



Parent Connection



HENRY FORD DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS

February 23, 2021

We know life may be challenging right now and we want you to know your Henry Ford pediatrician is still here for you. Below we have collected articles and resources we think you might find helpful. Information in our newsletters is yours to use when it is helpful to you and yours to disregard when it is not. We hope you and your family are staying safe during this pandemic.

Consent for Kids

Helping young children understand the importance of consent can be a difficult task. Some adults even struggle with it. [Consent](#) means that you are respecting another person's boundaries. It is asking and waiting until you have their affirmative permission before moving forward with whatever the activity is. When thinking of consent, most people only consider sexual activity. Consent can apply to many areas of your life, not only sex.

There are many age-appropriate ways to start incorporating consent into your child's daily activities. [Below](#) are a few:

- Teach children that "no" and "stop" are important words
- Never force a child to hug, touch, or kiss anyone
- Give children the opportunity to say "yes" or "no" in everyday activities
- Educate about good touch and bad touch
- Talk honestly with children and teens about consequences
- Build self-esteem

Whether you have a younger child or teenager, [this video](#) could be a great way to start the conversation about consent. Starting and continuing these conversations at home can help our children become advocates for themselves and their peers. Even if you have not had conversations around consent in the past, starting as soon as possible can help your child to understand, respect, and establish their own boundaries.

Celebrating Black Joy

As most of us know, February is Black History Month. A month devoted to celebrating black history and culture, however, what about during other months? We do not have to limit our learning and celebrating to just February. After all, Black history is American history. [Celebrating Black joy](#) is something we should be doing throughout the year. When we celebrate Black joy, we are amplifying Black voices and supporting the happiness, joy, and achievements experienced daily. Celebrating Black joy can teach children and those of all ages the importance of every day Black culture, in addition to the famous African Americans we learn about during the month of February. How can we celebrate Black joy daily? [Incorporating books](#) that highlight Black stories and are written by Black authors can be a great way to expand your knowledge on Black culture. We can also look to our [local communities and attend events](#) that highlight Black stories and experience. Many of these events are occurring during the month of February but continue year-round. Celebrating Black joy is acknowledging the happiness, pride, and positivity that is experienced daily, not just during the month of February.

Eating Disorder Awareness

[Eating disorders](#) are illnesses where people experience severe disturbances in their eating behaviors, thoughts and emotions around food and weight. They often become pre-occupied or consumed by these issues. Eating disorders affect millions of people and are most common in women between the ages of 12 and 35. However,

[boys can be affected](#) as well. The three main types of eating disorders are anorexia nervosa, bulimia and binge eating. There are [other types of eating disorders](#) as well. Signs and symptoms of eating disorders can include:

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Behavioral/Emotional:

- Dieting
- Obsession with weight/dieting
- Picky eating
- Discomfort eating in front of others
- Skipping meals
- Restrictions like no carbs/vegan
- Extreme mood swings

Physical:

- Weight fluctuation
- Stomach cramps
- Constipation
- Acid reflux
- Missed periods
- Dizziness
- Yellow skin

If you believe your child may have an eating disorder, please talk to your pediatrician for help. You can also contact the [National Eating Disorder Association](#) at (800) 931-2237.

Car Seats 103: Maintenance and Aftermarket Products

Car seats are an investment and proper maintenance will allow you to get the most protection and longest life out of them. Since babies and children are naturally messy, it may be frustrating to learn that cleaning options are limited. This is because most cleaning products are not tested, and manufacturers cannot guarantee chemicals won't affect the structural integrity of things like the straps or fire retardant. This is why it is important to read the instructions that come with your particular seat as advice may vary. For general guidance, [The Car Seat Lady](#) has good advice. Here are some safe recommendations for [protecting seat backs](#) from little feet in rear-facing seats. It is also recommended to periodically take the car seat out of the car to clean the area under the car seat.

There are also a lot of [after-market accessories](#) sold for car seats and even though they are useful, they may not be tested for safety. The same is true for parenting hacks using other things to protect a car or car seat from messes. The best thing to do is [educate yourself](#) on the safety and potential risks and then make the decisions that are best for your family. You can also contact your car seat manufacturer to see what products they recommend. It will usually be something they sell and have tested.

Shyness

[Shyness](#) is a natural personality trait in many children. If your child takes a while to warm up in social situations, try not to worry. Most children outgrow this or learn how to adapt. There are [some things you can do](#) to try to help your child with their shyness. One of the most important is to not pressure your child into interacting with others when they aren't comfortable. This can make a child withdraw even more. Also, try to avoid using the word *shy*. This can make your child feel something is wrong with them and make it more difficult for them to interact with others. Attempt to leave space for your child to respond to people at their own pace. It can be instinctual for parents to want to respond on behalf of their child when they do not immediately engage. Waiting a few beats can give your child a chance to get up the courage to respond. Rarely, what we perceive in children as shyness can actually be [social anxiety](#). If your child's shy behavior is often accompanied by negative emotions or physical ailments such as headaches or stomach pains, it would be a good idea to bring it up with your pediatrician.

Learning about African American Scientists

Historically, the scientific contributions of African Americans are often overlooked or overly simplified. Films like [Hidden Figures](#) and even [The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks](#) highlight the exclusion of African American contributions to science and society. Alternatively, George Washington Carver is a celebrated Black scientist whose race both hindered him and helped make him famous. He is commonly thought of as the peanut scientist, but his actual contributions to [science and politics](#) are more complex. In celebration of Black History Month, we take a moment to look at the [many contributions](#) that African American scientists have made to improve our world. If you are interested in [books about African American scientists for children](#), look at [these picture books](#) and [these books on inventors](#). Encouraging [diversity and representation in science](#) improves innovation that impacts every aspect of our lives.

Dental Health Month

Dental Health is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. [Dental Health Month](#) occurs every February to bring awareness and [knowledge](#) surrounding the importance of oral health. Regular dental visits, usually every six months, are important for preventative care and overall health. Attending regular dental visits can also help reduce any fear or anxiety surrounding the dentist. There are many ways to [encourage healthy dental habits](#) on a daily basis, for example, regular teeth brushing, flossing, and avoiding sugary food and drinks. There are also many fun activities that can be done at home to teach the importance of dental health. This [mini dental health coloring book](#) can be a great way to keep kids entertained and learning at the same time. If you are looking for a fun, [at home science experiment](#), this quick experiment helps teach how plaque forms on teeth.



Youth Advocacy Spotlight



"I believe the children are our future. Teach them well and let them lead the way."
-Whitney Houston

Most parents are doing the best they can to support their children and other young people in their lives during these unprecedented times. This might include being creative with household duties or trying new recipes as a family. We all are trying to do our part to make our day-to-day tasks as enjoyable as possible.

There is a new series that may help us explore different healthy food options and have fun with preparing our meals. Former first lady, Michelle Obama, is doing her part to "bring a bit of light and laughter to homes across the world." Beginning March 16th, Mrs. Obama's new series ["Waffles and Mochi"](#) will premiere on Netflix. The show will follow a pair of puppets who will travel around the world discovering new food while also trying out new ingredients and recipes. Waffles and Mochi is not only geared toward entertaining and educating children, but also hopes to engage parents as well.

In addition to the series, Mrs. Obama plans to re-release her New York Times best-selling memoir "Becoming" with modifications that will make it more accessible for [younger audiences](#). The new edition is said to be appropriate for readers age 10 and up. It will be available in early March 2021.

Has your child's behavior changed?

Have you noticed any changes in your child's behavior or emotions since the pandemic started? If you have any concerns or questions, please call (313) 451-0720. This is a Google Voice phone number that will call our Henry Ford coordinator who can help to connect you with a behavioral therapist for children.

*Are there other topics you are interested in and would like to learn more about?
If yes, please e-mail us at ParentConnection@hfhs.org or to unsubscribe.*