

Are you a mom on empty?

by Ron Craker, Psy.D.

Answer these four True and False statements:

- *I am not sleeping well.*
- *I haven't been out with my friends, just for fun, in the past three months.*
- *There are health and wellness activities I used to do (walking, aerobics, yoga, meditation, etc.) that I no longer do for myself.*
- *I don't have anyone who really "gets me," that I can share my parenting experiences with.*

If you can answer TRUE to any of these statements, the trap of skimping on your self-care may have you ensnared. You don't need me to tell you that everything about you and your life is different now that you're a mom. Your heart is pouring so much of yourself into your children, that in other parts of your life you are running on empty.

As a parent coach who works full time with moms of young children, I know the risk of skipping or at least skimping on your self-care is always there. With that in mind, here are six simple things you can do to renew your energy and you can remember them by thinking about **SPRING**:

S = Some Solitude. Are you a Velcro Mom with some kid always attached to you? Peel them off (yes they will make that awful tearing noise that Velcro makes) but do it anyway. Moms tell me even grocery shopping alone can feel like a slice of paradise with a Starbucks in one hand and... well nothing in the other.

P = Pursue Playfulness. With or without the kids around, find ways to laugh and just have fun. You used to be goofy; kids love it when parents take a pratfall. Once they start laughing it is contagious. Drop your "to do" list and use those free hands to tickle a kid!

R = Restart an energy gainer. Health and wellness activities can be thought of as those things we do that serve as "energy gainers" in our lives. As a parent of young children there is little you can do about some

A 45-minute nap can improve your alertness for six hours!

of the inevitable "energy drainers" you will face each day. That makes maintaining some energy gainers even more vital to your health. Make a list of the energy gainers you used to do for yourself before you had kids. Pick one from the list and get creative about how you can introduce it back into your life. Come on now, Moms of young kids are the most resourceful and creative beings on the planet, so you can do this!

I = Intimacy. Start small. Intentionally kiss your partner goodbye when one of you leaves and hello when you return. Intentionally hug each other for at least 10 full seconds (if this feels awkward do a

minimum of three times a day). Share one good thing that happened in each of your days.

Once you have an intimacy rhythm at home, make a date night. Find a way. I know it seems impossible, but just do it! Guys, take the lead in planning and initiating this. Nothing big. Even 90 minutes of browsing at Barnes and Nobles to start (Parent and Child sections are off limits).

N = Naps and Sleep. A Mom loses about 350 hours of sleep at night over her baby's first year. Napping is a great way to reduce your sleep debt. The National Sleep Foundation reported research that found a 45-minute nap improved alertness for six hours after the nap. Even 20 minutes can make a big difference for many people. How many times did you pass up that 20 minute nap window because you felt you had to get something else done while the kids napped?

G = Guiltless Girl Time. A *Parents Magazine* survey in 2007 reported that only 10 percent of mothers with young children had gone out socially for fun in the previous three months. If you can't maintain and cultivate your adult relationships it will sure be more difficult to have that one friend who really "gets you" that you can be real with and not worry about how you are viewed. Now dads, guiltless means you don't call her five times during the two hours she is out with friends because you can't handle the kids. It also means no *(Mom on empty, cont. on p. 2)*

(Mom on empty, cont. from p. 1)

snide remarks when she gets home. You will find that supporting your wife this way can lead to "guiltless guy time"!

Ron Craker, Psy.D., is a local pediatric psychologist and parent coach. He specializes in cradle to kindergarten services through his affiliation with StepWise, a unique non-profit center for educational and psychological solutions for children and their families. Dr. Ron and his wife, Vickie, reside in Granger with their three terrific boys. Visit his web site at www.stepwiseonline.org or Dr. Ron's blog at www.parentcoach.wordpress.com.

Safe sleeping for babies

- Always place babies on their backs to sleep for naps and at night. The back sleep position is the safest.

- Place babies on a firm sleep surface, such as on a safety-approved crib mattress, covered by a fitted sheet.

- Never place babies to sleep on pillows, quilts, sheepskins or other soft surfaces.

- Don't use pillows, blankets, quilts, sheepskins or pillow-like crib bumpers in their sleep area, and keep any other items away from the baby's face.

- Keep soft objects, toys, and loose bedding out of babies' sleep area.

- Keep babies' sleep area close to, but separate from, where you and others sleep. Your baby should not sleep in a bed or on a couch or armchair with adults or other children.

Area Inservices

Grandparents as Parents

- 1st Wednesday of each month, 10 a.m., at 3609 Mishawaka Ave., South Bend.
- 3rd Monday of each month, 6:30 p.m., at Living Stones Church, 718 East Don Moyer Ave, South Bend. Contact number for both locations is (574) 232-6890.

Support Groups

- **Elkhart County** contact Jody Richards at (574) 533-1234, ext. 218.
- **St. Joseph County** group meets the 1st Thursday of each month. Contact Tom & Linda Cleveland at (574) 232-3404.
- **Marshall/Starke County** meets 3rd Monday every other month at the Plymouth Library. Next meeting is March 17, 6:00–7:30 p.m. Contact Melissa Bachtel at (574) 935-3052.

Michiana Behavioral Health Center

- **Why Self-esteem is so darn important**, Friday, August 16, 11:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.
Seating is limited. To make a reservation, call (574) 936-3784,

Parenting Classes

Mondays, July 21–September 22, 5:00–8:00 p.m., Bashor Children's Home, Goshen. Wednesdays, July 23–September 17, 9:15–11:45 a.m., Joy Rose Center, Elkhart. Thursdays, July 24–September 18, 5:00–8:00 p.m.

To register, contact Elizabeth Cruz at (574) 522-1998, ext. 71. Please note, these are nine-week workshops. Fee for the entire series is \$35 for a single parent or \$45 for two parents.

Family Involvement Fund (FIF)

Foster parents of children with disabilities are eligible to receive financial support through the Family Involvement Fund for actual expenses to participate in conferences, training events, and other activities. Funding limits may change, but are currently up to \$250 per person, per program year and up to \$500 per family. The application must be received at least 30 days prior to the first day of the event. For more info, contact Cathy Beard at 1-800-825-4733 or via email at fif@indiana.edu.

- Think about using a clean, dry pacifier when placing the infant down to sleep, but don't force the baby to take it. (If you are breast-feeding your baby, wait until your child is one month old or is used to breast-feeding before using a pacifier.)

- Do not let your baby overheat during sleep. Dress your baby in light sleep clothing, and keep the room at a temperature that is comfortable for an adult.

- Reduce the chance that flat spots will develop on your baby's head by providing "tummy time" when your baby is awake and

someone is watching, changing the direction that your baby lies in the crib from one week to the next, and avoiding too much time in car seats, carriers and bouncers.

Sources: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Service

Reservations for the following training sessions can be made by calling (574) 533-1234 or 800-282-0809, ext. 243. Classes may be cancelled if not enough persons register. Alternative training is available through books, audio and video. A web site at www.fosterparents.com lists approved foster parent trainings. For a list of pre-approved materials as well as the training verification form, go to www.oaklawn.org, click on Services and Programs, then Services for Children and Adolescents, then Collaborative Programs. Look for Traditional Foster Care to find the forms. Remember, traditional homes can receive up to four hours and special needs or therapeutic homes can receive up to eight training hours annually through books, audio, video or internet. Certification of the training hours are dependent upon approval from the training coordinator. Please note that child care is NOT provided during trainings.

Preservice

Required training: 20 hours for foster parents or 26 hours for adoptive parents. Day one of each training session must be taken first. All pre-service classes include Universal Precautions and First Aid Training; you do not need to sign up for these classes separately.

Elkhart

July 26, August 2, 9, 16
Saturdays, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
Oaklawn, Elkhart

September 13, 20, 27, October 4
Saturdays, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
Oaklawn, Elkhart

St. Joseph County

August 2, 9, 16, 23
Saturdays, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
August 23 will end at 2:00 p.m.
United Way, South Bend

September 20, 27, October 4, 11
Saturdays, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
October 11 will end at 2:00 p.m.
United Way, South Bend

First Aid & Safety

Meets criteria for certification and State requirements for Foster Parents. CPR—due before certification expires; First Aid—due every three years; Universal Precautions due at each relicensure.

Universal Precautions/ Bloodborne Pathogens

- Monday, August 18, 6:00–6:30 p.m., JJC, South Bend
- Wednesday, September 10, Oaklawn, Elkhart, 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Important information about trainings

- Both Elkhart County and St. Joseph County trainings are held at various locations. Check individual trainings for location.

- You **MUST** register for classes in advance so that we can prepare for the number attending.

First Aid (immediately following Universal Precautions training)

- Monday, August 18, JJC, South Bend
- Wednesday, September 10, Oaklawn, Elkhart

CPR

- Saturday, July 12, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m., Oaklawn, Elkhart
- Saturday, July 12, 1:00–4:00 p.m., Oaklawn, Elkhart
- Saturday, July 19, 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m., Mishawaka Public Library
- Saturday, July 19, 1:30–4:30 p.m., Mishawaka Public Library
- Saturday, August 23, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m., Oaklawn, Elkhart
- Saturday, August 23, 1:00–4:00 p.m., Oaklawn, Elkhart

Inservice classes

10–20 hours of training required each year. **Classes are 6:00–9:00 p.m. unless otherwise specified.**

Handbook Training

Cancelled until a new handbook is published.

"Pictures of Hollis Woods"

Tuesday, July 8, JJC, South Bend

Movie about one foster child's story, followed by discussion.

Pre-adoption/Permanency, Part I & II

Thursday, July 17 & 24, Oaklawn, Goshen

Information on adoption subsidies and post adoption. Required of adoptive parents.

Grief, Trauma and Loss

Tuesday, July 29, Oaklawn, Goshen

Understanding grief Issues experienced by foster children.

Medication Management and Foster Children

Tuesday, August 5, (location to be announced)

A nurse practitioner will discuss the importance of following medication guidelines.

Family Team Meetings: What Foster Parents Need to Know

Monday, August 11, JJC, South Bend

Dept. of Child Services case managers will explain what is involved in team meetings.

Coordinator's Corner

Jerica Tripp, M.S.
Team Leader, Traditional Foster Care



Jerica Tripp

Hello foster parents and Happy Fourth of July! I hope you're enjoying the warm weather and all the activities that summer brings! I'm guessing that most of your children are done with school and enjoying their free time. Hopefully, you can find time to fit in some rest and relaxation this summer as well!

I'd like to remind you of a couple of things. First of all, it is very important to call and sign up for the

trainings since we prepare paperwork and certificates beforehand. Also, sometimes there are unforeseen circumstances that cause us to move the training to another location or reschedule it. I would hate for you to drive to a training to find out it had been cancelled.

Secondly, it is likely that you will have more frequent home visits from the Department of Child Services case manager. Case managers are required to see where children sleep, check their clothing and make sure the children are getting everything they need. I am sure you all agree that we want to do everything we can to protect the children in our community.

Lastly, I would appreciate your input on training topics. It is so important that we provide you with the training you need so that you feel well prepared and supported as

a foster parent. If you have any training ideas, please email me at: jerica.tripp@oaklawn.org. I cannot schedule every recommendation I get, but I will do my very best!

Thanks again for opening up your homes to the children in our community. I have a great deal of admiration for each one of you and appreciate what you do on a daily basis. Have a wonderful summer!

Foster Parent Network-News is published monthly for foster families and the professionals who relate to them.

Please send changes of address to:

Gloria Miller Holub, editor

P.O. Box 809, Goshen, IN 46527

E-mail: info@oaklawn.org

Jerica Tripp, Team Leader, Traditional Foster Care

E-mail: jerica.tripp@oaklawn.org

Phone: (574) 533-1234, ext. 754

Toll free: 800-282-0809, ext. 754

Fax: (574) 537-2638

Address Service Requested

Important Information for
Foster Parents!

Goshen, Indiana 46527
330 Lakeview Drive
P.O. Box 809

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Foster Parent Training Registration Form

Use this form only for network training classes (those in the box on page 3). Please complete the following information about yourself, your spouse or companion (if applicable) and the training sessions you would like to attend. Fold, seal, stamp and mail to the Traditional Foster Care office.

First Participant

Name _____ Phone _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail address _____

Agency that maintains your license _____

Training topic _____

Location _____ Date(s) _____

Training topic _____

Location _____ Date(s) _____

Training topic _____

Location _____ Date(s) _____

Second Participant

Name _____ Phone _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail address _____

Agency that maintains your license _____

Training topic _____

Location _____ Date(s) _____

Training topic _____

Location _____ Date(s) _____

Training topic _____

Location _____ Date(s) _____

**Traditional Foster Care
2600 Oakland Avenue
Elkhart, IN 46517**

Place
stamp
here
