



CA/N Opening News

ALPENA/PRESQUE ISLE CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT (CA/N) TEAM

CA/N Team Mission: "To assist and support programs that promote the prevention of child abuse and neglect."

Visit us online at www.alpenapicanteam.com!

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Baby Pantry Coordinator
- **Robin Benson-Clark**
CA/N Team Coordinator

Holiday Stress

The holiday season is not exempt from child abuse and neglect. Unfortunately, statistics show that child abuse reports increase during the holidays, as stress can increase for many families during this time. Extra expenses, kids home more and usually stuck inside due to weather, and extra errands to run can wear down a parent! Even for a well balanced family, the holidays can quickly become overtaxing. The holidays can also show an increase in alcohol use. Parents need to plan ahead for the additional holiday stress to keep themselves in check emotionally in order to parent effectively during this time.

back on the ones that will cause stress in terms of money, time, transportation and energy. Let your kids be a part of the process. If something has to be missed, they are more likely to understand why.

you do not have to attend every party, volunteer at every function, and buy your kids every toy they want. Do what is important and realistic for you and your family.

Relax with your family.



Be open to change. Keep in mind that life requires flexibility. Be prepared to change plans if something comes up. Be prepared for something new that may arise and that your family may want to do. The holiday season is about making memories for you and your children, whether by celebrating a tradition or creating a new one.

time." Enjoy the season in a simple way. Go for a walk or drive and look at holiday decorations. Read a holiday classic or watch a holiday movie together. Spend time making holiday crafts that you and your children will all have fun creating.

Give back to others. Include in your family plan an activity that gives back to others and involves your children. As a family, donate holiday gifts, visit a nursing home, serve meals at a food bank, or join an event sponsored by your church, community center, place of work, or local family organization.

Learn to say "no". Set limits. Say "yes" to activities that matter but decline those that put you over the top. Remember,

Below are some helpful tips from the Massachusetts Children's Trust Fund:

Make a holiday plan with your children. Gather the family and discuss all the upcoming school, church, community and other holiday activities. Talk about what events mean the most to each family member. Schedule in the most important and cut

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Baby Pantry News

The Alpena County Baby Pantry is open twice a month, on the second and fourth Thursdays, from 9:00 to 3:00. Our new location is St. Bernard's Parish Center at 319 Lockwood St. Usage of the baby pantry has increased gradually over the last year and a half so that we are now regularly seeing 75-80 families on each open day. By comparison, in the fall of 2005 we were seeing 12-15 families each day.

Originally the planners provided only "the basics," i.e. diapers, wipes, baby food, formula, and some bath supplies. Remarkably, our inventory has grown through

spontaneous donations of clothing of all kinds up to size 3T, baby bottles, bibs, blankets, crib sheets. There has also been donations of even larger items such as cribs, strollers, potty chairs, infant carriers and bouncy chairs, etc. Many donations come from churches, civic groups, various organizations, and individuals. However, although we've never requested it and it is not required, we are in awed that

more than 50% of the individuals who donate used baby and toddler clothes to the baby pantry are our own customers.

Amounts of many items that are distributed are limited per child per visit but families can come as often as they need the help to provide for their infants and toddlers.

Donations of all kinds are essential to allow the baby



pantry to continue to serve so many families. We use cash donations and money collected through fund raisers to supplement donations of the basics to have adequate amounts available during each open day.

If you or anyone you know is interested in donating to the baby pantry, checks can be written to Alpena County

to 1044 US 23 North, Alpena.

Donations of clothing and other items can be brought to the baby pantry on regular open days between 9:00 and 3:00. Other, more convenient, arrangements can be made by calling Celeste at 356-9516.

Presque Isle County MOMMY & ME

This new program in Presque Isle County offers participants assistance in the challenges of parenting. Participants will engage with other parents who face similar challenges with raising healthy, happy families.

Through assisted group discussion and child playgroups, participants will learn new problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.

The group meets every Friday when schools are in session at the **United Methodist Church**, 3647 N. Lynn Street, Onaway.

Questions?

Call Denise Penn

989-733-4968

Look for the Alpena Baby Pantry on Facebook!

Social Connections for Parents

In this newsletter, we will review one protective factor for child abuse prevention according to the *Child Welfare Information Gateway*—**Forming Social Connections.**

Parents with a social network of emotionally supportive friends, family, and neighbors often find that it is easier to care for their children and themselves. Most parents need people they can call on once in a while when they need a sympathetic listener, advice, or concrete support. Research has shown that parents who are isolated, with few social connections, are at higher risk for child abuse and neglect.

Some parents may need to develop self-confidence and social skills to expand their social networks. Helping parents identify resources and/or providing opportunities for them to make connections within their neighborhood or community may encourage isolated parents to reach out. Often, opportunities exist within faith-based organizations, schools, hospitals, community centers, and other places where support groups or social groups meet.

Identifying and building on parents' current or potential social connections, skills, abilities, and interests can be a great way to partner with them as they expand their social networks. For parents who have difficulty establishing and maintaining social connections, your discussion may

help them identify what is holding them back.

Encourage parents to express goals regarding social connections in their own terms, such as, "I have friends and at least one person who supports my parenting."



Sharing Strategies and Resources to Strengthen Social Connections

If parents express an interest in making social connections, you may want to offer suggestions, information, or services. Sometimes parents will not identify a lack of social connections or emotional support as an issue. Instead, they may express concern about a child's behavior problem or their own depression. In addressing the parent's concerns, you can also provide information about how these needs might be met by connecting with others (e.g., a support group for parents with

similar issues). You can also provide general information on how expanding social connections can reduce isolation and support parents.

Consider sharing the following:

Benefits of a broad social network

- Helps ease the burden of parenting
- Models positive social interactions for children and gives children access to other supportive adults
- Provides support in crises
- Offers opportunities to help others

Ways to broaden a social network

- Overcome transportation, child care, and other barriers. For instance, take a bus or carpool to a play group or join a babysitting co-op to meet other parents and have occasional child care
- Access community resources, especially those with which the parent has some experience (a church he or she attended, a Head Start program where the child is enrolled, a cultural center that offers services in the parent's native language)
- Join a parent's group or play group in the neighborhood, or start a new group

Dr. Bruce Perry

In October, the Alpena and Presque Isle CA/N Team hosted a community discussion that focused on a video of Dr. Bruce Perry on the topic of the effects of trauma on children. Dr. Bruce Perry is the Senior Fellow of *The ChildTrauma Academy*, a not-for-profit organization based in Houston that promotes innovations in service, research and education in child maltreatment and childhood trauma (see www.childtrauma.org for more information). He is also a world-renowned child psychiatrist and the author of *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog*, one of the foremost books on extreme child abuse. The community discussion drew in over 70 community members, professionals, parents and others, who discussed how our community systems can work together more effectively to help children in Alpena and Presque Isle Counties.

Recently Dr. Perry appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Show. Below is some information from www.oprah.com on that episode with Dr. Perry's views on how our culture may be affecting our developing children.

In homes across the country, Dr. Perry says

parents may be stunting their child's development unintentionally.

"Our modern world is very different than the world that our brain is



engineered for. In the world that human beings have lived in for centuries, there were many, many, many more people in our lives— aunts, grannies, extended family. We were in continuous relational interaction with each other," he says. "The developing child under the age of 6 had at least, in those typical settings, four developmentally mature individuals who would help protect, enrich and nurture these kids."

Thanks to the loving attention of many family members, Dr. Perry says the part of the brain involved in relational interaction got lots of stimulation. This helped people grow up with a tremendous sense of empathy.

Over the years, things have changed. "In the modern world, we have childcare settings where there's one adult and eight, nine, ten kids," he says. "Then, in a home, you've got a poor, isolated mother who's got multiple children."

The consequence isn't what Dr. Perry would call neglect. "I would say that it is underdevelopment of a potential," he says. "Broadly, we are underexpressing the potential of our children to be humane. ... We aren't providing equal amounts of social, relational and emotional experiences to help them be compassionate."

The video used for the community conference, "Early Childhood and Brain Development: How Experience Shapes Child, Community & Culture" is available to borrow at no charge by calling Robin at 989-354-8089.

Another video conference will be offered in the community in the near future spotlighting another Dr. Bruce Perry video entitled "Relational Poverty: The Importance of Early Childhood Relationships for Child, Community & Culture," so stay tuned!

Tips for parenting teens—Managing anger and conflict

Find yourself in situations with your teen when anger gets out of control—your teen's and yours? Anger is a way for teens to assert their independence as they prepare for adulthood, but the struggle can be trying for parents. Parents may respond with their own anger.

Resolving conflict with your teen constructively is a big challenge, but it is important for the well-being of every member of your family.

When anger gets out of control, step back, calm down, and identify more positive, healthy ways to deal with it.

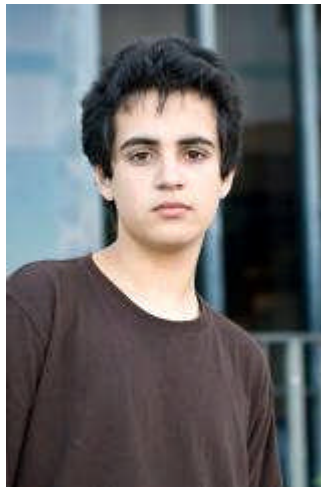
Tips for Calming Down

- Pick your battles. Sometimes the issue is not worth the anger or worth arguing about.
- Take a deep breath and count to ten.
- Go for a walk
- Use “self-talk” to calm down. Say something to sooth yourself such as “I need to relax and stay calm.”
- Reframe the issue. Identify the underlying problem for the angry outburst and how to address it.
- Use humor. However, be sure the humor is not sarcastic

or hurtful.

Look at How You Manage Your Own Anger

- Do you express anger in positive and constructive ways?



- Do you resolve conflict well?
- Have you taught your children to accept and express their anger constructively?

Tips for Resolving Conflict

When you are calm, you can better deal with the issues that caused the conflict. Here are some tips:

- Give your point of view. State the problem as you see it; speak clearly and calmly—don't yell.
- Ask to hear your teen's point of view.
- Pay attention, listen, and carefully consider what your teen is saying.
- Discuss ways to solve the dispute without a battle.
- Practice the art of compromise. Find a middle ground that you and your teen can both live with comfortably.
- Assert your authority, when appropriate, in a calm, yet firm manner.

If you find that anger becomes a

chronic problem for someone in your family, you may want to get help from a mental health professional.

Source: *Helping Your Children Navigate Their Teenage Years: A Guide for Parents*, Dr. Robert Schwebel, White House Council on Youth Violence.

Helpful links with information

regarding parenting teens:

- www.parentingteensonline.com
- www.parentteen.com
- www.byparents-forparents.com
- www.parentingteensresourcenet.org

Adolescence is a period of rapid changes. Between the ages of 12 and 17, for example, a parent ages as much as 20 years.

~Author Unknown



**Consider the CA/N Team
in your year-end giving!**

Your gifts will stay local
throughout the Alpena and
Presque Isle County area!!

If you would like to support the Alpena and Presque Isle Child Abuse and Neglect (CA/N) Team, please send this form along with your donation to:

**Alpena CA/N Team
1044 US 23 North
Alpena, MI 49707
(989) 354-8089**

The Alpena & Presque Isle CA/N Team is a non-profit 501(c)3.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

I would like my gift allocated toward:

___ Alpena Baby Pantry

___ CA/N Team child abuse and neglect prevention efforts

___ Split equally between both

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Consider the CA/N Team in your year-end gifts

Giving to the Alpena and Presque Isle Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Team is a great way to celebrate commitment to families and children in our communities. Gifts given to the CA/N Team are used to assist community programs to prevent child abuse and neglect, offer conferences to educate others to do the same, and also assist in needed supplies for the Alpena Baby Pantry.

The CA/N Team is a 501(c)3

non-profit organization and all gifts are tax deductible. Many of our programs would not be possible if it were not for caring community members who make monetary donations to assist in our efforts. Consider giving to us to help your community's children live lives free of abuse and neglect.

