A Newsletter of WV Birth To Three Regional Administrative Unit 7

BRIDGES

Early Intervention….Building Bridges for a Bright Future

SPRING 2023

Spring Cleaning and Mental Health: Why Decluttering is Good for your Body, Mind and Soul

It's finally happening! We see flowers peaking through the soil and grass turning green. The days growing longer and the sun shines a little brighter. It's Spring! Spring has always represented a time to start brand new and if Mother Nature knows its time for a fresh start, maybe this is a hint we should do the same.

There's something so satisfying about a deep clean and that purge of dust, dirt and clutter that inspires a sense of renewed energy. The great thing about spring cleaning - donating those old clothes, stacks of books and magazines, and whatever else you've got lying about - is that it's an opportunity to create a new beginning for yourself.

Individual cleaning tasks such as vacuuming, ironing and gardening are physical activities that can burn between 150 and 300 calories an hour. In fact, a study at Indiana University, found that people with clean homes are healthier than people with messy homes. Results showed that participants who kept their homes clean were healthier and more active than those who didn't.

Aside from having a cleaner home, the physical action of housekeeping and the end result of a cleaner home helps relieve stress, anxiety and depression. When stress affects the brain, the rest of the body suffers consequences as well. The physical activity of cleaning (moving, bending, scrubbing, dusting, sweeping, vacuuming) produces endorphins which reduces stress levels, improves your ability to sleep, and boosts your overall mood.

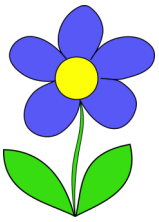
We live in a culture that is obsessed with acquiring stuff. However, there is a shift happening…many are starting to realize that serenity doesn't come from purchasing more things but from experiencing life with less stuff. Once you clear out the 'things' you don't 'want', you start to realize the things you need more of… like hanging out with friends and family, spending time outdoors, reading a book, learning a new hobby. This type of less is more approach helps you to not only simplify your life but saves ultimately saves you time and money.

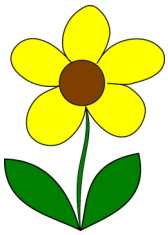
The relationship between a clean house and mental health is one that should be important to your whole family. We all love a cleaner, more organized home and we typically feel more at ease with less clutter. When you consider the overwhelming benefits—better physical health, improved mental health and a cleaner, healthier environment, it's easy to see how keeping a home clean can keep minds more calm and relationships strong. That's why the great thing about a spring cleaning isn't just the opportunity to get rid of all the stuff that you accumulated over the course of a year – it's also a chance to help improve your thoughts in ways you may have never even expected!

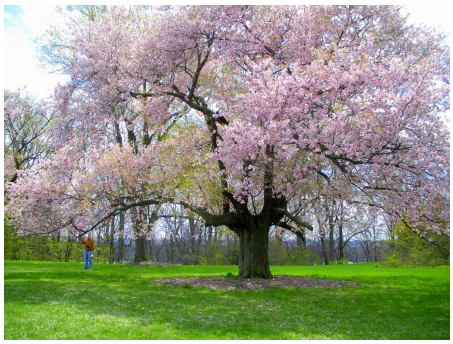
Spring Cleaning and Mental Health: Why Decluttering is Good for the Body, Mind and Soul — everwell Online Therapy and Counselling (everwellcounselling.ca)

*THINGS I LIKE ABOUT SPRING *

- The weather getting warmer
- The birds chirping in the morning
- Switching your wardrobe to brighter colors
- The smell of fresh cut grass
- Planting your spring garden
- Driving with the windows down
- Flip Flops or sandals
- Opening the windows in my house
- Spring Flowers
- The feeling of a fresh start
- Hiking or walking in sunshine
- Being able to sit outside
- Picnics
- Spring cleaning
- Baseball
- Trees are budding
- Tasty fruits and vegetables
- Feel the sun on my face
- Pedicures-getting my toes ready for sandals
- Sunlight exposure increases your body's release of serotonin in the brain causing people to be **HAPPIER!**







Goodbye Winter, Hello Spring

by Kenard Pak

As days stretch longer, animals creep out from their warm dens, and green begins to grow again, everyone knows—spring is on its way!

Join a boy and his dog as they explore nature and take a stroll through the countryside, greeting all the signs of the coming season. In a series of conversations with everything from the melting brook to chirping birds, they say goodbye to winter and welcome the lushness of spring.

When Spring Comes

By Kevin Henkes and Illustrated by Laura Dronzek

Before spring comes, the trees are dark sticks, the grass is brown, and the ground is covered in snow. But if you wait, leaves unfurl and flowers blossom, the grass turns green, and the mounds of snow shrink and shrink. Spring brings baby birds, sprouting seeds, rain and mud, and puddles. You can feel it and smell it and hear it—and you can read it!

Spring is Here: A Bear and Mole Story

by Will Hillenbrand

Mole can smell that spring is in the air, but Bear is still asleep after his long winter nap!

Excitedly he taps on the window and knocks on the door-- he even tries playing a trumpet to wake his friend so they can celebrate together. But Bear keeps snoozing.

But Mole is determined, so he milks and gathers and bakes a special springtime surprise for his friend-- the perfect way to wake up!

Tips on Temperament

Every child is born with their own way of approaching the world—a temperament. Here's how you can tune in to your child's temperament to anticipate how they will react in certain situations. Generally, there are five characteristics that describe an individual's temperament:

* Emotional intensity
* Activity level
* Frustration tolerance
* Reaction to new people
* Reaction to change

Temperament is not something your child chooses, nor is it something that you created. A child's temperament shapes the way they experience the world. A child who is cautious and needs time to feel comfortable in new situations and a child who jumps right in are likely to have very different experiences going to a classmate's birthday party. A child who can handle a lot of sensory stimulation will experience a trip to the supermarket differently from a child who has difficulty when a place has a lot of noise and action.

Understanding your child's temperament helps you be a better parent. Recognizing patterns in your child's behavior that are influenced by temperament can help you anticipate your child's responses to certain situations. If you know that your child has a hard time making transitions, you can guess that pick-up time at child care might be challenging. You could share this observation with your child's teacher and talk about how you can work together to make the end of the day easier.

Your Child Can Adapt

A child's behavior and approach to the world are shaped by experiences and especially by their interactions with you. For example, children who are temperamentally shy can become more outgoing and comfortable in new situations when their parents help them sensitively and slowly adapt to new experiences.

Also, no matter how consistent a child's patterns may appear to be, sometimes children can—and will—catch you off guard by acting in ways that you do not expect. A child who is usually wary of strangers might fall madly in love with their new teacher. The fact that your child can surprise you is one of the most exciting and even delightful rewards of parenthood.

Culture Matters

Different cultures place different values on behavioral styles. For example, some cultures value children who are quiet and obedient. Others value feisty, assertive kids. One dad, who lives in the inner city, expressed worry that his son was too laid back and not assertive or tough enough. He was afraid that his child would get bullied and taken advantage of by others.

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There is No Right or Wrong Temperament

It's very important for children to be accepted for who they are. It is true, though, that some temperaments are easier to handle than others. A parent with an intense, reactive child or a child who is very shy and slow-to-warm-up will tell you that parenting these children can be a challenge at times. Siblings can be (and often are) temperamentally very different. You may even feel that in your house, with two kids, you have to parent them in two different ways.

Most parents prefer some of their child's temperamental characteristics to others. Frank is shy and slow-to-warm-up. Frank's father sometimes feels his patience dwindling and wishes that his son Frank was the kind of kid who would just get on with it rather than take so long to settle in. The mother of very feisty Carlos sometimes wishes for a disappearing pill, like the day Carlos' exuberant hug knocked over a friend who hit his head on a chair as he fell down.

Parents struggle with these kinds of feelings for a range of reasons. Your child's behavior may remind you of parts of yourself that you don't like so much and want to change—like being easily hurt by someone's unkindness. Conversely, you may feel discomfort with ways in which your child is very different from you—such as their ease and comfort in new situations when you like to take things slow. It is quite normal that you will like and feel more comfortable with some aspects of your child's temperament more than with others.

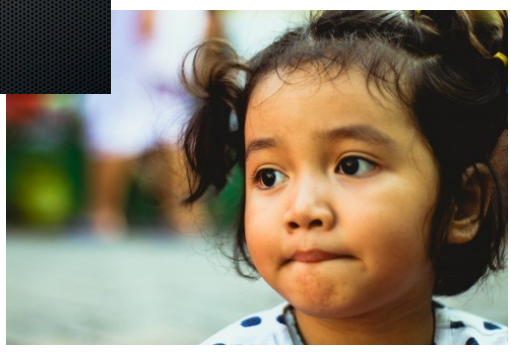
Be Your Child's Champion

Have you ever found yourself feeling isolated from or misunderstood—even put down—by family, friends, and neighbors who disapprove of or judge your child? You are not alone. It can be empowering to see these situations as opportunities to educate others about your child. For example, a father explains to his aunt, who is not getting the warm reaction she wants from her niece, "Sophie, like a lot of other kids, needs time to adjust to new people." Dad then hands her Sophie's favorite book, helping his aunt learn to approach Sophie slowly.

You can also help others see your child's behavior from a different perspective. A mom describes her daughter, Tess, to a neighbor who is critical of Tess's feisty nature. "Tess knows who she is and what she wants. She is loving and she is fierce. She puts her whole heart into everything."

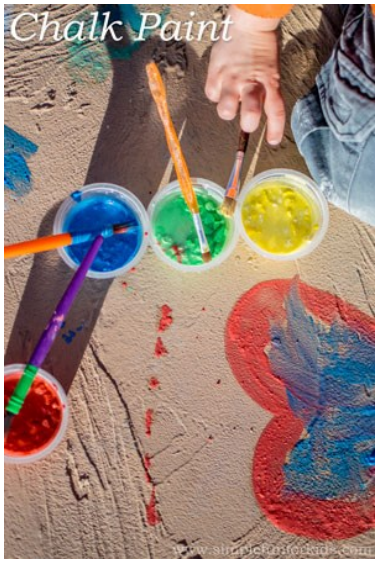
Remember, the goal isn't to change your child's temperament, but to help them make the most of their unique temperament—both its strengths and the areas where they may need more support. By watching and learning from your child, you can begin to slowly and sensitively help your child adapt, to expand their world, and to feel more confident about their place in it.

Adapted from: Zero to Three, February 22, 2022. Tips on temperament. Retrieved from https://www.zerotothree.org/resource/tips-on-temperament/.



COFFEE FILTER EASTER WREATHS

Items you will need to do this craft are located in the picture on the right. You will start by taking your paper plate and cutting the center out. You can color the plate if you like. Next, take the coffee filter and color them with food coloring mixed with water. Let coffee filters dry. To attach the coffee filters, make a hole in the paper plate. You can make your holes by snipping several small X's around your plate. You can give the coffee filters a twist and a scrunch, and then tucked them into the holes. You can fluff everything up a bit, and add a ribbon for hanging.



CHALK PAINT

Materials for vibrant homemade chalk paint:

- Chalk sticks – broken up preferred.
- Water.
- Ziploc baggies
- Paint brushes

Place chalk sticks in baggies and crush the chalk. After chalk is crushed put in cups and add a little water. Mix well. Now, paint your masterpiece!

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West Virginia Birth to Three Growing Together

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