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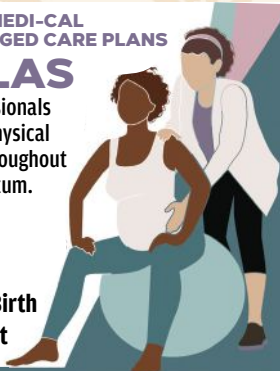
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On the Cover: Shasta County resident Jessica Lee with her baby girl Addison (age 1 at the time) muses, "Being a parent has been an incredible and rewarding experience." This photo captures that experience and the love between mother and baby. Addison, now age 5, loves gymnastics, coloring and swimming.

Photo by: Tracey Hedge Photography creates fresh, vibrant images that allow you and your loved ones to shine. Tracey specializes in weddings, senior portraits and family portraits, serving Northern California. Call Tracey at (530) 209-1116.



Come and meet us and have fun with your child this month. See our [Family Calendar](#) for parent participation events held throughout the north state.

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SERVING FAMILIES IN BUTTE, GLENN, SHASTA, SISKIYOU & TEHAMA COUNTIES

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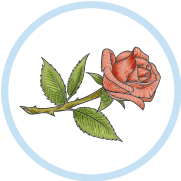
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DEAR READERS

Be sure you stop and smell the roses.



Skip down the sidewalk together. When you get home, make a blanket fort with your child.

Bake a cake. Don't worry about spilling.



Plant a flower or sprinkle some seeds.



Enjoy the the month of April with the enthusiasm of a child!



Pamela and the NSP Team

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Jenny Lowrey

Transforming Lives from the Ground Up

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From the Ground Up Farms in Chico was born out of intense crisis. In 2009, Jenny Lowrey found herself facing the death of her husband, the disintegration of her health and the subsequent loss of her job.

After seven heart attacks and two strokes, her doctor gave her six months to live. Jenny realized she needed to rip her life up by the roots and take drastic action to remain present for her two young teenagers. She sold her house, packed her family into a 26-foot trailer and moved to Lake Concow Campground. She began exercising, changing her diet and gardening for the first time. As she cooked meals with ingredients from the garden, she discovered the healing effects of good nutrition. Over the next few years, she shed pounds, medications and diabetes and beat back cancer.

NUTRITION, MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH ROOTED IN COMMUNITY GARDENS

With a new lease on life, Jenny moved to Chico. Unfortunately, a house fire forced her to relocate once again. As she looked at a forgotten community garden plot outside the window of her temporary apartment in Chico, the seeds of an idea sprouted in her mind. She acquired the property and rallied friends to revitalize Kentfield Garden – the first of many community gardens designed as a source of food and food education for the local community.

Today, Jenny and her staff of From the Ground Up volunteers are committed to helping people in Butte County access nutritious food through community gardens, food education and life skills training. Their efforts promote not only physical health through good nutrition, but mental and emotional health through good community.

FIRE RECOVERY INCLUDES JOB TRAINING AND REBUILDING COMMUNITY

After the 2018 Camp Fire, Jenny applied for grants that funded sawmill equipment to help people in the community clear their land. She partnered with youth from the Concow Maidu tribe, providing what has become a state-recognized job training program for tree-felling. “It has turned the whole tribe around,” Jenny says. “They have been hired in seven counties and have eight years’ worth of contracts. They’re reaching out to other tribes and they’ve been recognized in Sacramento as a leading force in the community for fire recovery.”

Jenny’s fire recovery efforts also included a tool lending library, which evolved into people trading skills and services toward recovery. Although Jenny again lost her home to fire - this time a wildfire - she focused on rebuilding Lake Concow Campground as a refuge for displaced fire survivors and a hub for community events like the annual Community Egg Hunt. “We know that we’re on the right track because the universe keeps providing everything that we need to help people,” Jenny says. ▶



With Jenny Lowry’s “can do” attitude, community gardens are flourishing throughout Chico.



Giving Kids a Great Head Start:

Spotlight on Two Remarkable Shasta County Teachers

Teachers typically have their hands full every school day. That is especially true for those taking on our pre-K kiddos. The unique challenges that come with honing these young minds require skill, dedication and above all, patience. There are many dedicated teachers in the North State and Shasta Head Start (SHS) teachers Chelsea Moreno and Haley Keefe are two spectacular local standouts in the field. Chelsea and Haley are devoted to nurturing curiosity, creativity and compassion in the children they care for, going above and beyond as early childhood educators (ECEs).

CHELSEA MORENO; CARING FOR CHILDREN FROM THE BEGINNING

Chelsea Moreno has many skills and accomplishments to pull from in her role as a primary caregiver at Early Head Start Oakview Center,

Chelsea started her journey in child care at an early age. She looked after her three siblings when she was young. “I remember how amazing it was to watch them grow and learn things for the first time,” Chelsea recalls. “Becoming a teacher is how I can keep helping children grow at a crucial stage.”

Chelsea joined the SHS team in 2014 as a kitchen aide, but it wasn't long before her drive to help children and their families saw her transition. First, she became a classroom aide. Through work and continued education, she soon earned the position as a primary caregiver.

“It became evident that Chelsea had a gift for working with children and that while she was great in the kitchen, she would be even greater in the classroom,” says Christina Knowles, Early Education Head Start Manager for SHS.

MAKING IMPACTS IN THE LIVES OF STUDENTS AND MENTEEES

Chelsea puts her talents – along with her Child Development Associate Teacher Permit and Associate of Science degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE) – to work by both nurturing the youngest minds at Oakview Center and inspiring ECEs as an Early Head Start mentor for Shasta College.

“Chelsea is a shining example of what happens when someone takes their innate skills and works to build them into a career,” Christina says. “It has been an honor to watch Chelsea grow in her career and in her passion for serving children and families. We are proud to have Chelsea as part of the SHS family!” 9►



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Chelsea Moreno's love of children and her joy in teaching is evident in all she does as primary caregiver at the Early Head Start Oakview Center. Photos provided by Shasta Head Start



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HALEY KEEFE: EDUCATION AND A PLAN

28-year-old ECE Haley Keefe introduces herself as a mother, a teacher, a creative and a lifelong learner. This devoted nature permeates everything she does. Whether she’s nurturing the growing minds under her care or watering the garden of her own knowledge base, Haley is always seeking to expand understanding of human nature. Haley’s journey began in 2015 when she first enrolled in Santa Barbara City College. Working full time in a Montessori style preschool to put herself through college, she started out as a psych student, resurrecting the college psychology club and even serving as its president for two years. Leaving with two associate’s degrees (Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences), she transferred to San Francisco State University. At SFSU, Haley’s star continued to rise. She was accepted into the President’s Leadership Program, impressing mentors while earning a bachelor’s degree in creative writing, a minor in philosophy and continuing to make ends meet as a day care teacher. Leaving school with degrees in tow, a fledgling business underway and new inspiration, everything seemed to be headed toward growing a business.

HARDSHIP, HARD WORK AND A NEW TRAJECTORY

The 2020 pandemic came and with it a great deal of change. Haley moved to Texas, where she shifted her focus to ECE. Enrolling in Johns Hopkins School of Education, she joined the Urban Teachers Cohort, pursuing a master’s in elementary education. The Urban Teachers Program’s mission was disrupting systems of racial and socioeconomic inequity. That core tenet kindled Haley’s new calling. She returned to California to meet her destiny in the North State. “I found beautiful work at Shasta Head Start. The Head Start program was designed by President Lyndon B Johnson in 1964 as part of his movement to end the war on poverty. President Johnson’s mission to help preschool children and low-income families speaks to me on a personal level,” she explains. “Giving children a head start in life is part of our calling as teachers who represent Head Start programs.” That’s why she also works to help mentor the newest crop of ECEs at Shasta College, along with running Head Start’s Cottonwood Center. Suzanne Miller, director of the Toddler and Preschool Center at SHS said of Haley, “She has such a big heart for the work she does and for the children and families in her classroom and care. She is one to watch and will continue to do amazing things in the early childhood education world.” Sarah Bogener, an Area Manager for SHS, agrees. “Haley has shown her passion in working with children with special needs, collaborating with a team and the family to set the child up for success in the upcoming school years,” she says. “Through all these amazing qualities, Haley is the representation of who we are at Shasta Head Start.” With all that goes into the work they do, Chelsea and Haley consistently exceed expectations with joyful hearts, helping to make the North State a great place to grow up. ■



SHS teacher Haley Keefe is dedicated to giving young children a head start in life. Photos provided by Shasta Head Start



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WHEN THE NEST IS NEVER EMPTY:

Realities of Parenting a Child with Disabilities into Adulthood

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For most parents, the idea of an “empty nest” is a bittersweet milestone. It marks the time when their children leave home and parents shift into a new phase of life—one with fewer responsibilities and more time for themselves. But for parents of children with significant disabilities, this transition often never comes. Their children will live with them for as long as they can provide care. The role of “parent” remains an active, full-time commitment well into their senior years. This reality comes with unique joys and challenges and while it’s rarely talked about outside of disability communities, it’s something thousands of families like mine navigate every day. While our daughter is only 18 and we haven’t hit the “golden years” quite yet, it’s something that we think about often.

Living alone isn’t always an option for adults with disabilities

For many adults with intellectual, developmental or physical disabilities, independence isn’t an option—at least not in the traditional sense. Some may never be able to live alone safely due to medical needs, mobility limitations or cognitive disabilities. Others might need round-the-clock supervision or assistance with daily tasks like eating, dressing or using the restroom. Even with community support services, the reality is that many adults with disabilities require care that only a parent or dedicated caregiver can provide. For parents in this situation, raising their child doesn’t end when that child becomes an adult. It simply evolves into a lifelong commitment. The traditional idea of “launching” a child into the world doesn’t apply in the same way to families of children with disabilities. Instead of independence, the focus is on interdependence—building a life that allows their child to thrive while remaining in the care of their family.

Situations like this could involve the disabled adult participating in a day program where they engage in social activities, learn new skills and build friendships while returning home to the stability of their family each evening. It could also mean finding ways to foster independence within the home and out in the community, such as using assistive technology for communication, adaptive tools for daily living or structured routines that empower them to make choices about their day. Interdependence acknowledges that while full independence may not be possible, a fulfilling, engaged life is—with the right balance of support and autonomy.

Parenting an adult with disabilities can be rewarding and isolating

The journey of parenting a child with disabilities into adulthood is full of love, connection and purpose, but this path can also be isolating. We see family and friends with children the same age who are leaving for college, living independently - some even starting families of their own. While we’re so happy to see them thriving, there is also that pang of sadness that our child will most likely never experience those milestones. As parents our age become empty nesters, taking up hobbies, traveling and enjoying newfound freedom, we will still be coordinating therapies, medical appointments and daily care routines. Social events, vacations and even simple things like a spontaneous night out will still require careful planning.

I’ve had people ask if we’ve considered a group home or an assisted living facility, and while that may be a good option for some, we know it wouldn’t be a good fit for our daughter. Even if it was something we wanted, disability services like this often have long waitlists and limited availability. For many parents like us, the only viable option is to continue to provide care for as long as possible, often into our twilight years.

Make no mistake, we wouldn’t change our role for anything and we’re committed to providing the best possible life for our child. But that doesn’t mean it isn’t exhausting. It doesn’t mean we don’t worry about the future. We wonder what will happen when we’re no longer able to physically care for our child. We think about the what ifs, the possibility of our own declining health and, of course, what happens when we’re gone. In the meantime, we’ll still be here advocating for her needs and ensuring she has a life filled with stability, dignity and opportunities, because that is what she deserves. ■



Shasta County author Jennifer Arnold is the mom of four, two of whom have been diagnosed with multiple special needs. She hopes to raise awareness of many issues that parents of special needs children face on a regular basis.

THIS IS TEHAMA



The ancient word “Tehama” once meant a place where rivers could be crossed. With our county’s rich currents of history, happenings and hope, this is our crossing place today — where we meet to celebrate our beautiful Tehama County.

TEACHING LIFE AT TURN THE PAGE BOOK SHOP IN RED BLUFF

“A gain, again, again!” How many parents have heard this plea from their children after reading a book or reciting a rhyme? This might be the only stage of a child’s life when they will repeatedly ask their parents to spend time with them. Veteran parents advise younger parents to embrace those days. Children’s book author Jane Yolen captures those sentiments in her poem, “Read to Me.”

“Read to me riddles and read to me rhymes
Read to me stories of magical times
Read to me tales about castles and kings
Read to me stories of fabulous things
Read to me pirates and read to me knights
Read to me dragons and dragon-book fights
Read to me spaceships and cowboys and then
When you are finished- please read them again.”

Reading to children builds confidence and security, teaches grammar

“Words and stories are a foundation for life,” Heidi Henderson, co-owner of Turn the Page Book Shop says. “Reading to children inspires their imagination, teaches literacy, shapes their character and helps both the reader and the listener learn more about themselves.”

When a child begs to hear a story or a rhyme again, they are trying to memorize the story. Besides language development, this builds confidence and makes them feel secure when they know what is coming next. Reading often to your children will help them be better writers as they age. Children learn correct sentence structure and “what sounds good” to the reader. Reading to young children can make future grammar lessons a breeze. It is a win-win!

Turn the Page Book Shop is built on shared love of the written word

Turn the Page Shop owners Heidi and her daughter, Riley Henderson, are lifelong, avid readers and now published authors. Their love of books stems from their shared love of words. Heidi and Riley have made it the goal of their bookstore to celebrate the written word with their customers - more specifically, the words written on pages.

“Reading a book is a tangible experience,” Heidi says. “It’s tactile in that we hold the book, touch the pages and turn them as the story unfolds. A book is just that—a book. Whereas when we are reading on our phones, for example, any number of distractions can ‘pop up.’ Books give a way of escape from all of that.”

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ARTICLE



Sonora happily shares her favorite book with her little sister Ayla Mae, held by mom Jillian.



Priscilla and Emi cheer for Turn the Page.
Photo by Kate Hiller.

Red Bluff mom Ashley Mendenhall says, “Having various levels of readers in my home, Turn the Page Book Shop has sparked interest in all my children. Their curiosity for learning grows with each visit because there’s something for all of them, which is so encouraging. It really has been a wonderful resource for my growing kids and a gem in our community.”

Investing in your child’s future with books

Books are companions for the lonely, inspiration for the dreamer, brain exercise for lovers of mystery and the anticipation of a new book can brighten even the darkest mood. “I love discovering the charming, one-of-a-kind bookshops in my local towns,” says Jillian Hower, owner of Mill Creek Resort. “One of my most treasured finds from Turn the Page is a book that remains my daughter’s favorite, even years later. There’s something so special about experiencing a book for the first time or revisiting it over and over as a family. I’ve been reading to my little ones since they were born and watching their love for books grow has been such a joy. Nurturing future bookworms is one of the greatest gifts.”

Heidi and Riley want to keep reading affordable. So, apart from all their new titles, they carry a huge stock of used books which average \$7 per book. Reading and placing value in books is something parents can model for their children. Instead of a new video game or a grande coffee, the money could be spent on a book – a valuable investment in your child’s future. Heidi says, “Encouraging your child to slow down and read in the quiet can also help alleviate some of the anxiety disorders that are growing in our country. And, if you still can, sit them in your lap! Healing can be found in that deep connection with your child.”

Story time at Turn the Page

Heidi’s favorite part of owning a book shop is planning Turn the Page’s monthly children’s story time. She puts a lot of thought into picking two books for the occasion with a seasonal theme and an engaging rhyme or word play. She also likes to inspire with adapted classics as often as she can. Heidi always prepares a craft so kids can take the fun back home with them. “If nothing else, we want reading to leave children with a happy and secure feeling.”

This month’s story time at Turn the Page is April 24, 11am. Heidi will choose two spring themed books to read and will send each child home with a craft. Come by the book shop, 643 Main St., Red Bluff, or visit their [website](#) to learn more. ■



Kate Hiller’s greatest accomplishment in her life were the many hours spent reading to her children and the life-wisdom that was spoken off those pages.



Even though Turn the Page co-owner Heidi Henderson is busy running her book shop, she managed to write her book *Bits of Paper*, one little piece of paper at a time.



Turn the Page book shop offers books for all interests and every budget.



Story time at Turn the Page is a favorite time for Red Bluff families to gather, bond and dream.

HOW DO I GET MY TODDLER TO STOP HITTING?

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Toddlers are little people with big feelings. Sometimes, the only way for those big feelings to come out is through their actions: hitting, kicking, biting, flopping, screaming. It's not because you're a bad parent or that they're a bad person. The feelings must get out and toddlers need to learn how to control how that happens.

As a parent of a toddler, you know that they are still working on getting bodily functions under control. Toilet training is about learning what needing to void feels like, how to control it and where to let it out. This comes with teaching and practice.

Just like physical continence, emotional continence takes time to develop and learn. First, we must know that a feeling is coming, then we have to know what to do with it, and then we need to practice, practice, practice.

Bottom line: Toddlers need our help to learn how to help themselves. Words are not enough. They need action.

- IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT -

- 1 If they've hit before and you find yourself hoping they won't hit again, THINK AGAIN! Until they learn and grow, they will hit again, so plan for it and see if you can stop it from happening before it happens. This will help to break the habit.
- 2 Your toddler needs your help to control their hands and feet. Be ready to use gentle but firm hands to hold their arms and stop the hitting. You can say, "Your body is showing me it needs my help to control your hands. Let's keep everyone safe and control your hands."
- 3 Speak the words they don't have yet so that they can get used to the language. "You feel mad" or "You don't like this" or "You are having a big feeling."
- 4 They need to learn to let their arms relax and stop hitting. To help them relax, you can say, "When your arms go soft, I will know that you have control of your body. Let's breathe and let your arms go soft. I know you can do this!"
- 5 When they do let their arms soften, let go and say, "I knew you could get control of your hands. Good for you!" This could happen quickly or could take some time. Keep yourself and all kids safe. They will learn.
- 6 Normalize big feelings. More about this below.

- IN THE COOL OF THE MOMENT -

When things are calmer, there are many ways to help your toddler learn about big feelings.

- 1 Read books about feelings. I love books by [Cornelia Spelman](#) such as *When I Feel Sad*, *When I Feel Angry*, *When I Feel Jealous*.
- 2 In any children's storybook, notice the way the character looks when a feeling comes on. Does their face get red? Do they scrunch their fists and tummy? Ask your child what they feel like when they get mad or sad. Where do they feel it in their body? Share where you feel it.
- 3 Notice how the character lets out their anger.
 - Do they yell words?
 - Do they jump up and down?
 - Do they stomp their feet?
 - Do they take three big breathes and blow out their feelings?
 - Do they dance out their feelings?
- 4 Ask your child about safe ways they can let feelings out. Share your own simple physical ways.
- 5 Teach songs and actions about getting big feelings out. Practice these when things are going well, as part of the games you play so that you can use them when big feelings come. [@Mrchazz on YouTube](#) has a great Self-Regulation song to the tune of "When You're Happy and You Know It."

When I want to feel happy, I just breathe (in/out)

When I want to feel happy, I just breathe (in/out)

When my anger starts to grow, I just breathe through my nose (deep breath in, deep breath out)

When I want to feel happy, I just breathe (in/out).

Your singing doesn't have to be excellent. It's about joining in and believing that it works. This teaches your child about feelings and safe ways to let them out.

Toddlers are little people with big feelings, which sometimes come out through actions like hitting, kicking, biting, flopping or screaming. These feelings must get out and toddlers need to learn how to control how that happens.

15 ▶

How Do I Get My Toddler to Stop Hitting?

NORMALIZE FEELINGS

For many of us, it was not OK to feel feelings when growing up. Maybe you were told, “Stop crying or I’ll give you something to cry about!”

It is hard for parents to watch their kids feeling sad, angry or jealous. We all feel feelings and the only way to get through them is to feel them and let them out in a way that keeps everyone safe.

Our kids need to know that we can handle their big feelings. We can stay calm while our kids feel the feeling. When we model that calm response, our child can get there faster. This is not the same as ignoring the feeling. We need to name it, show that we get it and help it to leave the body.

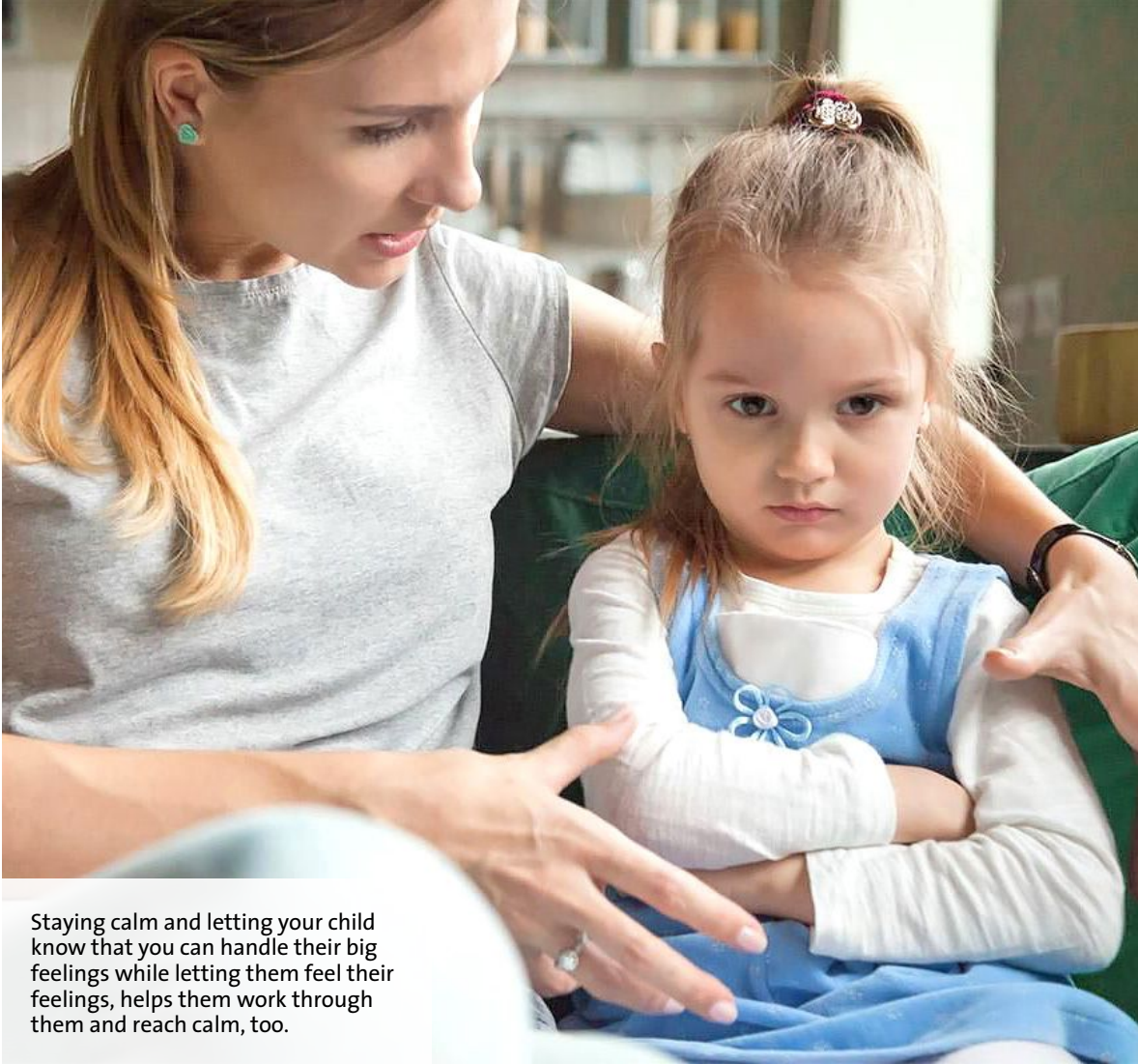
Simple words like these can help: “You’re having a big feeling, that’s normal. It’s OK for you to not like it. I’ll help you through it. It’ll be over soon. We can do this together.”

KIDS CHANGE

This behaviour is quite normal for a toddler. When children behave in ways that we don’t like, it is usually an indication that they have something new to learn. Our job is to be watching for those moments and find ways to teach the new skills that fit their developmental level. ■



Author, blogger and parenting expert Julie Freedman Smith has been helping parents across North America for over 20 years parent the way they always wished they could. Find out more at parentmentornow.com.



Staying calm and letting your child know that you can handle their big feelings while letting them feel their feelings, helps them work through them and reach calm, too.

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SISKIYOU COUNTY NEWS

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Child Abuse Prevention Council of Siskiyou County SUPPORTING PARENTS TO PROVIDE SAFE, HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS FOR THEIR CHILDREN

Siskiyou County, the fifth largest county in California, with child abuse rates higher than the state average (child abuse allegations are twice as prevalent as the statewide average), faces unique challenges when it comes to child welfare and demographics. With a relatively small population and a mix of rural communities and small towns, access to resources and services can be limited, increasing family isolation. Furthermore, a higher-than-average poverty rate compared to the state of California often contributes to stressors that impact family dynamics and child welfare.

Organizations like First 5 Siskiyou play a vital role in a preventing child abuse. For 25 years, First 5 Siskiyou has actively invested in and worked with partners to raise awareness and reduce child abuse rates through community engagement and support programs.

Every county in CA has a designated Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC). As Siskiyou County's CAPC, First 5 Siskiyou collaborates with local agencies and leaders to promote awareness and encourage community involvement. "This designation has opened the door for more opportunities to increase community awareness about prevention and community education around how we can do better to improve child outcomes by supporting parents," says Karen Pautz, executive director of First 5 Siskiyou/Siskiyou Child Abuse Prevention Council.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AS A FRAMEWORK FOR COLLABORATION

First 5 Siskiyou collaborates with more than 25 agencies, health service organizations, schools, community partners and leaders to provide services that address the root causes of child abuse. Strengthening Families 5 Protective Factors Framework from the Center for Social Policy, a research-based approach to increase family strengths, enhance child development and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect, is the foundation for this collaboration.

The CAPC goal is to support families through access to programs and services to build five protective factors: parental resilience; social connections; knowledge of parenting and child development; concrete support in times of need; and social and emo-

tional development in children. Partnerships with community members, local schools, child care and education providers, libraries and other willing organizations and groups are key to providing successful programs that enhance child development and parenting support.

DIRECTLY ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF CHILD ABUSE

The dedicated First 5 Siskiyou team, led by executive director Karen Pautz, works together with Siskiyou County Health and Human Services and other partners to prevent child abuse by offering family-friendly events, playgroups and parent education programs to nurture family protective factors throughout Siskiyou County.

First 5 Siskiyou project manager Lexi Beaulieu coordinates home visiting systems, a proven strategy for strengthening families and improving the health of women and young children. Home visits are voluntary and serve families from diverse backgrounds and a wide variety of needs. Families can receive support from a range of professionals including health, social service and education professionals through Shasta, Siskiyou and Modoc Early Head Start programs, Public Health and First 5's Welcome Home Baby program. Through regular home visits, parents have increased access to resources and critical information to support their children's healthy development.

Lexi also works closely with diverse organizations and schools to plan and schedule the parenting education program including classes and workshops, online and in-person, which address a wide variety of needs, offering solutions to many parenting challenges. Go to first5siskiyou.org/parenting-education-classes for information on upcoming and ongoing classes and workshops. In-person groups include child care and dinner to reduce barriers for families.

Mackenzie Bolls and Jean Trevisan coordinate the First 5 Siskiyou April Child Abuse Prevention Month efforts. Go to first5siskiyou.org for information on all the exciting free family-centered events planned throughout the county this April.

Registered dietician Michele Harris coordinates the Cal Fresh program through First 5. She also facilitates CAPC meetings in which multiple agencies collaborate on implementation of effective child abuse prevention programs and strategies.

Team member Allison Scull leads efforts at all cities and the Board of Supervisors to adopt proclamations for Child Abuse Prevention and Sexual Assault Awareness month in April.

Play in safe, age-appropriate settings is essential for children's social, emotional and physical development. First 5 team members Krista Weagraff, Layna Baker and Kara Kitchen co-facilitate playgroups in Yreka, Mount Shasta and Dunsmuir. In addition, Nikki Crocker leads playgroups in Happy Camp. Playgroups provide children an opportunity to develop social skills, learn to communicate appropriately, enjoy physical activity, get ready for school and increase cognitive abilities and emotional growth.

A MULTI-PRONGED APPROACH TO STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

First 5 Siskiyou provides a plethora of additional programs that work together to provide a safety net for parents in need of support.

Help Me Grow Siskiyou provides free parent-administered developmental screenings for children ages two months to six years, connecting children and their families to services and resources to enhance the development, behavior and learning of children and increase support for parents.

Quality Counts Siskiyou supports early childhood centers, preschools, family child care homes and Happy Camp Community Center play groups that voluntarily commit to continuous quality improvement based on state and nationally recognized quality standards.

Children with strong literacy skills are often more confident and capable, making them less vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. **Family Literacy Promotion**, a funding partnership with Siskiyou County libraries, Delta Kappa Gamma, preschools and child care centers, provides early literacy resources, quality children's books, story time and parent education training 18 ►

about the importance of daily reading with children. Available in English and Spanish.

Kit for New Parents, a free, comprehensive resource for new and expectant parents, emphasizes the importance of a child's early years. Available in multiple languages, the kits are distributed countywide including through clinics, home visitation programs and hospitals.

Smoking & Kids Don't Mix/Kick-It, in partnership with Siskiyou Tobacco Education Council, provides knowledge and resources about the impact and effects of the use of tobacco products, including around children and while pregnant.

Siskiyou Parenting Education Collaborative helps parents raise children who thrive through community-based educational trainings, programs, fun events and text-based messages. Families in need are assisted with access to resources such as CalFresh.

Siskiyou Professional Development Partnership works with organizations to coordinate high-quality trainings for service providers. Trainings include education about the impact of trauma and teach trauma-informed practices.

To help babies, toddlers, preschoolers and school age children and youth have a strong start in life, First 5 Siskiyou leads the **Siskiyou Strengthening Families Collaborative** to work hand in hand with Siskiyou County Health and Human Services, Siskiyou Domestic Violence and Crisis Center, Siskiyou County Office Of Education, Siskiyou County Local Child Care Planning Council and many other key partners to elevate community awareness about the effect of **ACEs** (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and the effectiveness of the **5 Protective Factors**.

Learn more about all the services available through First 5 designed to prevent child abuse and address its root causes at first5siskiyou.org. ■



As a single parent of two boys, Stacey found the resources provided by local nonprofit agencies vital for her and her family to thrive under very challenging circumstances.



Kevin Shearer
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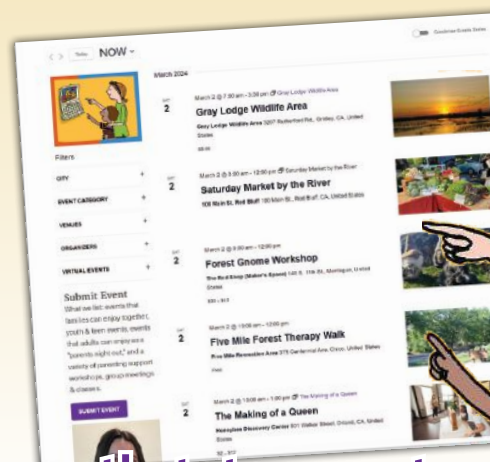
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WATER BABIES

Body, Bonding and Brain Development

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“My baby isn’t old enough to walk. How could she learn to swim?” When your baby isn’t old enough to walk, it may seem strange to take them to the pool. But for babies, there are many benefits to splashing around and gliding through the water with a parent. “Just like walking, skill development is cumulative,” says Haley Clark, owner of Water Sprites Swim School in Chico. “Rolling over doesn’t look like walking, but it is a crucial first step. Submersions and floating don’t look like swimming, but they are a crucial first step. Spend-

ing time in an aquatic environment helps babies to put together all the pieces, so that when they are physically mature enough, they can.”

Babies who are introduced to the pool as young as two months can, overtime, experience an increase in cognitive abilities, self-confidence and muscle strength and coordination and a decreased fear of swimming. I took both my boys to baby swim class when they were only a few months old. They loved it, it was a wonderful bonding time for us and they grew to become confident swimmers.

“Children who get introduced to the water at a very young age are more comfortable overall in swim lessons than children whose parents wait,” says Margaret Natina, swim instructor and owner of Swim Foundations in Redding. “Children who are comfortable in the water have an advantage in swim lessons because their nervous systems are calm and they can focus fully on learning and not being fearful of the environment. In my experience, babies who get to enjoy the water from an early age have a joyful bond with water all the way through their adulthood!”

21►

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SWIMMING INCREASES BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Numerous studies have shown that teaching your infant to swim can help their brain grow. According the Healthline, a researched-based online health journal, being in the water engages your baby’s body in a unique way, creating billions of new neurons as your baby kicks, glides and smacks at the water. Down the road, this may improve reading skills, language development, academic learning and spatial awareness.

SWIM BABIES GAIN STRENGTH, MUSCLE COORDINATION

Babies need to develop muscles to hold up their heads and to be able to coordinate and consciously control the movement of their arms and legs. Time in the pool, as your baby learns the difficult task of moving those little arms and legs together, can accelerate muscle development and coordination. According to Swimming.org, not only does swim time for babies improve their muscle strength and ability, it provides internal benefits by getting babies’ joints moving. Swimming is also great for cardiovascular health and will help strengthen your little one’s heart, lungs, brain and blood vessels.

SWIMMING IMPROVES BABIES’ BEHAVIOR, BOOSTS SELF-ESTEEM

A 2010 study led by H. Sigmundsson, department of psychology, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, suggested 4-year-old children who had taken swim lessons at some time between the age of two months and four years were better adapted to new situations, had more self-confidence and were more independent than non-swimmers.

Many infant swim classes include water play, songs and skin-to-skin contact with parents. Babies learn to interact with the instructor and the swim group. Add to that the fun of learning a new skill and all these elements may boost your baby’s self-esteem.

In a long-term study in which children who were exposed to swimming after their second month of life were compared with others who were introduced to swimming only in their 28th month, found that a program that included early, year-round swimming lessons for preschool-age participants was associated with greater self-control, a stronger desire to succeed, better self-esteem and more comfort in social situations than non-swimmers.

By becoming immersed in the social setting, children learn valuable skills like conflict resolution and empathy as they navigate relationships with other children, says Olympic Gold Medalist and children’s swim coach, Lenny Krayzelburg. They also learn how to observe boundaries as they see their actions don’t occur in a vacuum but rather affect others in the class. This understanding of boundaries and how to interact in groups can lead to improvements in behavior. 22 ►



Children who get to enjoy the water from an early age have a joyful bond with water, become good swimmers and develop social, emotional and physical skills. *Photo provided by Swim Foundations*

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Water Babies: Body, Bonding and Brain Development

SWIM SAFETY FIRST

Younger children are usually less resistant to floating on their backs, a skill that even some babies can learn. However, this does not mean babies and young children should ever be left unwatched or unattended around water. It's important to keep in mind that a child can drown in even just one inch of water.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), drowning is a leading cause of death among children and toddlers. Most of these drownings in children under four years old occur in home swimming pools. If you have a pool, early swim lessons may be helpful. Even if your child has had swim lessons, they should still be supervised at all times while in the water.



Splashing in the pool helps babies develop their brain, strengthen their muscles, lungs and heart and improve coordination. *Photo provided by Swim Foundations*

Swim Foundations' Margaret Natina says, "Especially in this area where there are so many bodies of natural water, it is important to have your children create a healthy respect and understanding of the water, for their own safety and that of others. I always recommend not just learning to be water safe by jumping in, taking a breath and getting to the side of a pool, but also building endurance in swimming, meaning swimming for long periods of time so that one is safe in all sorts of water."

For children under four years of age, it's best to do "touch supervision." That means that an adult should be close enough to touch them at all times. Be aware that babies can chill easily, so consider the temperature of the pool.

SWIM BABY BONDING

The very best benefit of swimming with your baby is the wonderful parent-child bonding experience it provides. Leaving the hectic, fast-paced world behind and slowing down to enjoy an experience together is rare and precious. It brings us into the present moment while teaching your baby important skills that will serve them for a lifetime.

North State parents and caregivers can enjoy these beautiful bonding experiences at Shasta Family YMCA and Swim Foundations in Redding and Water Sprites in Chico. ■



Stacey treasures the bonding time she enjoyed with her two baby boys, splashing, playing and learning to love and respect the water.



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Experience Glowing Wild Lantern Festival at the Sundial Bridge at Turtle Bay, featuring ten acres of illuminated gardens filled with Asian lanterns inspired by plants & animals from around the world, plus music, food & drinks, live performances on select nights & more!



Member Discount
\$5 Off Each Ticket

BUY TICKETS ONLINE

turtlebay.org