Try "box" breathing: Breathe in to a count of 4, hold for a count of 4, and breath out to a count of 4.
- **Muscle relaxation.** Lie flat and tighten sections of the body from toes to the head. Hold for a few seconds, then release the muscles.
- **Mental imagery.** Close eyes and imagine a relaxing, happy and comfortable place

4 Social relationships at school or in the community

Developing strong, healthy social relationships provides a support system for your child's mental and emotional development.

Foster friendships.

Developing friendships help kids learn to understand and connect with others in positive ways.

- **By the time your child is 2 or 3 years old,** consider inviting another child to play. This is a great way for kids to develop and build friendships. Playdates also can lead to trusted connections with other parents, which makes it easier to raise our children.
- **Encourage your older child or teen** to invite friends over or meet up with peers at the park or the movies.

Encourage your child to get involved.

Kids who are active in their community will do better in school, find it easier to stay out of trouble and be less likely to have depression or suicidal thoughts.

- **Encourage your child to try extracurricular activities, clubs or sports teams,** for example. This helps them discover what they enjoy, meet peers with similar interests and develop friendships.
- **Ask about volunteer opportunities** at school or your family's place of worship, for example. By helping others in the community, children and teens learn self-confidence and how to work with others.

Help your child develop empathy, respect & acceptance.

Recognizing the viewpoints and feelings of others helps kids learn to manage their own emotions. Respecting differences also helps children to embrace their own identities and feel valued for who they are.

- **Introduce your child to diverse cultures and backgrounds** through books, movies, music and community events. Discuss different perspectives and feelings in various situations.
- **Let them see you treat everyone with kindness,** regardless of differences.

Connect with teachers & community leaders.

This helps you stay aware of challenges your child may be facing.

- **Keep in touch** with teachers, school counselors and other adults in your child's life. Work together to address any concerns.
- **Talk with your child's pediatrician** to discuss whether they may need more support.

8 Parenting Goals to Start the New Year Strong



Get everyone up-to-date on recommended immunizations. Vaccines are the best way to protect yourself, your children, and other loved ones from dangerous viruses such as flu and COVID, which are spiking among children. Call your pediatrician to make sure your children are up-to-date on all recommended immunizations, and ask any questions you may have.

Build healthy digital habits. What are your kids watching on TV and online? Devote some time to researching age-appropriate media. Make a family media use plan, and try to prevent gaming from becoming an unhealthy habit. Remember that screen time shouldn't always be alone time. Watch a show together. Play a video game together. Understand what they are doing and be a part of it. Create or update your Family Media Plan.



Read together. Set aside some time for reading each day. For younger kids, an easy way is to build it into your child's bedtime routine. For older children and teens, share a favorite book by taking turns reading aloud or listen to audiobooks together. Reading has so many brain-boosting benefits for kids. Reading together also strengthens that special bond between you and your child.

Get outside more. Spending time outdoors can be a great mood booster. It also helps families get needed physical activity and vitamin D while enjoying time in nature. Spending time outside also give your child's eyes a healthy screen-time break. It may also help them sleep better at night.



Check your car seat limits for safety. Kids grow so fast and can easily outgrow car seats faster than parents realize. Keep kids riding rear-facing as long as possible, up to the limits of their car seat, because this is the safest mode. This commonly includes children under 2 and most children up to age 4. See if there are any new car seat laws that may be going into effect in your state in the new year. Remind anyone who transports your child by car about all safety rules.

Set aside time to cook as a family. Many families enjoy baking treats together during the holidays. Keep the fun going in the new year. Schedule special times to cook together as a family. If your child is a picky eater, this can get them more interested in trying new, healthy foods.



Make a family disaster kit. It's scary to think how disasters like wildfires, hurricanes or tornados could affect our communities. But extreme weather events are becoming more frequent due to climate change. Being ready is one way to be less afraid. Ask your children what they would want with them in a disaster and assemble basic supplies.

Mind mental health & practice self-care. When was the last time you had a check-up? Got proper rest? Once a baby is no longer a part of your body, it's easy to forget that how you care for yourself affects how well you can care for your child. We also know depression and anxiety can happen to both moms and dads during and after pregnancy, even up to three years after having a child. The National Maternal Mental Health Hotline is available 24/7 by calling 1-833-943-5746. And for non-emergency support, you can contact Postpartum Support International: call or text "Help" to 1-800-944-4773.



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Caring for Kids with Colds & Flu: Simple Remedies to Ease Symptoms

Adapted from an article by Lanre Falusi



Keep your child hydrated.



Reach for honey instead of cough syrup.



Add a cool-mist humidifier.



Try mentholated vapor rub.

New Year Word Search



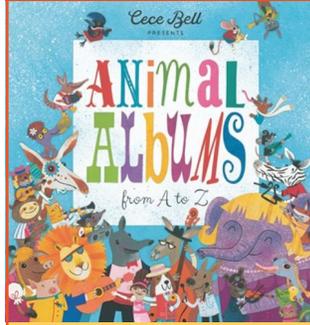
Resolution
Holiday
Midnight

Confetti
January
Goals

New Year
Cheers
Party

J A N U A R Y T Z P
M I D N I G H T S L
G C O N F E T T I N
R E S O L U T I O N
G H O L I D A Y U O
O P I R C H E E R S
A A S T Q C I N E Y
L R X S E I V W Y R
S T A P K W R V C K
O Y M N E W Y E A R

Winter Book Recommendations



Animal Albums from A to Z

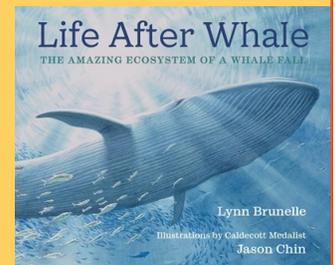
Cece Bell (Walker US)

This unique album features 26 fictional animal artists, each representing a different musical genre. The album includes album art and lyrics for one song by each

artist, showcasing a variety of musical styles and design aesthetics from different decades. Whether you're a new listener or a seasoned audiophile, this imaginative work highlights Bell's creativity, bringing each concept to life with bold, unforgettable detail.

Life After Whale: The Amazing Ecosystem of a Whale Fall

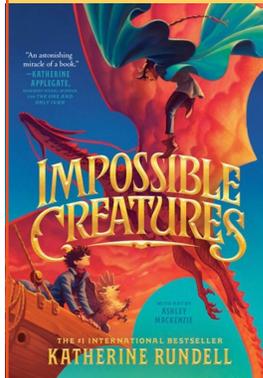
Lynn Brunelle, illus. by Jason Chin (Holiday House/Porter)



Magnificent watercolor and gouache spreads by Chin and meticulous text from Brunelle capture the grace of a blue whale in life alongside the bustling ecosystem that surrounds it in death, as its body provides nourishment for countless creatures over more than a century. It's a brilliant breakdown of how death supports life and how populations grow and are sustained.

Impossible Creatures

Katherine Rundell, illus. by Ashley Mackenzie (Knopf)



A boy with an affinity for animals, a girl who can fly when the wind blows, and a secreted-away world in need of saving propel this dazzling, realms-roving trilogy opener. Rundell deploys epic stakes, bonds both tender and devastating, and fierce kid characters for a fresh, lore-informed narrative about the kinship of living things and the marvels of being alive.

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A GROUNDBREAKING INNOVATION IN PEDIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH



PARENT SUPPORT FOR:

- Ignoring directions or dawdling
- Navigating stressful situations
- Tantrums and big feelings

Evidence-based strategies that boost children's **confidence**, build **connection**, and teach social-emotional **skills** in just 5 minutes a day!

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"I can't recommend Happypillar enough—it gives moms and dads actionable, science-backed tools to handle tough behaviors while building stronger bonds with their kids!"

Dr. Whitney Casares, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.A.P.
Board-certified pediatrician and mom of 2

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder symptoms can appear as early as preschool and continue through adolescence and adulthood.



Know the signs and symptoms.



nimh.nih.gov/ADHD