

## School Based Health Program Newsletter FEBRUARY 2016 ISSUE 3

### SBH Team

Mary Ann Glusich  
School Nurse

Jill Mullens  
School Nurse

Erin McFarland  
School Counselor

Brenda Orth  
Clerical Assistant

Angie  
Impellicceiri  
Clerical Assistant

**February  
is  
American  
Heart  
Month**



### **American Heart Association...Scared for our Kids!**

Today, about one in three American kids and teens is overweight or obese. The prevalence of obesity in children more than tripled from 1971 to 2011.. With good reason, [childhood obesity](#) is now the No. 1 health concern among parents in the United States, topping drug abuse and smoking.

Among children today, obesity is causing a broad range of health problems that previously weren't seen until adulthood. These include [high blood pressure](#), type 2 diabetes and [elevated blood cholesterol levels](#). There are also psychological effects: Obese children are more prone to low self-esteem, negative body image and depression.

And excess weight is associated with earlier risk of obesity-related disease and death in adulthood.. Perhaps one of the most sobering statements regarding the severity of the childhood obesity epidemic came from former Surgeon General Richard Carmona, who characterized the threat as follows:

*"Because of the increasing rates of obesity, unhealthy eating habits and physical inactivity, we may see the first generation that will be less healthy and have a shorter life expectancy than their parents."*

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*Parents, we can turn this around! You know what to do! Plan ahead to avoid quick trips through fast food. Send water or milk instead of sugary juice drinks to school for lunch and snacks. Fruit Gummies are just sugar, don't be fooled. Smaller portions and less snacking on chips and other high salt high fat snacks. Eliminate soda from your diet. That's a hard one I know but it can be done. Try putting a half of a teaspoon of sugar on non-sugary cereals.*

*I could just cry when I see a little one crying after a dental filling. The dental community is seeing an increase in children with cavities for the first time in 40 years in WV. Sugary diets can be to blame.*

*So, let's make some changes! You can do it! All for the sake of our KIDS HEALTH and FUTURE.*

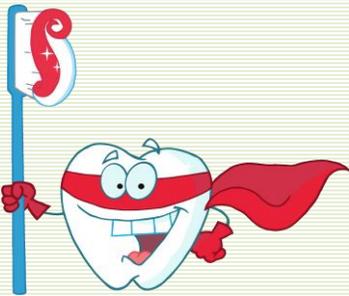
Ref. AHA

**February is National Children's Dental Health Month**, and the American Dental Association is asking people to:

**"Defeat Monster Mouth."**

Effective ways to defeat monster mouth and maintain good oral health are: brushing, flossing, rinsing, and eating healthy snacks.

For tips on how to achieve optimal oral health, visit [MouthHealthy.com](http://MouthHealthy.com)



**February is also Pet Dental Health Awareness Month.**

When was the last time you checked Max or Fluffy's pearly (or not-so-pearly) whites...or took them to the veterinarian for a dental exam?



## H "APPY" Days



**Huff & Puff SD Free**  
Creator: Health Nuts Media  
Platform: iPhone, iPad  
Language: English  
Cost: Free

"Then I'll huff...And I'll puff...And I'll..."What if the big bad wolf suddenly had an asthma flare instead? This twist on the classic tale is a teaching tool for kids. The app features a fully animated video series "Huff & Puff: An Asthma Tale." It includes asthma quizzes and a trivia game.

**Kids Beating Asthma**  
Creator: iCrysta  
Platform: iPhone, iPad, Android  
Language: English and Spanish  
Cost: Free

This educational app teaches kids about asthma and how to manage it. There are five educational modules that are instructive and interactive, allowing kids to answer questions about the disease. One game shows kids a list of pictures and asks if asthma symptoms will get better or worsen based on the image shown. Another game is a puzzle of the respiratory system.

**First Aid by American Red Cross**  
Creator: Media Net  
Platform: iPhone, iPad, Android  
Language: English and Spanish  
Cost: Free

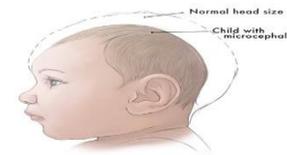
The American Red Cross app is fully integrated with 911, so with one tap you can call emergency medical services (EMS) if you're experiencing an asthma flare or anaphylaxis and need assistance. Or, tell the app what your symptoms are and it'll direct you to a nearby hospital or emergency room for treatment.



### Watch out for the "Skeeters"

Zika virus is a disease transmitted to people by the bite of infected *Aedes* species mosquitoes. Only 1 in 5 people become ill from infection with Zika virus. Fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (redness of the eyes) are the most common symptoms, usually lasting for several days to a week. Muscle pain and headache may also occur. Hospitalization and death are not usually associated with infection. Currently, infection with Zika virus is associated with travel to countries where cases are being reported (e.g. countries in Africa, the Americas, and Oceania). No cases have been reported in West Virginia. No vaccines or medications are available to prevent or treat Zika virus. Getting plenty of rest, drinking water, and taking medication (e.g. acetaminophen) are recommended to treat the symptoms associated with the virus. It is also important to avoid mosquitoes during the first week of illness since infections can be spread when a mosquito bites an infected person then bites another person who was not previously infected. *Aedes albopictus*, a mosquito species found in West Virginia, can transmit Zika virus. Pregnant women in any trimester are advised not to travel to areas with ongoing Zika virus transmission due to poor pregnancy outcomes in babies of infected mothers. Microcephaly has been associated with cases in Brazil. Babies with microcephaly have a birth defect where their heads are smaller than what is expected for babies of the same sex and age. Babies with microcephaly have smaller brains that might not have developed properly.

This spring, use insect repellent with DEET or Picaridin. Watch for any standing water that would breed mosquitos, wear long sleeves and long pants and solid toe shoes when out in area. Avoid Dawn and Dusk times outside. Find things to do indoors.



Ref. CDC

## **The 8 Life Skills all 18-year-olds should have: A Checklist for Parents**

Julie Lythcot-Haims  
TODAY Contributor

If we want our kids to have a shot at making it in the world as 18-year-olds, without the umbilical cord of the cell phone being their go-to solution in all manner of things, they're going to need a set of basic life skills.

Based upon my observations as dean, and the advice of parents and educators around the country, here are some examples of practical things they'll need to know how to do before they go to college — and here are the crutches that are currently hindering them from standing up on their own two feet:

**1. An 18-year-old must be able to talk to strangers** — faculty, deans, advisers, landlords, store clerks, human resource managers, coworkers, bank tellers, health care providers, bus drivers, mechanics—in the real world.

**The crutch:** We teach kids not to talk to strangers instead of teaching the more nuanced skill of how to discern the few bad strangers from the mostly good ones. Thus, kids end up not knowing how to approach strangers — respectfully and with eye contact — for the help, guidance, and direction they will need out in the world.

**2. An 18-year-old must be able to find his way around** a campus, the town in which her summer internship is located, or the city where he is working or studying abroad.

**The crutch:** We drive or accompany our children everywhere, even when a bus, their bicycle, or their own feet could get them there; thus, kids don't know the route for getting from here to there, how to cope with transportation options and snafus, when and how to fill the car with gas, or how to make and execute transportation plans.

**3. An eighteen-year-old must be able to manage his assignments, workload, and deadlines.**

**The crutch:** We remind kids when their homework is due and when to do it— sometimes helping them do it, sometimes doing it for them; thus, kids don't know how to prioritize tasks, manage workload, or meet deadlines, without regular reminders.

**4. An 18-year-old must be able to contribute to the running of a house hold.**

**The crutch:** We don't ask them to help much around the house because the checklisted childhood leaves little time in the day for anything aside from academic and extracurricular work; thus, kids don't know how to look after their own needs, respect the needs of others, or do their fair share for the good of the whole.

**5. An 18-year-old must be able to handle interpersonal problems.**

**The crutch:** We step in to solve misunderstandings and soothe hurt feelings for them; thus, kids don't know how to cope with and resolve conflicts without our intervention.

**6. An 18-year-old must be able to cope with ups and downs** of courses and workloads, college- level work, competition, tough teachers, bosses, and others.

**The crutch:** We step in when things get hard, finish the task, extend the deadline, and talk to the adults; thus, kids don't know that in the normal course of life things won't always go their way, and that they'll be okay regardless.

**7. An 18-year-old must be able to earn and manage money.**

**The crutch:** They don't hold part-time jobs; they receive money from us for whatever they want or need; thus, kids don't develop a sense of responsibility for completing job tasks, accountability to a boss who doesn't inherently love them, or an appreciation for the cost of things and how to manage money.

**8. An 18-year-old must be able to take risks.**

**The crutch:** We've laid out their entire path for them and have avoided all pitfalls or prevented all stumbles for them; thus, kids don't develop the wise understanding that success comes only after trying and failing and trying again (a.k.a. "grit") or the thick skin (a.k.a. "resilience") that comes from coping when things have gone wrong.

Remember: our kids must be able to do all of these things without resorting to calling a parent on the phone. If they're calling us to ask how, they do not have the life skill.

Julie Lythcot-Haims  
TODAY Contributor

Julie Lythcot-Haims is the former Dean of Freshmen at Stanford University and the author of ["How to Raise an Adult."](#)



# Healthy Heart Valentine's Day Activities for Kids

One of the great things about Valentine's Day is that it coincides with [American Heart Month](#). You can use this to your advantage to distract your child from all the chocolate and do some healthy heart Valentine activities instead! Here are a few ways to spend some time with your little Valentine and make your day a little sweeter.

1. **Make some [healthy heart Valentine snacks](#) with your child.** At first, he might be disappointed not to be eating cupcakes, chocolate and red fruit punch, but presentation can go a long way in making up for a sweet tooth. Talk about healthy heart-shaped and Valentine-colored options like strawberries, heart-shaped muffins and a healthier pink drink like [Sparkling Cranberry Punch\\*](#).
2. **Take the opportunity to teach your child a little about his heart and [the circulatory system](#).**  
Go to: <http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/En/JustForKids/Body/Pages/Heart.aspx>  
One important thing to stress is how aerobic exercise strengthens the heart. Even younger kids are able to understand the connection between a healthy heart and exercise. It will help your child make the connection that a real heart is more than a shape.
3. **Throw a "happy heart" dance party.** If you have a Wii and one of the [Just Dance games](#), it's a great time to get the whole family up and moving. Of course, even without a Wii, you can still play dance music and boogie down.  
Talk to your child about how dancing is aerobic exercise that will strengthen his heart as well as raising his spirits. To provide your point, have him listen to his heart again after he dances and take note of how much faster it's beating (which means it's working harder).
4. **Modify your Valentine's Day cards to get your child up and moving.** Purchase an inexpensive box of cards and instead of writing a message on each one, write an exercise for your child to try and share with his classmates. As he reads them, ask him to perform the exercise. You might, for example, want to write down some [simple stretching exercises](#) or some other [easy exercises you can do together](#).
5. **Play healthy heart hopscotch.** Whether you live in a warm climate or a cold one, you can play this twist on the [classic playground game](#). Simply replace the squares with hearts and you're ready to go. If it's too cold to play outside, with a little masking tape and some open space, you can [play indoor hopscotch](#) instead.
6. **Organize a Valentine's Day scavenger hunt.** This game gives you an opportunity not only to get your child moving throughout the house, but also to help him learn a little more about the people he loves. Provide your child with a list of items or clues leading him to find things that are important to each person in your household. You can include clues like:  
*\*\*Find something that is your sister's favorite color.*  
*\*\*Bring back your brother's favorite food.*  
*\*\*This used to be your favorite book when you were younger.*  
*\*\*Find Daddy's favorite song on his music player.*
7. **Make a [Valentine's Day heart craft](#).** These activities are a little slower in pace than the other heart healthy Valentine's Day activities. Despite that, they're not only a good way to slow down at the end of the day, but a good way to show your child that even though his heart plays an important role in keeping him healthy, other types of hearts can play an important role in making other people happy.

## \* [Sparkling Cranberry Punch](#)

2 quarts cranberry cocktail juice chilled  
1-6 oz. can frozen pink lemonade, thawed  
1 quart sparkling water, chilled