



Issue 59 | December 2017

Holiday Parenting A Note from the Director

Greetings,

The holidays are filled with opportunities to spend time with friends and family! Unfortunately, these opportunities also come with challenges, especially for parents. Childcare and co-parenting schedules can be challenging with younger children. Differing expectations and more unsupervised time can make parenting teens more stressful this time of year. Healthy communication skills and advance planning can ease some of the stress. Establishing schedules and setting clear expectations can improve the likelihood of getting through the holidays with fewer conflicts. As parents, we also have to learn to lower our expectations of ourselves. The added stress of trying to be the perfect parent, hostess and gift-giver isn't healthy. We hope that the tips and resources included below are helpful to you and the families you serve as you navigate this season's stressors to make happy holiday memories.

From the Resource Center Family to yours...Happy Holidays!
Robyn Cenizal, CFLE, Project Director

Tip of the Month

Your monthly tip to strengthen the relationships of those you serve. Share it - Post it - Pass it on!

Regardless of the status of a parent's romantic relationship with their co-parent, raising a child always has challenges. Married, biological parents may not see eye-to-eye on the balance in their responsibilities. Meanwhile a couple raising a child while living apart may be completely in sync. No matter the romantic situation you, or the families you work with, may be in, here are some quick tips for healthy parenting:

- **Be Positive.** Children do better when they receive encouragement instead of criticism. Remember, your children get positive messages from things you say and do (such as a hug or a high five).
- **Connect.** Children need to feel loved and build strong bonds with their parents. Spending time with your children is one of the best ways to help them feel loved.
- **Manage Behavior Effectively.** Parents need to model positive behavior, set clear expectations and boundaries, and be consistent. Be sure you know your children's friends and other influences, such as what TV shows and movies they are watching, what they are doing on social media, and what they are doing when they spend time online.

[Take our free online training](#) for more tips on healthy parenting, as well as communication, conflict management, and financial management.

Featured Resources

The Resource Center's **Virtual Library** has collected more than 3,000 materials in a variety of formats including fact sheets, research-to-practice briefs, brochures, pamphlets, training resources, program reports or evaluations, and research materials.

- **Strong Families: Tips for Healthy Parenting**
This tip sheet provides specific tips to improve parenting skills. It is designed as an informational handout for families in support of the companion resource for providers, *Tips for Service Providers: Healthy Parenting Practices*. It is also [available in Spanish](#).
- **My Family Album: Healthy Relationship Activity Book for Children**
My Family Album is designed as an interactive educational tool for children ages 7 through 10 to work through together with either their parents or educators. The

book can be used in group settings or one-on-one with children to generate conversations about healthy family relationships, interpersonal skills, and appropriate interactions within the family, school, and community.

- **One Big Happy (Blended) Family: Tips to Help Fathers Co-Parent Effectively**
When we hear the words "blended family," we may think of two adults getting married and creating a new household that includes a child or children from a previous relationship(s). Unfortunately, there isn't a word that adequately expresses the variety of people who are fathers and mothers to children that aren't biologically theirs. Therefore, in this tip sheet, "blended family" means something more general: any situation where a parent who is not the birth father or mother is raising a child. For example, grandparents raising a grandchild, foster parents, or a child living with a parent and the parent's live-in partner.
- **How Technology Changes Teen Romance**
This New York Times article addresses the challenging topic of teenage romance. Some parents and teens have easy and open communication on this topic, while others find the conversation difficult and uncomfortable. This article addresses points for parents to consider when talking to their teens.

Events

The Resource Center's [Events Calendar](#) offers a listing of Resource Center events and other national, regional, and community-wide events that might be of interest. Upcoming events include:

- **Beyond Housing: A National Conversation on Child Homelessness and Poverty 2018, January 10-12, 2018**
Join fellow practitioners, policy makers, and service providers to share new and effective programs, solutions, and policies aimed at reducing poverty and homelessness among children and families in the US. Attend strategy and solution-based interactive workshops, enlightening panels, informative table discussions with peers, keynote luncheons, a networking reception, and much more.

Plan on attending? Be sure to stop by our exhibit table!

Feedback and Technical Assistance

To learn more about the Resource Center, visit us at <http://www.healthymarriageandfamilies.org/>.

The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families supports human service providers as they integrate healthy marriage and relationship education skills into service delivery systems as

part of a comprehensive, culturally appropriate, family-centered approach designed to promote self-sufficiency.

If you have suggestions or wish to speak with a Resource Center staff member, please [contact us](#) and we will be happy to assist you. To learn more about free training and technical assistance available to human service agencies, visit our [Training and Technical Assistance page](#).

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This newsletter was published by ICF with funding provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant: 90FH0003. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.