

# Children's News

a newsletter for growing minds

November-December 2008



## Who's Coming to Dinner:

### The Importance of Family Meals

*When 1,500 children were asked, "What do you think makes a happy family?" the answer they gave most often was doing things together.*

One of the most important times a family can be together is mealtime. Mealtimes provide a great opportunity to interact with your kids and make sure that the people you love make time for one another.

If family mealtimes are rare in your household, you're not alone! According to a recent study of eating patterns in America, only 49 percent of the families studied ate dinner together seven nights a week, and 74 percent ate together five nights a week.

Today's families are busier than ever and mealtimes are a great opportunity not only to eat together but also to connect, laugh together and even problem solve. Family meals provide opportunities for adults to share appropriate table manners and nutritious food choices. When children help with meals, they learn important skills such as shopping, setting the table, preparing food, serving food and cleaning up.

Eating together as a family can teach good communication skills such as listening patiently, and expressing one's opinion in a respectful manner. Mealtimes provide a natural setting for families to engage in moral and intellectual discussions that share family values. Family meals can also help create long-lasting family traditions and enhance cultural customs.

One of the first things a family can do is determine how many nights, and which nights, they will eat together. Although it may be difficult to eat together seven nights a week, a commitment should be made to eat together as often as possible. The whole family needs to understand the importance of sharing the meal together and making it a priority.



## Who is Coming to Dinner, continued

### What can busy families do to make their mealtimes enjoyable?

1. Keep in mind that you may be too busy to have a family meal each night.

*Plan ahead, think creatively and make adjustments to fit your family's schedule. It may be as easy as changing the time of day you eat together.*

2. Turn off the television.

*If your family usually watches TV during dinner, begin with one or two meals a week with the TV off, and gradually increase this as time goes on. TV can be a distraction and can limit the important social interactions that make family mealtimes important.*

3. Don't worry about making big, fancy meals – keep the food simple.

*Elaborate meals are not necessary for quality family time. To save time and effort, keep the meals simple and easy to prepare.*

4. Involve the whole family in planning, preparing and serving meals.

*Listen to children's meal suggestions and try to make eating together fun. Studies show that children who participate in family dinners tend to have healthier diets than those who don't.*

5. Teach by example. If you make the family dinner a priority, your children will learn the importance of it.

*When you make pleasant family mealtimes a priority, your child or children will more likely be healthy, well-mannered and well-adjusted.*

This information courtesy of Family and Consumer Sciences, Michigan State University Extension. For more information on this and other parenting, money management, food, nutrition or health issues, contact the local office at 734-997-1678

## Business Spotlight: The Scrapbox



*Having fun and learning with your children doesn't have to cost a lot. At one local business, turning junk into treasure is what they are all about. They call it creative recycling—We call it fun!*

In the corner of the warehouse, a little girl and her grandmother are busily searching through a bin of plastic strips to find just the right one to complete their flag. Nearby another child has stacked up 18 orange caps in a pyramid— These are just a couple of the many joys of reusing stuff that can be found at the Scrapbox in Ann Arbor. Located at 581 State Circle (near the intersection of State Street and I-94), the Scrapbox is a nonprofit community organization dedicated to making good use of the materials that local businesses and manufacturers might otherwise throw away. For just a couple of dollars, visitors to the Scrapbox can fill up a paper bag full of doodads of all sorts, from sticky backed foam to plastic containers- From there, the possibility for creation with the materials are endless!

**Creative juices not flowing yet? The Scrapbox also offers up suggestions for what can be made with items, both in the store and on their website at [www.scrapbox.org](http://www.scrapbox.org).**

The Scrapbox is open Tuesday through Friday from 10 to 6 and Saturday from 10 to 2. Make a trip today— You might be surprised how far your dollar and your minds can stretch!



This is just a brief listing of the some of the **free, family-friendly events** happening throughout Washtenaw County. For more information contact your local Chamber of Commerce or visit one of the following sites:

<http://annarbor.org/events/calendar.asp>

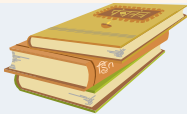
<http://www.ewashtenaw.org/>

<http://www.arborweb.com/>

## november

S	M	T	W	T	Fr	S
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

11/21-11/22 \* Downtown Manchester \* **Christmas in the Village**, a 2-day Holiday celebration, begins with a Holiday Parade on Main Street, Friday at 6:30pm. Events, including a craft show, a bake sale, and sleigh rides, continue through Saturday. Call (734)-476-4565 for details.



Here are some of the Special Events being offered at libraries throughout the county in November and December:

- \*Tuesday, November 25th, 6:00 to 7:00 pm \* Thanksgiving Storytime with Tom the Turkey \* Chelsea District Library
- \*Saturday, December 6th, 1:00 to 3:00 pm \* Movie: The Polar Express \* Manchester District Library
- \*Sunday, December 13th, 10:00 to 11:30 am \* Holiday Storytime for All Ages \* Dexter District Library
- \*Sunday, December 28th, 4:00 to 4:30 pm \* Dancing Babies \* Ann Arbor District Library- Traverwood Branch
- \*Saturday, December 6th, 11:00 am to 12:00pm Snowflakes are Falling \* Ann Arbor Library- Malletts Creek Branch

### Public Library Events:

The District Libraries of Ann Arbor, Chelsea, Dexter, Manchester, Milan, Saline and Ypsilanti, as well as the Northfield Township Area library located in Whitmore Lake, offer a variety of free, weekly story times for young children as well as programs for older children. Contact your local library for details:

Ann Arbor (734)327-4200  
 Chelsea (734)475-8732  
 Dexter (734)426-4477  
 Manchester (734)428-8025  
 Milan (734)439-1240  
 Saline (734)429-5450  
 Ypsilanti (734)482-4110  
 Northfield (734)449-0066

## december

Su	M	T	W	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

12/5-12/7 \* Downtown Chelsea \* **Chelsea Hometown Holidays** is a weekend of holiday fun including a tree lighting ceremony and lots of activities and entertainment. Call (734) 475-1145 for more information.

12/6 \* Downtown Saline \* **33rd Annual Holiday Parade** begins at 5:30pm. "Hustle and Bustle" downtown before and after parade. Call (734) 944-6835 for more information.

12/11 \* Pease Auditorium-EMU-Ypsilanti \* **Annual Holiday Concert** by the Ypsilanti Community Choir and Band starts at 7:30pm.

12/13 \* Downtown Dexter \* **Home for the Holidays—Victorian Christmas** starts at 8:30am with Breakfast with Santa. Events continue throughout the day and include 5K Run/Walk, Ice Sculpture Exhibit, and Light Parade. Call (734) 426-0887 for more information.

## Are you concerned about your child's growth and development ?

Most parents wonder at times if their child is growing and developing like other children.

If you question how your child is developing,

**"Don't worry, but don't wait!"**

There are many services to assist families with infants, toddlers, preschoolers and beyond in finding the help needed to support children's development. Early On, Project Find and First Steps Programs all serve children and families in Washtenaw County. Children may have a diagnosed disability or may simply need extra support in their development. For more information call 1-800-EarlyOn or go to

[www.1800earlyon.org](http://www.1800earlyon.org)

Or call 734-994-8100 ext 1531

or go online: [www.wash.k12.mi.us](http://www.wash.k12.mi.us) for more information.



# Brush Up on Oral Health!

**FACT: Tooth decay (dental caries) affects children in the United States more than any other chronic infectious disease.**

Untreated tooth decay causes pain and infections that may lead to problems; such as eating, speaking, playing and learning. The good news is that tooth decay and other oral diseases that can affect children are preventable. The combination of dental sealants and fluoride has the potential to nearly eliminate tooth decay in school-age children.

## What Parents and Caregivers Can Do:

Here are some things you can do to ensure good oral health for your child:

- Encourage your children to eat regular nutritious meals and avoid frequent between-meal snacking.
- Protect your child's teeth with fluoride.
- Use a fluoride toothpaste. If your child is less than 7 years old, put only a pea-sized amount on their toothbrush.
- If your drinking water is not fluoridated, talk to a dentist or physician about the best way to protect your child's teeth.
- Talk to your child's dentist about dental sealants. They protect teeth from decay.
- If you are pregnant, get prenatal care and eat a healthy diet. The diet should include folic acid to prevent birth defects of the brain and spinal cord and possibly cleft lip/palate.

*This information courtesy of the Division of Oral Health at the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

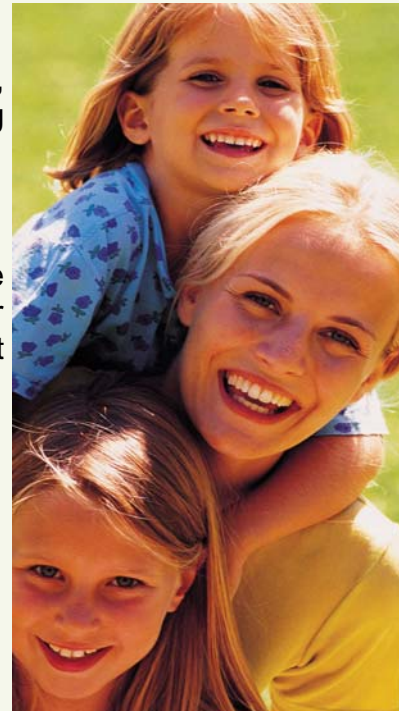
**For information about how you can connect with Oral Health Resources in Washtenaw County, please contact Kelly Stupple, Children's Health Insurance Advocate, at (734)544-3079**

## Did You Know?

Success by Six is working throughout Washtenaw County to support families, child care providers and others as we all work toward sending our young children off to school ready to succeed!

## Want to Learn More?

Visit our website at [www.washtenawsuccessby6.org](http://www.washtenawsuccessby6.org) to learn more about the work that Success by Six is doing in Washtenaw County. You can also join our Parent Network, volunteer, or join our Great Start Parent Coalition to help us get the word out about the importance of learning in the first 5 years of a child's life!



### How to Reach us:

2305 Platt Road  
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Phone: 734.994.8100 ext 1277  
Fax: 734.971-6230  
[www.washtenawsuccessby6.org](http://www.washtenawsuccessby6.org)

