

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

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What is Bipolar Disorder in Children and Teens?

When children over the age of six or teens have bipolar disorder, they have their moments of “ups and downs.” When they are “up” they either have brief irritability or extremely happy (mania) moments several times a day. They seem to have lots of energy; however, when they have their “downs” they appear to very depressed. **During times of mania, they may:**

- Feel irritable and throw temper tantrums.
- Show extreme happiness with high levels of energy.
- Are restless.
- Talk very fast.

During times of depression, they may:

- Say they feel sad, empty, down, or bored.
- Complain of headaches, fatigue, stomach and muscle aches.
- Become lethargic.

How is bipolar diagnosed?

- Your doctor may ask questions about your child’s behavior and feelings.
- Your doctor may perform written tests to help identify how severe the mania or depression is.
- Blood tests to rule out other health problems.
- Your doctor may ask about your family history, including mental illness and drug and alcohol abuse.

How is bipolar treated?

- Treatment usually consists of medications, such as mood stabilizers, and counseling.
- Make sure your child is taking their medications. Children and teens may feel better after taking the medicine for a while; however, it is very important that they do not stop the medication (unless suggested by your doctor) because symptoms usually come back.

Acceptance is hard. The disorder can be a serious, lifelong problem. Your child will need long-term treatment and will need to be watched carefully. By working with your doctor, you can find a treatment that works for your child.

www.healthwise.com

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Egg Dipper Treats

Kellogg’s® Rice Krispies®

“Mold these egg shapes and dip them into chocolate and brightly colored sprinkles with your kids.”



Ingredients

- 3 TBS butter or margarine
- 1 (10) oz. package regular marshmallows
- 6 cups Kellogg’s® Rice Krispies® Cereal
- 1 ½ cups semi-sweet or milk chocolate morsels
- 5 tsp shortening
- Multi-colored sprinkles

Directions

- 1) In large saucepan, melt butter over low heat. Add marshmallows and stir until completely melted. Remove from heat.
- 2) Add Kellogg’s® Rice Krispies® Cereal. Stir until well coated.
- 3) Using ¼ cup measuring cup coated with cooking spray, divide warm cereal mixture into portions. Using buttered hands, shape each portion into 2 ½ x 1 ½ inch egg shapes. Cool.
- 4) In small saucepan, combine chocolate morsels and shortening. Cook over low heat until melted, stirring constantly. Dip bottoms of cereal eggs into chocolate. Decorate with sprinkles. Place on wax-paper-lined baking sheet. Refrigerate until chocolate is firm. Individually wrap in plastic wrap. Best if served the same day.

www.allrecipes.com

April is Autism Awareness Month

What is Autism? Autism is a general term used to describe a group of complex developmental brain disorders known as Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD), Asperger's Syndrome and Rhett Syndrome is considered to be PDD-NOS (Not Otherwise Specified) and is referred by many parents and professionals as Autism Spectrum Disorder.

How common is Autism? It is estimated that 1 in every 10 children are diagnosed with Autism. Studies suggest that boys are more likely to be diagnosed 3-4 times more frequently.

What causes Autism?

The majority of causes of Autism are idiopathic, meaning the cause is "unknown." The best scientific evidence available points toward a potential for multiple variations of factors causing Autism. Timing of exposure during the child's development (before, during or after birth) may play a role in the final presentation of the disorder.

"Some cases can be linked to genetic disorders such as Fragile X, Tuberous Sclerosis, and Angelman's Syndrome, as well as exposure to environmental agents such as infectious ones (maternal rubella or cytomegalovirus) or chemical ones (thalidomide or valproate) during pregnancy." There is a growing interest among researchers in relation to the immune system, both within the body and the brain that involve inflammation in the central nervous system.

Although the definitive cause is undetermined, it is not the result of unloving mothers, which give a tremendous burden of guilt for their child's disability.



Of course, when we think April, some of think of April Fool's Day and Easter as the two main holidays. However, the end of the month is packed full of some truly respectable family holidays. For example, did you know that...

- April 18th is Animal Cracker Day? Buy some animal crackers and eat with your child. Or, be truly adventurous and try baking your own.
- April 22nd is National Jellybean Day? Grab some straw and jellybeans and have your child construct a bird's nest and place jellybeans inside as eggs.
- April 23rd is National Picnic Day? Throw an outdoor party or have your child bring their stuffed animals and have a teddy bear picnic.
- April 26th is National Pretzel Day? Have a party and serve pretzels. Have the kids and adults play twister and make human pretzels.
- April 27th is Tell a Story Day? Pick a story and have children come to a party dressed as characters and act out the story.

www.associatedcontent.com

MSP ~ CAN

Mountain State Parent-Child Adolescent Network

What has MSP-CAN been doing?

Our organization is gearing up for Parent Advisory Councils to begin as Spring has arrived. Currently, we have one in McMechen and another in Parkersburg. We are looking to begin more in Parent Groups in the northeastern part of the state as well as counties along the mid and upper Ohio Valleys. If you or someone you know would be interested in becoming more involved with their children's mental health and well-being, please contact

Crystal Dugan at 304-916-3649.

What is MSP-CAN looking forward to?

Our organization is hopeful that we can obtain volunteers from Gilmer, Calhoun, Wirt, Wood, Pleasants, Tyler, Wetzel, Marshall, Ohio, Brooke, Hancock, Ritchie, Doddridge, Harrison, Marion, and Monongalia Counties, to share our vision and mission as the only family-run organization in the state. We are also looking to gain more faces for our Board of Directors – those who have children with serious emotional disorders under the age of 18. For more information, Contact Crystal Dugan at the above mentioned number.

MSP-CAN continues to accept referrals, provide 1:1 assistance to family members, offers trainings, promotes advocacy, shares information, and collaborates with other organizations.

Upcoming Events

Harrison County Social Skills Group

Daryle Maher, an educator at Adamston Elementary School, facilitates a **FREE** Social Skills Group that meets monthly at the Alternative Learning Center (formerly Gore Middle School) for students who have Autism and/or are on the Autism Spectrum and their siblings. Harrison County Social Skills Group meets monthly and for more information: Call Daryle Maher at 304-288-2711 or email him at dmaher@access.k12.wv.us to register or contact Harrison County PERC at 304-326-7692.

“5 Promises” workshop and dinner will be held on Tuesday, April 12, 2011 at Christ United Methodist Church located at 716 16th Street, Parkersburg, WV. The workshop session will be held from 1pm-5pm and the dinner will be held from 6pm-8pm. Topics include: “Capturing Kids Hearts, Prevention of Abuse & Neglect, Mentors & Volunteers – How meaningful they can be in a child's life.” Workshop session is \$15 and dinner is \$15. For questions and registration, please contact Missy Storey at 304-485-0650 or email her at mstorey@childhswv.org.

FREE Community Baby Shower, hosted by Wood County FRN Early Childhood Coalition, will be held on April 15, 2011 at the Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in Parkersburg, WV from 1pm-3pm. Health Information will be available as well as fun, food, games, and door prizes. Contact Barb Lott at 304-485-0650.

Wood Parent Advisory Council to be held April 25th, 2011 from 5pm-6:30pm at SW Resources located on Mary Street in Parkersburg.

Ohio/Marshall Parent Advisory Council to be held April 13th, 2011 from 5pm-6:30pm at MSP-CAN office located on 1201 Garfield Avenue in McMechen.