



Matters of the Mind

Summer is Family Time

Make the most of summer vacation with kid friendly plans

- Cedar Outdoors Free Concerts; The Cedar Cultural Center. Thurs through Aug. 2
- Wayzata Summer Concerts; Depot Park (Free). Weds 7/11-8/1
- Plymouth Movies in the Park; Hilde Performance Center (Free). Weds 8-9:30 pm.
- Highland Fest; Highland Park (St. Paul). July 20th 10 am.
- Plymouth Farmers Market; Pkg lot of Lifetime Fitness. Weds 7/11-10/10 2:30-6:30 pm
- James J. Hill Days; Wayzata (Free). Sept. 8-9th.
- Swimming Ponds at Elm Creek & Lake Minnetonka (3 Rivers Park District website for information) 9am-8pm through 9/3; \$3 each daily; \$10 season pass per person
- Monarch Festival; Lake Nokomis Naturescape Gardens. Celebrate the trek of monarch butterflies from MN to Mexico. Sat. 9/8.
- Centennial Lakes Park (Edina) Farmers Market Thurs 3-7pm through 9/27.
- Will Hale & the Tadpole Parade. Thurs. 7/19.
- AlphaBits. Thurs. 8/9 (noon-1pm) Rusty's Rocking Jamboree. Tues. 8/14 (noon-1pm). Paul Spring Family Show. Thurs. 8/23.
- Brodini Comedy Magic Show. Thurs. 8/30 (noon-1pm).
- Foodies on Foot Culinary Walking Tours; Stillwater. (\$50). Tuesdays, Fridays & Saturdays May 22-Oct. 31.
- Minnesota State Fair; St. Paul. Aug. 23-Sept. 3.
- Renaissance Festival; Shakopee. Weekends Aug. 18-

Meet Dr. Sonja Benson

Sonja Benson, Ph.D. is a psychologist in private practice in Wayzata. She specializes in couples and family counseling including pre-marital counseling, relationship enhancement, discernment counseling (contemplating divorce) and divorce counseling. Dr. Benson provides individual treatment for anxiety, stress, trauma, depression and medical/health issues. She offers career counseling and testing.

Dr. Benson is also available for coaching on topics such as parenting, difficult business relationships and work place stressors. She teaches workshops on topics such as stress management, anxiety, emotional intelligence, and relationship enhancement.

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IN HONOR OF FATHERS: THE IMPORTANCE OF INVOLVED DADS

Each June we honor all the Dads out there with perhaps a BBQ and a card. Father's Day just doesn't seem to get the attention it's May counterpart garners. Despite major shifts in the involvement of fathers within the modern family, many of us still tend to think of Dad as the secondary parent and Mom as the primary.

We've heard our whole lives how much mothers matter in the child rearing process, but what about fathers? Research on the importance of involved fathers started to really kick in beginning in the 1990s and it's fairly clear: Dads matter! One 26 year longitudinal study of 379 individuals showed that a father's involvement was the single most important

IN HONOR OF FATHERS CONT.

Dads who performed routine childcare, without Mom involved, at least twice a week raised kids who were the most compassionate adults (Koestner, et.al, 1990).

Father involvement has been repeatedly shown to help children in school settings. Kids with active Dads show more readiness academically when they start school and they have more patience and better skills to handle the stresses and frustrations of school. The influence of fathers' involvement extends into adolescence and young adulthood. Nurturing, active fathers tend to have children with better verbal skills, intellectual functioning and academic achievement.

BETTER EMOTIONS

The Economic & Social Resource Council (March 2002) reported that kids with involved fathers manage the emotions of adolescence more smoothly and have fewer behavioral difficulties.

Girls with strong father-daughter relationships during adolescence had less psychological distress as adults. Both male & female teens who feel close to their fathers are more likely to go onto happier adult marital relationships. Even though adolescents tend to want to push parents away, clearly it pays to stay involved!

Research is also clear that *lack of father involvement*, especially father absence, is associated with adolescent girls becoming sexually active at an early age and having a higher rate of teen pregnancy.

How should Dads be involved?

Father involvement doesn't have to be a big, orchestrated event. As many of us have already learned, sharing even 1 family meal-- with everyone using that time to check in with one another-- at least 3-4 times a week with teens (5 times/week for young kids) helps keep high risk behaviors at bay. Helping with homework can be another routine way to be involved with your kids.

What does it mean to be a "nurturing" Dad?

Many fathers can feel uncomfortable with physical affection, especially if it's not something they experienced in their own homes. Start when your kids are young with hugs and affectionate play. If your kids are already older, it's not too late to try out a "softer, gentler you"--just maybe not in front of their friends.

If hugging is too much of a stretch to start out, make sure and tell your kids "I love you" both in words and in gestures. One way parents sometimes overlook is simply by knowing

Technology & Sleep**Stress & sleep disorders**

- High use of computers & mobile phones linked to stress, sleep problems & symptoms of depression
- Teens texting day and night can suffer mental health problems. Maybe the cell should "charge" in parents rooms to decrease temptation.
- Adults with constant cell phone accessibility and heavy computer use (especially at night) are also at risk for higher levels of stress, problems with sleep and more symptoms of depression.

Combination of both high use of computer and high use of mobile devices makes the risks of mental health problems even stronger!

University of Gothenburg. (2012, June 13). Medical News Today

Sleep & Food

Yet another reason to get a good night's sleep. Lack of adequate sleep is associated with higher levels of obesity as well as mood issues.

"Sleep 2012" researchers studied 23 adults to determine relationship between sleep deprivation and food choices

When people were sleep deprived for even one night, brain activity in the frontal lobe (the part responsible for determining good choices from bad) was significantly impaired. Such impairment may lead us to make poorer food choices when we are tired, contributing to weight gain.

Grace Rattue. (2012, June 14). Medical News Today.