



Family Matters

“FULL INCLUSION, FULL LIVES”



Holiday Survival 101

By Eleanor Shaffar MA

The Holidays are rapidly approaching and if you're anything like me you have a lot of shopping and baking and wrapping and cleaning and planning to get done before the BIG DAY arrives. But no matter how long or how hard I work I still find more things to do right up until the very last second. Even after the last present has been unwrapped and the last bit of leftovers have been put away, there is always something else that needs to be done.

I used to drive myself NUTS worrying and fretting over the holiday preparations, and by the time my company arrived I was worn out, cranky, and a menace to be around. Fortunately, as I have gotten older, what once seemed really important, or absolutely crucial to the success of my entertaining, now doesn't seem quite so important or crucial anymore. In fact, I have learned to do without some of those details and I have found that my holidays have become even more enjoyable.

I have learned that the corners in the kitchen can tolerate a bit of dirt without ruining my holiday. My guests never even notice (and so what if they did!. I have learned that closed doors can very nicely hide less than immaculate bedrooms. And I have learned that it is NOT A SIN to serve store bought dinner rolls or pie (well, that is true for some brands anyway). In the last couple of years my family has even survived without three or four different kinds of potatoes and vegetables with our holiday dinner. It's actually easier to leave more room for dessert this way! Oh yes, I have also learned that taking a nap before my company comes is a GREAT idea!

Mostly though I have learned that it is most important for me to have more time and energy to focus on enjoying my family and friends. I want to spend more time talking with my mother and sisters and less time whipping the mashed potatoes (lumps never killed anyone anyway!). I want to spend more time catching up with my adult children and holding and hugging and playing with my grandchildren! The holidays will come and go, as they do every year, whether I am prepared or not. But I don't want to be looking back on them thinking "I didn't get a chance to talk with my brother, to see how he's doing" or "I didn't read Simeon that story he had asked me to read to him before he left". Or worse, "I didn't listen to my son and daughter-in-law talk about their life in China because I was too busy washing the dishes as they were sharing their pictures and stories with everyone else". I want to cherish my family and every moment we can be together! That's what will make my holiday celebrations memorable. Turkey diners, tinsel and presents will all be forgotten someday. But my relationships? Those I will remember forever!

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I hope this Holiday Season you are able to spend less time "doing" and more time enjoying a lot of love and laughter with your family and friends!

Happy Holidays from all of us at La Crosse County Human Services Family and Children's Section!

CHRISTMAS WREATH TREATS

Melt ½ cup butter in a large pot with 1 tsp vanilla and 1 bag of large marshmallows. When all marshmallows are melted add green food coloring until desired color. Then remove from heat and add 6 cups corn flakes. Stir till all flakes are covered.

Drop by large table spoon onto waxed paper. Shape into wreath. Add 3-5 red hots (holly berries). Let cool before removing from waxed paper.



A Message from the Supervisor

A Message from Larry

Larry Winter is the Supervisor of the Children with Special Needs Unit II.

Support for children with special needs in La Crosse County continues to grow with an eye toward including children in community supports regardless of the challenges they face. In return this creates a culture of compassion and acceptance for the differing abilities of all citizens in La Crosse County.

This fall the Family and Children Section began offering support for families through a new program titled "Comprehensive Community Services (CCS)". This program focuses on a child's potential, functional capacity, and ability to be a contributing member of society. (Compare this to the traditional mental health model which focused on the child's diagnosis, disability and deficits.) CCS is a service for children with a mental health diagnosis who are currently receiving or may qualify for medical assistance.

CCS believes that supports and services can assist a child to recover regardless of their current medical/mental health functioning. An Integrated Support Team will focus on the functional capacity of the child rather than on the illness and assist the family and child to achieve a series of functional objectives. The Integrated Support Team will focus on supporting a family and child, **not the illness**.

The Family and Children's Section has begun to identify children in our current delivery system who have a mental health diagnosis and a source of medical assistance. Based on a child's strengths and needs assessment they may qualify for this program. Regardless of the type of mental health support the child is receiving from us we promise to ensure that our focus will be on the child's potential, functional capacity and ability to be a contributing member of society.

We encourage those who work directly or indirectly with children who have a mental health challenge to embrace this new direction and join us as we move forward together. A social work friend gave a sticker to me a few years ago that I have attached to my computer. It quotes Dan Wilkins- "A community that excludes even one of its members is no community at all". An inclusive community, regardless of a child's abilities creates a culture of compassion and acceptance. Happy Holiday's!!!!

Upcoming Community Events

Breakfast with Santa, Crafts and The Polar Express Movie

Saturday, December 16th, 9:00 a.m. Breakfast, 10:00 a.m. Polar Express

At Marcus Theaters 2032 Ward Avenue, La Crosse

Tickets are \$5.00 per person over the age of 1 year

Limited Tickets Available only at Family Resources (608) 784-8125

1500 Green Bay St, La Crosse



Go see Santa at the Rotary Lights

Rotary Lights are open through New Years Eve nightly from 5:00 - 10:00 p.m. at Riverside Park in La Crosse. You can visit **Santa's House** from 5:00 - 8:00 p.m. Live Reindeer in Santa's Village Dec 1 - 23. Santa will have an extra twinkle in his eye on Dec 5th and 9th for children with special needs.

Other activities to see: (Activities subject to change depending on weather.)

- ♦ Hot chocolate, hot cider and cookies will be served in the Gingerbread House.
- ♦ Live Nativity by the WELS Church Group featuring live animals Dec 9-10, 16-17, and 23
- ♦ Free Hayrides starting at the Eagle Statue in the park Dec 12th and 19th
- ♦ Breakfast with Santa, December 9th at 9:00 a.m.
- ♦ The lights castle - heated tent with activities. Go to www.rotarylights.org to view entertainment schedule.

Admission if Free, visitors are encouraged to make voluntary contributions of cash and/or non perishable food.

Partner Picture



1500 Green Bay Street
La Crosse, WI 54601
(608) 784-8125 or (800) 873-1768

<http://www.laxfamilyresources.org>

Business Hours

Monday - Thursday 8:30 am - 5:00 pm
Friday 8:30 am - 3:00 pm

Discover Family Resources

By now, you may have already heard of Family Resources. But if you haven't here's just a brief idea of what we're all about. Family Resources provides support and resources to anyone who cares for children. The programs at Family Resources prepare, educate and support, while also giving parents and caregivers a greater understanding of the impact and influence they have on the children in their lives. All of this information is what ultimately leads to giving children a wonderful and positive start to life. Now that we have your attention and interest, keep reading to learn more about the programs we offer!

Play Groups: Family Resources offers group opportunities for parents and their children. On Tuesday mornings, **Parent Connection** is a group for parents to connect with others about the joys and challenges of parenting while their children are cared for in the adjoining supervised playroom. **Play Shoppes** give parents time to bond with their little ones while sharing in art activities, story time and snacks! These are held on Friday mornings in La Crosse & on Tuesday mornings at Christ the King Church in Onalaska.

Parenting Classes: The opportunities for increased parent education are endless at Family Resources. There are different classes you can participate in on many different nights of the week. Some upcoming classes for the next quarter include "Nurturing Your Spirited Child," "Active Parenting," and "Sharing Parenting Responsibilities."

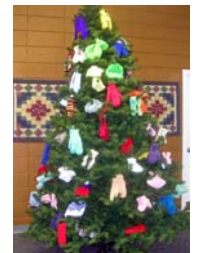
Workshops: Workshops at Family Resources are a great way to help you learn more about yourself as well as your children, many of which also give helpful information for everyday life. A few of the workshops that will be offered in the upcoming quarter at Family Resources include "Skills for a Successful Marriage," "Quick Meals for Busy Families," "Helpful Hints for Easy Organization," and many more! Workshops are offered free of charge and limited childcare is sometimes provided for children who are independent walkers or older; younger children are welcome to join their parents. Pre-registration is required by calling the main number.

Birth to Three Services: Another wonderful part of Family Resources is that we facilitate Birth to 3 service coordination. This is an early intervention program for families with infants and toddlers who have developmental delays and disabilities. If you live in La Crosse County and you have concerns about your child's development, you may request an evaluation free of charge. To make a referral for the Birth to 3 Program or for more information about the program contact one of the service coordinators at (608) 784-1035.

Warmlines: Warmlines is a free program that puts you in contact over the phone with a parent educator about any parenting or childcare question you may have. Individualized help and unique responses are given to each caller. So the next time you have a parenting question, or you're just feeling frustrated, give us a call, during our business hours, and let us help! Call (608) 784-8125.



Also... There is so much more that Family Resources has to offer. This includes services such as childcare referrals, childcare certification services, child seat safety checks, the resource and toy lending libraries that allow you to check out parenting materials and toys for up to three weeks, and many volunteer opportunities. For more information on any of these or other programs and services, please don't hesitate to call and feel free to come and visit us!



**To receive a free newsletter please contact Family Resources.
You can also visit us on the internet at <http://www.laxfamilyresources.org>**

Written By: Katie Vatland, Intern from UW-L

Awesome Activities

UW-L Active and Healthy Lifestyles for Children and Youth with Disabilities



“Learn to Snowshoe, Sled, and Cross Country Ski”

When: Mondays and Wednesdays, January 15 – March 5, 2007, 4:00-5:00 p.m.

For: Kids with special needs ages 5-18 years (and their siblings and nondisabled friends)

Where: Myric Park (across from the Kids Coulee), La Crosse, WI 54601

Cost: \$10 (scholarships are available)

Registration: Begins Monday January 8th.

Sign up at the La Crosse Family YMCA (1140 Main St., La Crosse, WI) or call (608) 782-9622

Contact: Brandon Corcoran, YMCA Youth and Family Director-(608) 782-9622 ext. 285



Hoops for ALL Basketball

When: Tuesdays and Thursdays, January 30 - March 27, 2007, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
(No program T & TH March 13-15)

For: Kids with special needs ages 8-15 years (and their siblings and nondisabled friends)

Where: Mathy Boys and Girls Club located on Viterbo University's Campus (811 8th Street, La Crosse)

Cost: One year membership fee of \$10.00 is required for all Boys and Girls Club non-members, along with a \$20.00 program fee that includes the 8 week basketball program and a t-shirt.

Registration: Begins Monday January 15th

Sign-up at Mathy Boys and Girls Club (811 8th Street, La Crosse) or by phone (608) 784-6061

Contact: Derrick Kroll, Director of Mathy Boys and Girls Club – (608) 784-6061



For more information about these programs and other activities contact Shelley Wetzel, UW-L Active and Healthy Lifestyles Grant Coordinator, at (608)785.8695 or go to the website at: www.uwlax.edu/activeandhealthylifestyles

Staff for these programs are trained and prepared to meet the needs of children with special needs.

YWCA Adaptive Physical Recreational Opportunities (A-PRO) Program
Provides adaptive recreation activities throughout the year for individuals with disabilities.

 **Adaptive Skiing** Sunday, January 21st and Saturday, March 3rd at Mt. La Crosse
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM, Cost is \$15.00.

For more information contact Lisa Mathson, YWCA Youth Activities Director, at (608) 781-2783 ext. 5, or email at lmathson@ywcalax.org.

Radical Resources



La Crosse Area Autism Support Group

La Crosse South Side Neighborhood Center
1300 6th Street South

January 24, 2007 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE, THERE IS HELP!

Come one, come all, to the La Crosse Area Autism Support Group meeting at the La Crosse South Side Neighborhood Center on January 24th, 2007. All families are welcome to join; there is no fee to attend. It is an opportunity for all families to attend a meeting to share insight, questions, feelings, and concerns regarding autism and autism awareness. These meetings will be held the third Wednesday of every month at the same time. There will also be autism literature available to you. We want to offer everyone the opportunity to attend this meeting, whether you or someone you know has autism.



If you have any questions regarding this meeting, please feel free to contact:

Steven or Rena Cash (608) 519-0883 lax-autismgroup@charter.net

* Please note, right now there is no child care available. Please make arrangements if possible.

ActiveStyle

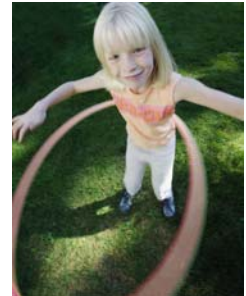
Pampers and Huggies brand diapers and pull-ups covered by MA for kids over 4.

1-800-651-6223 ext. 3203

(612) 968.1805

rgranmoe@charter.minet

Eligible recipients may receive the following items covered by their Wisconsin Medicaid delivered monthly to their home at no additional charge:



Diapers/pull-ups - not to exceed 300 per month
Gloves—vinyl or latex - 200 gloves per month
Chux or bedpads - 200 per month
(Subject to change per State Adjustments)



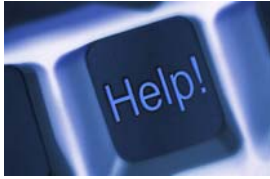
Specialized Telephone Equipment

If you have a disability that makes it difficult for you to use a standard telephone, the Wisconsin Telecommunications Equipment Purchase Program (TEPP) can help individuals pay for specialized telephone equipment such as amplified phones, visual ring indicators, voice activated phones and speech devices. This is available to all residents of Wisconsin who have a hearing loss, mobility or speech impairment. There is no income or age restriction to apply, and individuals can reapply every three years if needed.

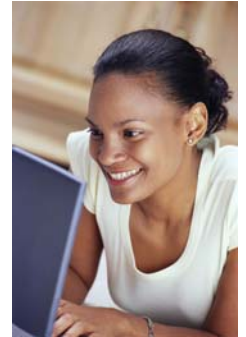
For more information on the TEPP program or to learn about equipment that could help you, call the Center at 414-541-5465 (Voice)/ 888-742-7654 (TTY).

Radical Resources

The Dark Side of the Internet: Sexual Predators of Children



Presented by:
Wisconsin Department of Justice Special Agent Eric Szatkowski
Thursday March 1st 6:30-8:30pm
Logan Middle School Auditorium
1450 Avon Street, La Crosse



While the internet offers a world of educational and entertainment options for young people, it also has a dark and dangerous side we must be aware of. This presentation on the online exploitation of children includes real-life examples and practical advice for anyone interested in the safety and well-being of our children. An eye-opening live demonstration of chat rooms is included.

Please note: Due to the nature of the subject, this presentation is appropriate for adults only.

There is no cost and FREE childcare and activities for older children provided
For more information call 789-8460
Sponsored By: Logan Middle School

Pocket Full of Therapy www.pfot.com

Check out this website's idea exchange for some fun occupational therapy activities.

Christmas Wreath for Window or Tree:

Supplies: Cardboard, pipe cleaners - assorted Christmas colors and green/red/white paint (optional). Glue glitter and some sequins for extra sparkle!

Using cardboard - outline and have the child cut out the shape of a donut for a wreath, if there's time the child can paint the shape (optional). Using one color or many different colors of pipe cleaners, have the child wrap pipe cleaners around the donut through the hole. Don't forget to make a pipe cleaner hook for hanging on a window or for the Christmas Tree. You can also try making a candy cane or stocking.

Ice Skating

This exercise is a great motor planning activity that uses felt squares for skates. This is a fun and challenging winter activity without the freezing weather!

Supplies: pieces of felt, scissors, pillows, blocks, balls for obstacle course

Cut felt squares large enough for the child's feet. No need to strap or attach the felt to their shoes just stand on them. Slide to skate. To make more difficult - Build an Obstacle Course to skate around. - Put pillows, blocks, etc. on the floor to skate around. Have an Race between two skaters or relays with a group.

Other News

FROM THE CRISIS CORNER

By Eleanor Shaffar MA LPC



As the holidays are approaching, tensions are no doubt rising. We thought it might be a good time to give everyone an overview of some tools that might come in handy for families trying to negotiate the "rocky road" that leads to "**Christmas Vacation**".

For the past six years La Crosse County Human Services has been operating a 24 hour/seven days a week **Crisis Program** capable of responding to a crisis situation involving mental, developmental or physical abilities anywhere within La Crosse County. Our mission is to "positively impact the mental health and physical well being of the community we serve by providing an array of readily accessible crisis services that will meet individualized needs in the least restrictive settings possible."

Mobile Crisis Responders are able to meet with children and families in a variety of settings to assess the nature of their crisis, their level of risk, and to develop a response plan that will assist them in resolving their current crisis situation. Crisis Responders are also available by phone for intervention and support.

Continued on next page...

Family Matters

Other News

...Crisis Corner Continued

La Crosse County has developed an array of crisis stabilization services available within the community to offer safety and support for children and to help avoid unnecessary hospitalizations. These services include telephone support, crisis respite homes, crisis group home, and in-home behavioral supports through Catholic Charities and Lutheran Social Services.

A Clinical Therapist is available to follow up with children in crisis to assure that their needs for support and services are being met. The therapist is also available to assist in the development of Emergency Response Plans to help both the responder and the family know the most effective way to respond should a crisis occur.

So if you find your “tinsel falling”, your “cocoa scalding”, your “reindeer running rampant” or your “stockings stinking” this Holiday Season, give us a call! We can help. During work hours you may contact us at 785-6101. After hours/weekends/holidays we can be reached at 784-4357 (HELP). There is a fee for our services coverable by Medical Assistance, most other private insurance companies or direct payment. A reduced fee may be available through our fiscal department.



HAVE A SAFE AND PEACE FILLED HOLIDAY SEASON!

For People with a Waiver: Critical Incident Reporting Overview

All critical incidents involving children who participate in the Children’s Long Term Support Waivers (CLTSW) must be reported to their Support and Service Facilitator. Support and Service Facilitators can be reached by calling them directly or by calling La Crosse County Human Services, Family and Children’s Section, at (608) 785-6202.

What is a critical incident?

A critical incident is any actual or alleged event or situation that creates a significant risk or serious harm to the physical, mental health, safety, or well being of your child. The critical incidents that must be reported include:

- Any abuse or neglect of the child known or suspected.
- Errors in medical or medication management that result in significant adverse reaction that required medical attention.
- The initiation of an investigation by law enforcement of an event or allegation regarding a child as either a perpetrator or victim, unless such action is a component of an approved crisis or treatment plan.
- Significant and substantial damage to the residence of the child or service provider (i.e.-fire, tornado, flood).
- Use of isolation, seclusion, or restraint by a service provider which is not included and approved as part of a behavior support plan. (Families will need to report if they use a significant/severe control.)
- Unexpected event or behavior that causes serious injury or risk to the child (i.e. running away, setting a fire, violence)
- If a family is not happy with restraints that are happening at school, then a report is necessary.

How is a critical incident reported? Families and providers are required to report critical incidents to their agency Support and Service Facilitator within 48 hours excluding weekends and holidays. Agency Support and Service Facilitators are required to report critical incidents to the State staff responsible for the CLTS waiver program within 5 days for serious situations or in most cases within 30 days.

Why is a critical incident reported? To assure for the health, safety, and welfare of your child as required by all Medical Waivers by the Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Critical incidents should be addressed as they occur to decrease the likelihood of a recurrence.

What happens after a critical incident is reported? Support and Service Facilitators are expected to address and resolve situations and implement systems to decrease the likelihood of a recurrence. Also, State staff responsible for the CLTS Waiver program will use information collected in critical incident reports to identify statewide or regional trends, which will then allow for the development of training or interventions to decrease the likelihood of recurrence.

If a critical incident occurs, families and providers should seek all necessary care and assistance from medical or emergency personnel as appropriate. This reporting procedure does not provide an immediate response or replace other mandatory reporting expected of agency personnel.

Family Matters
Attn: Susan Becker

La Crosse County Human Services
300 4th St. N.
La Crosse, WI 54601

Announcements



Become a member of a coalition recently formed in La Crosse County. The Coulee Coalition for Children of Differing Abilities seeks to identify the unique challenges of children with special needs and their families. We promote access to community resources, supports and services through collaboration and advocacy. We do this through a strong emphasis on family involvement. We feel it is important that no matter what avenue a family takes to seek help for their child, they have a complete array of strength based and family directed programs to help support that child and, in turn, the family. Our coalition has identified several areas of need and challenges that will be focused on in order to support families and professionals working with families. Meetings are primarily held the 4th Monday of every month. For more information contact Kristine Buehler at 785-6225 or buehler.kristine@co.la-crosse.wi.us.

We view this as a community publication and are welcome to any ideas or information you would like to share. If you are a parent and would like to pass on some valuable knowledge, inside tips or stories to share with other parents please let us know and we can feature an article(s) in our "Family to Family" section.

Forward any ideas, feedback or questions about this newsletter to Susan Becker at becker.susan@co.la-crosse.wi.us or call her at (608)785-6284. Let me know if you would like to be placed on our distribution list to receive this newsletter by email.