

## The Bi-Monthly Broadcast

Greetings! I hope this latest installment of the Bi-Monthly Broadcast finds you well, relaxed, and ready for the start of a new grant year. It's hard to believe that already we are looking at the third and final year of the Pregnancy Assistance Fund grant. In this latest issue of the Bi-Monthly Broadcast, you will find information on life skills, co-parenting tips, along with resources and training opportunities. We also take a look at the Partnership Project to Strengthen Families, an on-going collaboration between the Gallatin City-County Health Department, Thrive, Bozeman Public Schools, and the Gallatin Mental Health Center. In less than two months, we'll all be together once again in Helena for the Annual Contractor's Training. I hope this training will provide opportunities for meeting new faces and networking, collaborating and learning. Have a great start to the autumn season, and see you soon!

~ Kelly Hart, Healthy Montana Teen Parent Coordinator



### The Family and Youth Services Bureau Look at Teen Life

Life skills education is just one of the multiple core services being offered by contractors of the Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program. The definition of life skills used by the Family and Youth Services Bureau of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services is:

*"Abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life."*

In a recent e-Update from the Family and Youth Services Bureau, life skills *"help adolescents make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively with others, and cope with and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner."* It goes on to categorize adolescents' life skills into three areas: Social and interpersonal skills, cognitive skills, and emotional coping skills.

Social and interpersonal skills include communication, refusal skills, assertiveness, and empathy. Adolescents can practice these skills by doing a mock job interview, requesting prenatal or reproductive health

information, or expressing their desire to not have sex.

Cognitive skills include decision making, critical thinking, and self-evaluation. These skills can be practiced by having your participants think about possible actions they might take in a given situation and think about the consequences of those actions.

Emotional coping skills are those used for stress management, avoiding unhealthy behaviors, and increasing one's locus of control, or the sense that you are in control of your fate or destiny. The e-Update suggests teens practice these skills by learning to increase their self-confidence and to assert their personal values.

There are many curriculums out there for life skills, and these are just a few examples provided in the e-Update:

Girls Circle: <http://www.girlscircle.com/>

Michigan 4-H Youth Development Communications Toolkit: [http://4h.msue.msu.edu/4h/resources/communications\\_toolkit/](http://4h.msue.msu.edu/4h/resources/communications_toolkit/)

Casey Life Skills: <http://www.caseylifeskills.org/>

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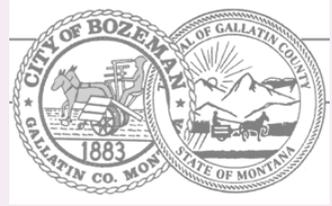
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# Contractor's Corner: Gallatin City-County Health Department

## By Stephanie Murphy, RN, BSN



*"You have changed everything for us. We would have had to move out of town and back to a situation that wasn't good for us or our daughter. Thanks to you we were able to find a place to live, get jobs and make a life for ourselves here. We are so thankful."* -Participant quote

The Partnership Project to Strengthen Families is a home visitation program that has been operating in Gallatin County for 18 years. The Partnership Project provides a full spectrum of parent education, family support, health, mental health and quality child care services to young parents with children ages 0-5 and multiple challenges. We provide services to families in Bozeman, Belgrade, Three Forks and other outlying communities within Gallatin County.

Partnership is a unique, collaborative model. The partners, Gallatin City-County Health Department, Bozeman public Schools, Thrive and Gallatin Mental Health Center, combine talents of Public Health Nurses, Social Workers, Childcare Experts and Licensed Counselors to share project and case management,

planning and evaluation, resources and responsibilities. Our commitment to collaboration is fueled by the belief that only through collaboration can we effectively impact our target group and avoid duplication, thereby maximizing our community resources. This approach increases our efficiency by bringing to the table the best of each partners' areas of expertise; being home visiting, parent education, health and mental health services, quality child care, access to community services, assessment and developmental screening.

Outcomes of The Partnership Project include:

- A proven track record of enhancing parent-child bonding;
- Improving parent knowledge of and expectations regarding child development;
- Increasing parent ability to meet basic needs for family survival;
- Healthy family functioning (physical, mental, and social emotional);
- Reductions in the incidence of

child maltreatment;

- Effective utilization of community services and support systems and health literacy.

Our Program Promotes:

- Improvements in maternal and prenatal health, infant health and child health, growth and development;
- Increased school readiness;
- Improved parenting related to child developmental outcomes;
- Improved family socio-economic status;
- Greater coordination of referrals to community resources and support systems.

The Partnership Project utilizes a validated assessment tool (LSP), the nationally acclaimed PAT home visiting program and has participated in a National Health Literacy Study.

## Announcing the Pregnancy Assistance Fund Resource and Training Center!



The Office of Adolescent Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has launched a new, online

Pregnancy Assistance Fund (PAF) Resource and Training Center to provide training and technical assistance resources to organizations working with pregnant and parenting teens.

Designed for PAF grantees and other providers in the field, the Resource and Training Center contains training and skill-building information as well as guides, tips and location-specific information to build the capacity of organi-

zations supporting pregnant and parenting teens.

These tools include [Training Topics](#), [Online Training](#), [Resources](#), [Grantee Spotlights](#), and [Grantee Map](#).

Visit <http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/paf>, and stay up to date with news and developments by [subscribing to OAH's e-updates](#).

## Effective Co-parenting for Young Parents: Tips from WORD



*The Futures project of WORD Inc. in Missoula has provided services for young parents through the age of 21 for over 20 years. For the last 12 years, we have specifically targeted young fathers as well as mothers. This shift has increased the number of dads that we serve significantly. Many of our young parents enter the program as a couple however our population closely mirrors the research on teen parents which shows that the majority of relationships (over 85%) will not last. Recognizing this trend, we focus a lot of our energy on helping both parents stay connected with their children by promoting effective co-parenting and encouraging the single parents we work with to obtain a parenting plan through the courts.*

*We have been partnering with Montana Legal Services for the past six years to provide guidance and workshops for our parents on parenting plans. Our advocates spend much of their time on relationship issues which includes effective co-parenting. Some of the advice they offer includes the following "tips":*

Co-parenting amicably with your ex is rarely easy but it can give your children stability and close relationships with both parents. Despite the many challenges though, it is possible to develop a cordial working relationship with your ex for the sake of your children. While it's true that co-parenting isn't an easy solution, it is the best way to ensure your children's needs are met. It may be helpful to start thinking of your relationship with your ex as a completely new one, one that is entirely about the well-being of your children, and not about either of you. The first step to being a mature, responsible co-parent is to put your children's needs ahead of your own. Through your parenting partnership your kids

should understand that your love for them will prevail despite changing circumstances. Kids with parents that have a cooperative relationship:

- **Feel secure.** When confident of the love of both parents, kids have better self-esteem.
- **Benefit from consistency.** Co-parenting fosters similar rules, discipline, and rewards between households, so children know what to expect, and what's expected of them.
- **Better understand problem solving.** Children who see their parents continuing to work together are more likely to learn how to effectively and peacefully solve problems themselves.
- **Have a healthy example to follow.** By cooperating with the other parent, you are establishing a life pattern your children can carry into the future.

Co-parenting is not about your feelings, or those of your ex, but rather about your child's happiness, stability, and future well-being. It's okay to be hurt and angry, but your feelings don't have to dictate your behavior. Instead, let what's best for your kids, you working cooperatively with the other parent motivate your actions.

- **Get your feelings out somewhere else.** Never vent to your child. Friends, therapists, or even a pet can all make good listeners when you need to get negative feelings off your chest. Exercise can also be a healthy outlet for letting off steam.
- **Stay kid-focused.** If you feel angry or resentful, try to remember why you need to act with purpose and grace: your child's best interests are at stake.
- **Never use kids as messengers.** When you have your child tell the other parent something for you, it puts him or her in the center of your conflict. The goal is to keep your child out of your relationship issues, so call or email your ex yourself.
- **Keep your issues to yourself.** Never say negative things about

your ex to your children, or make them feel like they have to choose. Your child has a right to a relationship with his or her other parent that is free of your influence.

It's healthy for children to be exposed to different perspectives and to learn to be flexible, but they also need to know they're living under the same basic set of expectations at each home. Aiming for consistency between your home and your ex's avoids confusion for your children.

- **Rules.** Rules don't have to be exactly the same between two households, but if you and your ex-spouse establish generally consistent guidelines, your kids won't have to bounce back and forth between two radically different disciplinary environments.
- **Discipline.** Try to follow similar systems of consequences for broken rules, even if the infraction didn't happen under your roof. So, if your kids have lost TV privileges while at your ex's house, follow through with the restriction. The same can be done for rewarding good behavior.
- **Schedule.** Where you can, aim for some consistency in your children's schedules. Making meals, naps, and bedtimes similar can go a long way toward your child's adjustment to having two homes.

These co-parenting tips have been assembled from Help Guide's [Tips for Divorced Parents](#). If you would like more tips and information about co-parenting check out their web site at [www.helpguide.org](http://www.helpguide.org). In order to gain expertise to help young parents with co-parenting issues we recommend that programs create a relationship with or partner with local resources such as mediation services, parenting programs, supervised visitation and exchange centers, local counselors and therapists, and Montana Legal Services on line web service [www.MontanaLawHelp.org](http://www.MontanaLawHelp.org)

*-Ron Liszak,  
Futures Project Coordinator*

## UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

### OCTOBER

#### **Healthy Teen Network–**

*The Power of Youth: Joining Forces to Achieve Positive Outcomes!*

October 16–19, 2012 • Minneapolis, MN

<http://www.healthyteennetwork.org>



#### **Montana Association for the Education of Young Children–**

*2012 Early Childhood Conference*

October 18–20 • Kalispell, MT

<http://www.mtaeyc.org/Portals/0/2012%20Conf%20info.pdf>

#### **Native Wellness Institute-**

*Adults Working with Native Youth– Walking the Four Directions*

October 23–25, 2012 • Prior Lake, MN

<http://nativewellness.com/events/eventshome.html>

### November

#### **Parents As Teachers–**

*2012 Conference for Early Childhood Professionals*

November 7–9, 2012 • Saint Louis, MO

<http://www.parentsasteachers.org/training/conference>

#### **Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program**

*Annual Contractor Training*

November 13–14, 2012 • Helena, MT

#### **Native Wellness Institute–**

*Adults Working with Native Youth– Native Youth Leadership Curriculum Training of Trainers*

November 28–30, 2012 • San Diego, CA

<http://nativewellness.com/events/pdf/2012/AWNYTOTWebBrochureNovember2012.pdf>

*\*Have training opportunities to share? Send them to [Khart2@mt.gov](mailto:Khart2@mt.gov) \**