



# Connections

## Holiday Edition

La Crosse County  
Human Services

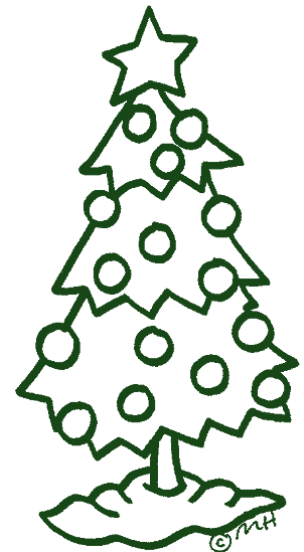
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Dec. 2011

### HOLIDAY STRESS AND ANXIETY IN CHILDREN: HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

The holidays are a fun and joyous time, but also a very busy one, and holiday stress and anxiety in children is a common occurrence. During the holidays, there are lots of fun activities and events going on, both at home and at school. And while that can be a good thing, the reality is that all that hustle and bustle means schedules are often out of whack, bedtimes get pushed back, and routines are disrupted. As a result, it's inevitable that kids may feel some degree of holiday stress.

\* **Set a calm example.** The most important way parents can help ease anxiety in children during the holidays is by trying to keep things relaxed as much as possible. As with so many situations, the way parents handle an issue can set the tone for how their kids will behave. If you let holiday stress get to you, your kids will definitely pick up on it, and child anxiety is more likely to be a problem in your house. To minimize anxiety in children during the holidays, take steps to handle your own stress and anxiety.



\* **Set up conditions for good behavior.** Avoid taking your child to places such as the mall or holiday gatherings when he is hungry or tired. It's hard even for grown-ups to deal with noise and lots of stimulation when they're not feeling their best; kids get hungry more often and become tired more easily, and may understandably have a tough time being on their best behavior and are more likely to experience holiday stress when they're exhausted or hungry.

\* **Remember the importance of routines.** The holidays can throw a big wrench into household routines, and that can play a role in anxiety in children. To minimize holiday stress in your kids, try to get routines back on track once an event or party is over. For instance, if a school holiday concert or a church gathering goes past your child's bedtime, try to stick to quiet, calm activities the next day and get your child to bed on time the next night.

*(Continued on page 3)*

# Mark Your Calendar!

## ~ UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS ~

### Rotary Lights

Friday, November 25 - Sunday, January 1 | 5:00-10:00pm (holiday hours vary) | Riverside Park, La Crosse  
Drive or walk through the largest holiday lights display in the Midwest. Admission is free but cash or food donations are encouraged. For more information visit [www.rotarylights.org](http://www.rotarylights.org).

### Countdown to Noon

Friday, December 30 (10am-5pm) and Saturday, December 31 (10am-12pm) | Children's Museum of La Crosse  
Welcome the new year a little early. Make a noisemaker and then join a noisy countdown to Noon. FREE with Museum admission. For more information visit [www.funmuseum.org](http://www.funmuseum.org).

### Winter Rec-Fest

Saturday, January 21-Wednesday, February 1 | Hours and locations vary  
26th annual event sponsored by the City of La Crosse Park & Rec featuring a variety of winter activities for all ages. For more information visits [www.cityoflacrosse.org](http://www.cityoflacrosse.org).

### Coulee Region Polar Plunge

Saturday, March 3 | Plunging starts at 12:00pm | Pettibone Beach, La Crosse  
Fundraising event for Special Olympics. For more information, visit [www.specialolympicswisconsin.org](http://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org).

## ~ TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES ~

*NOTE TO FOSTER PARENTS...please remember that per policy all training hours earned from outside resources must be pre-approved and verifiable. Be sure to retain a copy of the training certificate, flyer, or agenda.*

### 1-2-3 Magic!

Mondays, December 12 & 19 | 9:00am-11:00am | Stein Counseling (571 Braund St., Onalaska)

This course teaches child management techniques that work for children ages 2 to 12. Learn to:

1. Control obnoxious behavior using a simple technique to get your kids to stop doing what you don't want them to do (whining, arguing, tantrums, sibling rivalry, etc)
2. Encourage good behavior using several methods to get your kids to start doing what you want them to do (cleaning rooms, going to bed, homework, etc),
3. Strengthen relationships and learn powerful techniques that reinforce the bond with your children.

Cost is \$45 per person. Register online at [www.effectivebehavior.com](http://www.effectivebehavior.com). For more information call 608-785-7000 x221.

### Massage For Infants

Monday, January 9 | 7:00pm-8:30pm | Gundersen Lutheran—5th floor (1900 South Ave., La Crosse)

Regular gentle massage helps form stronger attachments and develops a healthier brain. During this class you'll learn how to increase circulation, increase blood flow through the muscles and calm your infant with therapeutic massage. Designed for infants 3 weeks old to those just beginning to crawl. Fee is \$20. For more information, contact Megan at 608-775-6878.

# Mark Your Calendar!

## WFAPA Spring Conference 2012

Friday-Sunday, April 13-15 | Stone Harbor Resort, Sturgeon Bay, WI

An event by the Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Parents Association featuring speakers and a chance to network with other foster/adoptive parents. For more information visit [www.wfapa.org](http://www.wfapa.org).

## Together for Children Conference

Tuesday-Wednesday, April 24-25 | Grand Geneva Resort, Lake Geneva, WI

This annual event by Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin is for professionals working to improve prevention, treatment, investigation and the prosecution of child abuse and neglect. Featured keynote speaker is *John Yuille, PhD, R. Psych, CEO, Pacific Alliance of Forensic Scientists and Practitioners*. For registration information visit [www.preventchildabusewi.org](http://www.preventchildabusewi.org).

(Holiday Stress...continued from page 1)

- ✿ **Watch what she's eating.** Another thing that can fall by the wayside amidst the holiday hubbub is healthy eating. Between all the extra sugary holiday snacks and the lack of time to sit down to regular meals, it can be all too easy for kids to eat less healthy foods, which can contribute to holiday stress and anxiety in children. Try packing healthy snacks when you have to go shopping or run other holiday errands and try to minimize the amount of sweet treats at home. Whenever possible, offer healthy snacks, such as air-popped popcorn or apple slices with cheese and crackers and limit cookies and candy to after-snack treats.
- ✿ **Get your child moving.** Fresh air and exercise are essential for boosting mood and re-setting the spirit, which can alleviate holiday stress and anxiety in children. Make sure you schedule some time to get your child outside to run around and play.
- ✿ **Avoid over scheduling.** As tempting as it may be to accept every invitation from friends and family, try to limit your holiday parties and activities so that you and your child are not overwhelmed. A couple of events a week may be fine, but having an obligation every day can lead to holiday stress and anxiety in children.
- ✿ **Have your grade-schooler help you.** Big kids love to help mom and dad, especially if they get lots of praise for being responsible and helpful. If you have to shop, ask your child to help you look for an item at the store (fun stocking stuffers for cousins, for example). Giving your child a task will not only boost her self-esteem, it'll distract her and help prevent any holiday stress and anxiety.
- ✿ **Schedule some quiet time.** Having some peace and quiet with your child is more important than ever during the busy holiday season. Find a quiet corner and read a book with your child or create holiday pictures for grandma and grandpa. Take a walk outside in nature, away from noise and crowds and obligations.
- ✿ **Remind your child — and yourself — what the holidays are really all about.** A great antidote for holiday stress and the bloated commercialism of the season is helping others.

By Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee, November 14, 2011



# Connections



LA CROSSE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES

300 4TH SREET NORTH  
LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN 54601

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## Pass the word on!

Do you know anyone who's interested in being a foster parent? Orientation sessions for those who'd like to learn more about the program are held the first Monday of every month from 5:30pm to 7:00pm. Those interested in attending should call Rhonda Rude at 789-4834 to sign up.

## Is there anything you'd like to contribute to our newsletter?

Please send your ideas, comments, or suggestions to:

Attn: Sharon McHugh  
La Crosse County Human Services  
300 N. 4th St.  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
mchugh.sharon@co.la-crosse.wi.us  
(608) 785-6056



### Foster Care & Adoption Resource Center

Looking for information on Wisconsin foster care or adoption? The Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center provides the following services:

- Resource lending library
- Links to training opportunities and resources
- *Fostering Across Wisconsin* quarterly newsletter

Visit their webpage at [www.wifostercareandadoption.org](http://www.wifostercareandadoption.org) or contact them at their toll free number 1-800-947-8074 .