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Monthly Newsletter:

February 2007

This Month's Topics: Parental Alone Time and Child Swapping: The Solution to Time Alone, and "Kid Friendly" Activities at Snowdown.

The Happy Parent, Happy Child Relationship: A parent is a role model for his or her child. If a parent is happy, a child is more apt to be happy as well. A child will mimic parental behavior, and learn what type of behavior is not only acceptable, but worthwhile as well. Guiding your child to understand that being happy is not only allowable, but preferable, is a great lesson. Whether you are a single parent or a couple it is very important for you to balance your needs along with the needs of your partner and the needs of your children. No matter how much time you spend with your children if you are not taking care of yourself your children will suffer. It can be hard to make the time to nurture yourself or your partnership without your children. This newsletter discusses some ways to explain to your kids that you need some time for yourself and also gives you some inexpensive solutions to childcare.

http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/115868/the_happy_parent_happy_child_relationship.html

Parents, Kids and Time Alone

Source: <http://ezinearticles.com/?Parents,-Kids-and-Time-Along&id=88007>

"What are some of the ways in which you explain to kids that mom and dad need time alone, without feeling guilty about it?"

A journalist, writing an article on having time alone and couple time when you have kids, asked me this question.

Parents will feel guilty only when they believe that they are doing something wrong by spending time alone and couple time without their children.

This is a false belief.

The truth is that children grow up far healthier emotionally when their parents are happy and fulfilled, even if it means that their parents spend less time with them. When parents understand that they are being good parents by taking loving care of themselves and their relationship, their children will understand this.

One way of helping children understand this is to introduce the concept of "time alone" very early in a child's life. By the time a child is three, he or she can easily understand the concept of time alone. If, each time you spend time alone with your child, you say, "This is our time alone," your child will begin to understand the concept. When you have time to yourself, you can say, "This is my time alone with myself." When you spend time with your partner, you can say, "This is Mom and Dad's time alone together." or "This is Mom and her friend's time alone together". Parents can tell their children, as soon as they are capable of understanding the words, "We need time alone with you, with each other, and with ourselves. All of us need to respect this about each other."

Our three children fully understood the concept of "time alone" because we spent time alone with each them. They came to understand and respect at a very young age the need for time alone.

If you put yourself aside and don't spend time with yourself and with your partner, you are giving your children unhealthy role modeling. You are teaching them that others are always responsible for meeting their needs. You are teaching them to feel entitled to your time and attention rather than helping them learn to respect others' time. You are teaching them that it is okay to demand that others put themselves aside for them, which may create narcissistic behavior.

Healthy parenting means finding a balance between being with your children, being with your partner, and being with yourself. For your children to grow up taking responsibility for their own needs and feelings, they need to see you taking responsibility for your needs and feelings. Constantly sacrificing yourself for your children does not role model personal responsibility.

Children need to experience you and your spouse enjoying your time with each other, as well as with yourselves. They need to see you pursuing your work, hobbies, creativity and passions in order to understand that they also need to find their passions. If you are always there to meet your children's needs, how can they discover who they are and what brings them joy? Always being there to meet your children's needs for entertainment creates a dependency on others rather than finding these resources within themselves.

Many people grow up not knowing how to be alone with themselves. Because they were either always in front of a TV or being entertained by their parents, they never discovered how to "play by themselves."

Of course it is very important to have enough time alone with your children. But it is equally important to have enough time alone with your spouse and with yourself. When you understand this, you will stop feeling guilty about taking your time alone. When you no longer feel guilty, your children will learn to stop guilt you and respect your needs.

Child-swapping- An Inexpensive Solution to Alone Time

Source: <http://www.bluesuitmom.com/family/realfamilies/childswapping.html>

Parents need timeout from parental duties. Whether it's a night out with friends, a table for two, a concert, or a movie, quality time for parents is important to any relationship marriage and family. If you don't think you can afford these dates without worrying about your kids' happiness and safety, and childcare costs, you're not

alone. For this reason consider a child-swapping network with other couples. It is a convenient, inexpensive, reliable and rewarding alternative to a babysitter.

Family Swapping Selection: Choose a couple you know well from your neighborhood, church, or social group.

Seek Similar Ages: If you have friends with similar aged children it is a great way to get your kids together.

Make a Good Deal: Offer to take care of the couples children in exchange.

The Rules

- ?? **Pick a Date:** Select one weekend night per month as your regular date night. Agree on a reasonable time frame, 5-10 PM once per month, with a long night or sleep over every 3-4 months.
- ?? **Put it in Ink:** Record the dates on a calendar and make a copy to distribute to your other child-swapping couples.
- ?? **Backup Plan:** Discuss a cancellation policy
- ?? **Personal Preferences:** Create a list of your kids' food preferences, bedtime routines, or favorite activities.
- ?? **Trial Play dates:** To make sure everyone gets along, schedule a few group play dates.
- ?? **Game Plan:** Be prepared to entertain the kids when they arrive. Try games, cooking, activities, crafts, or movies.

What are the benefits for the Parents?

- ?? No interruptions! Parents benefit from time alone.
- ?? Cost efficient.
- ?? Support system: you can share parenting, medical, and discipline tips and you have someone to call in case of an emergency.
- ?? Rejuvenating: time alone can make you feel refreshed and ready for more kid time after the night alone.

What are the benefits for the kids?

- ?? New friends: Sometimes the friendships you children form will be long lasting deep friendships.
- ?? Surrogate parents: Kids bond with other caring adults, providing someone else to turn to when Mom and Dad can not be there.
- ?? Improves social skills

KID FRIENDLY SNOWDOWN ACTIVITIES

Thursday February 1st 2006

4:30 PM SNOWDOWN JR. KING & QUEEN CONTEST

Best Western Rio Grande Inn - 400 E. Second Ave.

Hosted by McDonald's and the Best Western Rio Grande Inn. Final selection of SNOWDOWN's Junior King and Queen from Durango grade school competition. Winners will ride in the SNOWDOWN Light Parade Friday night. Event Coordinator: Kathy Bowser - 247-2446, 247-3986

7 PM SNOWDOWN KID'S FOLLIES

Durango Arts Center Theatre - 802 E. 2nd Ave.

Family entertainment provided by the rising stars of Durango, your very own kids! Appropriate for audiences of all ages who like a good show. Net proceeds will support ongoing Kid's Follies and DAC Children's Scholarships. Event Coordinators: Denise Hagemeister, Caitlin Cross - 259-2606. Event Cost: Audience: \$7 adult, \$5 children at the door. Entry Deadline: See audition information, above.

Friday February 3rd, 2006

NEW MILK CARTON PIRATE SHIP CONTEST

Vectra Bank-1101 E. Second Ave. Ahoy me teys and shiver me timbers! Davey Jones is requestin' that ye build a pirate ship out of milk cartons. Bring it down to Vectra so the Captain's Counsel can judge 'em. Be yer creative selves! Two age groups: 6 and under, 7-12 years old to participate. Event Coordinator: Stephanie Stewart-375-7423, Helen Adams 375-7430 Event Cost: Free, Entry Deadline: Ships must be entered by Monday, January 29th. Prizes: 1st (\$25), 2nd (\$20) prizes for each age group.

4PM-8:30PM SNOWDOWN SPAGHETTI DINNER

Elks Lodge-E. 2nd Ave & 9th Street. Hosted by Purgatory Ski Team. Eat before or after the parade. Grab your crew and we'll partake of grub together at the Elk's Club for a feast fit for any crew-scalawage and wenches! Spaghetti-the original sailors' food-and lots of it! Help fill up the treasure chest-a fundraiser for the Purgatory Ski Team, it's guaranteed fun for all ages. Tickets are available in advance at Magpie's Newsstand Cafe', 707 Main Ave., until 5PM, Friday, February 2 and at the door. Take your doubloons there in advance. Event Coordinator: Donna Bowles 749-1752. Event Cost: Adults \$8 and Kids \$5 for dinner.

6PM THE SNOWDOWN FIREWORK!!!

AHOY Skyward, above downtown Durango a single firework is all our highly motivated, specially trained pyrotechnic technicians need to begin the parade with a big satisfying bang! Keep your eyes to the south while you wait on Main Avenue for the SNOWDOWN Light Parade to begin. Our many thanks to Fire Marshall Tom Kaufman and his hearty crew of fire dudes! This show is hosted by the SNOWDOWN Board, Team and Friends.

6 PM SNOWDOWN LIGHT PARADE

Main Avenue College Dr. - 12th Street. Hosted by Mercury Payment Systems. This is the single biggest draw downtown Durango has ever seen....and for a good reason. It's Durango's only night time parade where light-bedecked floats create a dazzling delight for our most spectacular and entertaining procession. Floats and groups enter in 10 divisions with special emphasis on the use of lights. You must submit application to be eligible to participate! Event Coordinator: Terry Fiedler - 247-8163 Prizes: Mayor's Choice, Sweepstakes, Best Theme and many more trophies per category.

Saturday February 4th, 2006

8 AM SNOWDOWN BALLOON RALLY AND MASS ASCENSION

Red Rock Ranch - Park at Animas Valley Elementary School Hosted by BP, this spectacular event features a beautiful display of colorful hot air balloons ascending in the early morning frost. Ride the train up the valley and watch 35 balloons ascend at once from the warmth of the train! What a way to wake up! Persons over 21 interested in volunteering for chase crews should call the event coordinator. Event Coordinator: Phil Campbell-8846191 - 247-7189, Skip Page - 259-7821

8AM-1PM SNOWDOWN BALLOON RALLY TRAIN

D & SNGRR Depot-749 Main. Come see the spectacular view of the Snowdown Balloon Mass Ascension from the train! Watch the hot air balloons rise throughout the Animas Valley while enjoying complementary juice, coffee, and breakfast pastries. Concession car also available. Event Coordinator: Andrea Seid-2590274, Yvonne Lashmett- 385-8801 Event Cost: Adult ages 12+ \$45, Child ages 5-11 \$22

10 AM - NOON SNOW GAMES

Chapman Hill. Fun games for kids hosted by McDonald's for ages 3 through middle school. Tube races, tug-o-war, treasure hunt, egg throw, obstacle course, popcorn stuffing and more fun events.

Event Coordinator: Kathy Bowser - 247-2446, 247-3986. Event Cost: Free Entry Deadline: 30 minutes before event. Prizes: PRIZES AND PRIZES AND PRIZES

1 PM FELINE FASHION SHOW

McDonald's Parking Lot. This is tradition-ally one of SNOWDOWN'S most hilarious events. Grab your cat or snatch your neighbor's and dress 'em up for this all comers fashion show. Cats in leisure suits and twirly skirts!! Hosted by McDonald's, this event is literally a cat's meow...and a purr-fect spectator sport, just ask John Travolta. Event Coordinator: Kathy Bowser - 247-2446, 247-3986. Event Cost: Free Entry Deadline: 30 minutes before event. Prizes: Trophies for Funniest, Most Formal, Most Look Alike (Pet & Owner) and Best SNOWDOWN Theme Costume.

1 PM SNOWDOWN GROCERY GAMES

Fairgrounds Exhibit Hall. Hosted by South City Market. Try your hand at Oreo Stacking or Spam Carving. Oreo stacking - that's it; just stack those Oreos as high as you can in one minute. The cookies are provided by City Market and you get to keep the ones you stack. Categories: under 5, 5-8, 9-12, 13-16, 17 & over. Spam Carving - some people make fun of Spam, but they have never tried to carve it into John Travolta look-alike. You'll have 10 minutes to prepare your masterpiece using only a plastic picnic knife. Judged on originality and detail. Age groups: under 8, 9-15, 16 and above. Event Coordinator: Paula Langfitt- 247-4475 ex 1276 Hackler - 247-4475. Event Cost: Free Entry Deadline: 30 minutes before event Prizes: 1st, 2nd, 3rd each event.

NEW 1PM A JOLLY ROGER TREASURE HUNT FOR KIDS

Double Tree Hotel Parking lot-Camino del Rio & Hwy 160 Intersection. Hosted by Big Brother, Big Sisters. This new event teams one adult with one child to hunt around the area following clues to see who the first to find the buried pirate treasure is. Great fun for the whole family! Event Coordinator: Derek Raimo- 603-494-8029 Event Cost: Free Entry Deadline: 5pm, Friday, Feb. 2nd. Prizes: 1st, 2nd, 3ed and all will receive a prize just for playing.

2 PM CANINE FASHION SHOW

McDonald's Parking Lot. Every year a howling success, this event is open to all dogs regardless of where in the "Funkytown" they have come from. Dress your dog in its favorite "Paar-ty" attire or funniest costume. All dogs must be on a leash! Hosted by McDonald's. Event Coordinator: Kathy Bowser - 247-2446, 247-3986 Event Cost: Free Entry Deadline: 30 minutes before event. Prizes: Trophies for Funniest, Most Formal, Most Look-Alike (Mutt & Master) and Best SNOWDOWN Theme Costume

DUSK- SNOWDOWN BALLOON GLOW

Fort Lewis College West Rim. Hosted by Applebee's. Propane sponsor Mesa Propane. Catch the glow! Come watch the hot air balloons inflate and fill the evening darkness with the warmth of winter. Weather Permitting! Event Coordinator: Phil Campbell - 247-7189, Skip Page - 259-7821 Eligibility: Pilots by invitation

6 PM (dusk) SNOWDOWN FIREWORKS SHOW

In the Skies above Durango, opposite College West Rim. SUPER FIREWORKS! Gaze up and see the most SPECTACULAR! GLITTERING FANTASTIC! Fireworks show of the season. Hosted by Three Springs, Southwest Mortgage, Mountain Bike Specialists, Serious Texas Barbeque, Sky Ute Sand and Gravel, The Wells Group, Farquarhts, Ron's Plumbing and Leland House.

Sunday February 5th, 2006

7 AM LA PLATA COUNTY SEARCH AND RESCUE SNOWDOWN PANCAKE BREAKFAST & BACKCOUNTRY GEAR SILENT AUCTION

La Plata County Fairgrounds Exhibit Hall. Get a great start to your day with a yummy breakfast fit for any jive talking, boogie town resident exhausted from all that Saturday night fevering. This is a fundraiser where you can fill your belly while supporting SNOWDOWN and La Plata County Search and Rescue. Event Coordinator: Ron Corkish - 946-4437 Event Cost: \$6 for adults, \$4 kids 6-12 and free for age 5 and under

12:30 PM ULLR SKI OBSTACLE RACE

Colorado Timberline Academy Soccer Field -35554 N. Hwy 550 - turn off at Logwood B&B exit. Go left down to campus. Like skiing? How about donning 10 foot long 2X4's instead. Just grab 3 teammates, tie on your ol' rope bindings and jive along under the limbo sticks and around other imaginative obstacles and do a quick change clothes relay. Best time wins! This is great fun for spectators, too! Teams of 4, you must be 18 or older to enter. Children allowed if accompanied by an adult or parent so make it a family affair.

Event Coordinator: Judy Fairchild - 259-9673, Alex Schuhl - 382-8686. Event Cost: Free

Entry Deadline: 15 minutes before event Prizes: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd

Community Calendar and Events:

February 2nd, 9th, 16th, & 23^{ed}- Infant Massage- Tender Loving Touch is holding it's next Infant Massage class series starting next Friday, February 2nd from 10-11 at the Smiley Building Studio 5. You will learn all the strokes you need to know to give a loving and nurturing massage to your new infant within four Fridays. The fee is \$60.00 for four classes. or \$20.00 each to drop-in. Infant massage fosters attachment and bonding between the infant and parent, relieves tummy discomfort associated with colic and relaxes the baby plus it teaches parents their baby's cues and creates a foundation for communication. This class is for parents with babies 3 weeks to pre-crawling age. For more information and to RSVP call **Nicole Johnson at 749-3323**. Nicole Johnson is a certified infant massage instructor through the International Association of Infant Massage.

February 14th- FREE Children's Yoga Class for 3-7 year olds. The class begins at 3:20PM at Pediatric Associates of Durango. This yoga class occurs the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month through March. **Please contact Pediatric Associates of Durango to reserve your child's spot in the class 259-7337.**

February 15th – Craniosacral Therapy clinic led by **Dr. Paul Lee** will be held at Pediatric Associates of Durango from 1:30PM – 4:00PM. Children who are covered by CHP and Medicaid will be given a free session. Co-pay is the only required payment for insured patients and the remainder of the balance will be paid by your insurance company or handled by Dr. Paul Lee. Dr. Lee will be performing the therapy with his students. Please call Pediatric Associates of Durango at 970-259-7337 to schedule an appointment.

February 15th- Discussion on Sibling Rivalry, Join Dr. Pakhi Chaudhuri at **P is for Peanut** for a discussion on Sibling Rivalry, begins at 10:30AM.

February 15th- FREE CPR & First Aid Education, 5:30-7:30PM, Sara Powers, a former Red Cross instructor will be presenting an Infant/Child CPR & First Aid education class. Childcare will be available at the Family Center of Durango for a small fee and the education is FREE! Please call Amy at the La Plata Family Center to sign up or for more details 385-4747.

February 28th- Couples Communication begins at the **La Plata Family Center** with Erin Youngblood, please contact Erin at 799-4686 for more details.

February 28th- FREE Children's Yoga Class for 3-7 year olds. The class begins at 3:20PM at Pediatric Associates of Durango. **Please contact Pediatric Associates of Durango to reserve your child's spot in the class 259-7337.**

Pre-school story time every Wednesday and Saturday at 10:30am at the **Durango Public Library @ (970)-375-3380.**