



# Pennington & Red Lake Counties Wellness Newsletter

## January 2024

**“You are never too old to set a new goal or dream a new dream.” C.S. Lewis**

The start of the new year is often seen as an opportunity for a new beginning or an opportunity to set new goals. Give yourself grace, set goals that are realistic for you to achieve.

1. Connect with others. Remember to check in on those you have not seen in a while, the quiet person, the always happy friend, or the person who is always there for you.
2. Identify achievable goals. Identify small, achievable actions you can take now to accomplish what you want to in the next month, six months, or year.
3. Remember to relax. Give yourself permission to take time for yourself, whether that is going for a walk, watching a movie, hanging out with a loved one, or simply sitting in silence. #YouMatterMN
4. Maintain physical health. Our physical health can influence our mental health, and it is just as important. Make sure you get enough sleep, eat nutritious foods, and exercise regularly.
5. Ask for help. A part of prioritizing our own mental health is realizing that we can't do everything alone, it's okay to ask for help, reach out to a family, friend, or neighbor you trust, you can also call or text the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988 or chat, 988lifeline.org. #YouMatterMN

## Nutrition

### Why it Matters

Good nutrition is essential in keeping current and future generations of Americans healthy across the lifespan. Breastfeeding helps protect against childhood illnesses, including ear and respiratory infections, asthma, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). People with healthy eating patterns live longer and are at lower risk for serious health problems such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity. For people with chronic diseases, healthy eating can help manage these conditions and prevent complications.



Fewer than 1 in 10 children and adults eat recommended daily amount of vegetables.



Only 4 in 10 children and fewer than 1 in 7 adults eat enough fruit.

### Poor Nutrition is Making Out Nation Sick

Vitamin and mineral malnutrition impacts our health and economy.



Low levels of vitamins and minerals can result in mental impairment and central nervous system defects in infants.

Poor nutrition contributes to many costly diseases, including obesity, heart disease, and some cancers.



Mothers stop breastfeeding earlier than intended. More than 80% of mothers start out breastfeeding, but about 60% stop sooner than they planned.



Low rates of breastfeeding and more than \$3 billion a year to medical costs of women and children in the US.

# Parenting Tips From Child Parent Institute

**Celebrating positive parenting during the first month of the new year is an opportunity to remember that:**

- Raising children and youth to become healthy, confident, capable individuals is the most important job parents and caregivers have.
- Positive parenting is a protective factor that prevents and heals Adverse Childhood Experiences, which can have lifelong impacts on health and well-being.
- Many parents and caregivers raising children and youth feel stressed, isolated and overwhelmed, no matter their age, race, ethnicity, tribe or income level.
- Everyone in our community has a role to play in raising awareness of the importance of positive parenting and supporting the health and well-being of our children.

## **Maintain open communication and connection.**

Create space to have open, honest conversations about what's going on in your kids' lives, and practice active listening. This will help them feel understood and supported. It will also give you the opportunity to share any concerns or ideas that may influence how they cope with stressors (i.e., setting limits around screen time or creating a family dinner time).

## **Connect daily through fun and play.**

Kids thrive when their parents are physically and emotionally available to them. Spend quality time together (remember it can be brief—even a few minutes at a time—as long as it's frequent). Plan family activities that are fun and relaxing, but also help to build connections. This can be something as simple as taking a walk together, playing a game, reading stories, playing their favorite video game, or making their favorite snack.

## **Build a “parenting village.”**

Parenting can be a lonely, isolating job sometimes. Develop a “village” of trusted adults you and your kids can count on. This could be aunts, uncles, neighbors, close family friends, clergy members, teachers, coaches, camp counselors, etc. This provides your kids with emotional support and guidance that is independent of you, which can relieve parenting stress and pressure for you, too. It also allows kids to feel like they have safe adults in their lives who can offer help when they want to talk with someone other than their parent or guardian.

## **Use routines that create healthy habits regarding sleep, nutrition, and exercise.**

A consistent bedtime will help kids feel less rushed in the morning and will also ensure they get the right amount of sleep to stay focused at school and be ready to handle emotions and challenges that come up throughout the day. Regular meals, especially breakfast, can help your child get through the day without feeling hungry or tired (which often leads to meltdowns). A balanced diet will help maintain healthy moods, reduce anxiety, and promote clarity of thought. Encourage your kids to be physically active every day. Exercise releases endorphins which have mood-boosting effects. A healthy body contributes to a healthy mind! Incorporate mindfulness into your daily routine to teach kids tools to manage stress and anxiety. Meditation, journaling, and deep breathing are a few simple ways your kids can practice mindfulness.



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