Seasons of Celebration

In This Issue

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Happy Holidays!
Beginning with Thanksgiving, the end of the year is the celebration season in America. Although December is a season of joy, celebrations have hazards. Regulations have decreased the physical dangers of toys and travel; the increase in online shopping has increased other risks, like identity theft. Shopping with children presents other problems.

Simple rules for shopping with children from the National Crime Prevention Council include:
• If you are shopping with children, make a plan in case you are separated from each other.
• Select a central meeting place.
• Teach them to know they can ask mall personnel or store security employees if they need help.


Helping Children

Child advocates know the holiday season is a time when the financial inequalities appear in bold relief, and when the stress caused by the realization of poverty can be most painful to children. This time of year is a time of giving. It is a good time to focus on raising children who will grow up to be a part of a caring community. Seasonal responses to needs of our neighbors tend focus on the individual (Angel Tree donations) rather focusing on addressing systemic causes.

Empathy – the ability to share other’s pain, as a parent does with his or her child – is an important tool in protecting communities as well as families. Parents can encourage caring in their children.

Joyce, Amy, *Washington Post*, *Are you raising nice kids? A Harvard psychologist gives 5 ways to raise them to be kind*, [http://wapo.st/2g3XJ6Y](http://wapo.st/2g3XJ6Y).


Holiday Stress

TCCY’s training to help the state understand Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) includes information on three levels of stress: positive stress, tolerable stress and toxic stress. All of these can come into play during the holiday season. The positive stress of new experiences and new people can help us learn new ideas and new perspectives, build new skills and overcome social anxiety. The busyness, increased responsibilities and activities and attempts to meet family, work and neighborhood expectations can create a high level of stress, mitigated by the support of family and friends and that it’s "only once a year," into tolerable stress. Those who do not celebrate December
holidays deal with a different stress. However, ACEs and adult traumatic experiences combined with typical seasonable activities can increase the stress to a toxic level.


Mayo Clinic, *Healthy Lifestyle: Stress management, Stress, depression and the holidays: Tips for coping*, [http://mayo.cl/in/2g0lidk](http://mayo.cl/in/2g0lidk).


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### It's the Most Wonderful, Unhealthy Time of the Year

This season is full of special treats. Many of them are full of calories, and others disrupt sleep patterns. Consistency is an important for young children. What can parents do to keep families healthy when homes, workplaces and stores are full of treats and regular activities are disrupted?


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### Don’t Forget the Simple Answers

Part of our efforts to improve the lives of Tennessee children include simple solutions available to anybody. It's a basic rule of technology that if something stops working, the first step is to make sure all the cables are properly attached, That's an example of looking for the simple solution first. *National Handwashing Awareness Week*, Dec. 4-10, is another reminder that the best communicable disease prevention is simply washing your hands with ordinary soap.


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Over a quarter of a million people were treated for toy-related injuries in emergency rooms in 2010, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Three of every four were under the age of 15. Millions of toys are recalled for safety reasons each year. It is tragic when something that should provide joy provides pain. Prevent Blindness America declared **December Safe Toys and Gifts Awareness Month**. Holiday gift givers can find guidelines for purchasing safe toys, including checking toys for sharp edges and sturdiness, buying developmentally appropriate gifts and including protective gear with sports equipment.


TCCY Seeks to Honor Youth and Advocate

Each and every day, advocates across Tennessee improve child well-being, perhaps for one at-risk child, a classroom full of children or by changing policies that improve or protect the lives of all young Tennesseans. Since 1996, TCCY has honored advocates with the Jim Pryor Child Advocate Award. Again this year, TCCY is seeking nominations for the award to be presented at the 2017 Children's Advocacy Days.

As we have learned from the ACEs research, early experiences create barriers to success. Their exposure to ACEs and struggles within the system that responds to them make youth who leave the juvenile justice system prepared to serve their communities worthy of praise. Since the beginning of the 21st century, TCCY has honored some of these youth with the Youth Excellence Award and is again asking for help in identifying nominees.


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Mark Your Calendar


Dec. 2, 8 a.m.-9:30 a.m., Northeast Council on Children and Youth Annual Legislative Breakfast, Holiday Inn, 101 W. Springbrook Drive, Johnson City. Includes presentation on "DCS: State of the Child." Contact Jill.Stott@tn.gov or 423-979-4585.


Dec. 8, 8:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., CST, Northwest Council on Children and Youth "The Positive Power of Humor to Manage Stress," Boling University Center, Ballroom, 544 University St, University of Tennessee Martin. Contact Dana.Cobb@tn.gov.
Dec. 9, 11:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., **East Tennessee Council on Children and Youth Legislative Council Meeting and Lunch**, Bridgewater Place (Kingston Hall), 205 Bridgewater Rd NW, Knoxville. Register at http://bit.ly/2fUVH9x. Contact: Lindsey.Cody@tn.gov.


Dec. 16, 10 a.m. to noon, **Southeast Council on Children and Youth Legislative Event**, Bethel Bible Village, 3001 Hamill Road, Hixson, TN. Contact Rosalyn.Leavell-Rice@tn.gov.

March 14-15, 2017, **Children's Advocacy Days**, War Memorial Auditorium. Contact: John.Rust@tn.gov.

**In the News**


**Research Information**


Tennessee KIDS COUNT Facts

Children Whose Teeth Are in Excellent or Very Good Condition

[Graph showing percentage of children's teeth in excellent or very good condition over time]

Children and Teens Not Exercising Regularly

[Graph showing percentage of children and teens not exercising regularly over time]


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