



# Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

## Dickinson County

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### IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Dickinson-Iron District Health Department Kicks off National Parenting Month

Kingsford and Iron River, Michigan, March 2016 – The Power of Parents! March is National Parenting Month and the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department states that there are important things to know in parenting.

Below are tips to promote social-emotional health among young children:

- Catch your child being good! Praise your child often for even small accomplishments like playing nicely with brothers or sisters, helping to pick up toys, waiting his/her turn, or being a good sport.
- Find ways to play with your child that you both enjoy every day. Talk with your child; tell stories, sing, and make rhymes together. It is especially important to try and reconnect for a few minutes after separations. Include some type of regular physical activity such as a walk or bike ride around the neighborhood.
- Seek ways for your child to play with other children of the same age. Make sure they are watched by a trusted adult.
- Read with your child every day as part of a special family routine. Turn off the TV before the evening meal, have conversations with your children during the meal, get baths/showers after the meal, and read books with your children in preparation for bedtime. This will help children to settle down and sleep well at the end of the day.
- Limit screen time to no more than 2 hours daily for children 2 and older. It is not recommended to have any screen time for children younger than 2 years of age. Never put a TV in a child's bedroom. Parents should watch along with older children and try to put the right spin on what their children are seeing. Young children should not be exposed to violence on TV, including on the news. TV should not become a babysitter.
- Make time for a routine that includes regular family meals when parents and children can sit and talk about their day together. Play the "high-low" game by taking turns sharing the best and not-so-good parts of the day.
- Provide regular bedtime routines to promote healthy sleep. This time of day can become an oasis of calm and togetherness in the day for parents and children.

- Model behaviors that you want to see in your child. Parents are their child's first and most important teachers, and what they do can be much more important than what they say. Be especially careful of criticizing teachers or other trusted adults in front of the child.
- Set limits for your child around safety, regard for others, and household rules and routines that are important to you. Ask others to use these with your child.
- Be consistent with limits for your child and encourage all caretaking adults to use the same rules. If you must enforce a rule, do this with supportive understanding. Don't give in, but do quickly forgive. Do not hold a grudge for past mistakes. Encourage learning from mistakes so that they do not happen again.

A Final Thought: As adults, one of the greatest things we can do for our children is to make them feel good about themselves and to equip them with a wide repertoire of positive coping strategies. They learn these strategies best when they see them modeled by the important adults in their lives.

You can also visit these websites for more information on parenting:

<https://brightfutures.aap.org/families>, [www.nrckids.org/CFOC3](http://www.nrckids.org/CFOC3) and [www.aap.org/bookstore](http://www.aap.org/bookstore).

To learn more about the Health Department's income-eligible services and programs related to parenting and raising a healthy family, please call 774-1868 or 265-9913.

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