

Challenge of Ch

The Challenge of Children Conference offers a wide variety of relevant parenting topics. While the planning coalition may sometimes suggest or seek speakers on certain topics, the content of each workshop is determined by the individual presenter.

AM Sessions: 10:30-11:45

1. Parenting Issues for Adult Children of Alcoholics

Presenter: Francie Talsma

Age Group Focus: All Ages, Parent Self Growth

Parents will reflect on their own childhood and discover how certain characteristics affect the parenting of their own children. Parents will understand their own needs and “triggers” and learn ways to de-escalate stressful or confusing situations.

2. Positive Behavioral Support (PBS) at Home

Presenters: Pam Land & Rylee Beauvais

Age Group Focus: Preschool, Elementary

The workshop will focus on how to use the Positive Behavioral Support framework in your home to teach desired behavior and use positive approaches to child discipline.

3. Family Preparedness: Protecting Your Loved Ones in an Emergency

Presenters: Jennifer Brown & Brian Highstreet

Age Group Focus: All Ages, Parent Self Growth

Disasters can occur to any one. Are you prepared? Preparedness at the community and county levels is happening everyday, but none of those efforts will succeed if you and your family are not ready. You are responsible for the health and welfare of your family in an emergency or disaster. We will provide you with tools to help you format a family preparedness plan, leading you one step closer to ensuring the safety and security of your family.

4. Working with Picky Eaters & Discovering Fun Snack Ideas

Presenter: Jinnifer P. Gibbs, MS, CFLE

Age Group Focus: Preschool, Elementary

This workshop will provide parents with a better understanding of “picky eater” behavior in young to school-age children, identify possible reasons for this behavior, and provide suggestions on how to handle “picky eater” confrontations. Fun and tempting recipes and meal-time activities will also be provided.

5. Anger in Our Kids: Identifying, Understanding & Healing the Angry Heart

Presenter: Rev. Lori Jo Schepers

Age Group Focus: All Ages

Whether it increases gradually or hits overnight, anger in kids is faced by many parents and caregivers. This workshop will increase your understanding of what causes anger in youth and provide tools for understanding and healing the angry, broken heart.

6. Creativity is Key

Presenter: Kyle Ricard, MSW

Age Group Focus: Preschool

Parents will reflect on memorable play and how to create this in today's busy world. What key elements of play can be reproduced with homemade materials and creative thinking? Join us to find out!

7. Thinking with a Line

Presenter: Susan Loughrin

Age Group Focus: Preschool, Elementary

“Thinking with a Line” prepares children for drawing, reading and writing. By combining lines into shapes, they begin to create complex structures and design. Come and experience this hands-on workshop.

8. Everyday Ways to Support your Child's Development

Presenters: Misa Watson & Marilyn Handy

Age Group Focus: Infant, Preschool

Have you ever asked “What can I do to support my child's development?” If so, please join us for more information about children's developmental milestones as well as fun and easy activity ideas to help support your child's development at home.

9. When “Love & Logic” is not Enough: Parenting Children with Attachment & Trauma Issues

Presenter: Bettye Jo Bell, MA, LLP

Age Group Focus: All Ages

When children have experienced trauma and loss in their early years, their brains are changed and their ability to respond to affection and discipline may be impaired. This can be true of children who have experienced abuse and neglect or have experienced illness and separation from a primary caregiver. This workshop will explain the phenomenon and offer strategies for dealing with the needs and behaviors of such children.

10. The Red Flags of Adolescent Sexuality

Presenter: Don LeMahieu & Anna Clawson

Age Group Focus: Middle & High Schools

Adolescent sexuality creates anxiety for many parents. This workshop will focus on sexual behaviors, feelings, and attitudes that should concern parents and are beyond the boundaries of normal adolescent sexuality. Appropriate responses and interventions will be identified and discussed.

11. No Child Left Inside: Connecting Children with Nature

Presenter: Travis Williams

Age Group Focus: All Ages

**Also Offered
PM Session**

The average child in America spends less than 25 minutes a day outdoors. Research shows that children today are lacking a connection to nature which is critical for their healthy development. Join Travis and learn how nature is an important part of making children happier, healthier, and smarter.

12. Drugs & Alcohol—Practical Prevention Tips for Parents

Presenter: Rich Campbell

Age Group Focus: Elementary, Middle & High School, College

Learn the trends in youth drug and alcohol use plus several practical steps you can take to protect your children from substance abuse and addiction. This workshop will also address how to approach a youth who may already be using drugs and alcohol.

13. Parenting with Love & Logic

Presenter: Dave Sipka

Age Group Focus: Preschool, Elementary

**Also Offered
PM Session**

Do your children push your buttons? Do you ever become so angry with your child's behaviors that you could just cry? Are you exhausted at the end of most days? Come and find out how to work with your child without breaking a sweat. You will walk away with tools you can use immediately. Prepare to laugh. Handouts provided.

14. Talking to My Tween or Teen about Dating Violence

Presenter: Lesley Coghill, LMSW

Age Group Focus: Middle & High School

Is your child dating or thinking about dating? How would you like your child to be treated in a relationship? One in four 8th and 9th graders experience dating violence. Be a part of the solution by preventing teen dating violence before it happens. Engage in an interactive workshop that offers practical tools for helping tweens and teens to develop healthy, respectful dating relationships.

15. Darkness in to Light

Angela Harwell & Breah Groen

Age Group Focus: All ages

This program is designed for parents and other caregivers with simple proactive steps to protect children from sexual abuse

16. Parenting an Adopted Child

Presenter: Kurt Ellis

Age Group Focus: All Ages

What is attachment? What is attachment disorder? Do all adopted children experience attachment disorders? The answers to these questions and many more will be answered in this workshop.

17. Preparing Children with Disabilities for Employment

Presenter: Peggy Fakler

Age Group Focus: Preschool, Elementary, Middle School

Parents may feel mixed emotions about their child with developmental disabilities growing up and going to work. Helping their child with special needs develop job skills is one of the best gifts parents can give, because it builds potential for their child's future.

18. An Introduction to Montessori Preschool

Presenter: Amy Sprik

Age Group Focus: Preschool

Join us to hear a brief description of what Montessori is, try out some of the classroom materials, and ask questions that you may have about the Montessori experience.

19. Raising Happy Children

Presenter: Christine Gockman

Age Group Focus: Elementary, Middle & High School

As a parent raising children, a goal of instilling happiness is a common one. This workshop will focus on identifying traits of happy people and discussing how adults can assist children in developing them.

20. Uno, Dos, Tres

Presenter: Tillie Cazares

Age Group Focus: Preschool, Elementary

In this workshop parents will sing songs, do take home activities and learn everyday Spanish phrases and words.

21. Avoiding Power Struggles

Presenter: David Blakeslee, BA

Age Group Focus: All Age Groups, Parent Self Growth

When young people wrestle with powerful emotions or conflicting needs, their behavior can create situations that put adults on the defensive and create power struggles. During this session, you will explore the psychological components that lead to these “collisions of the will.” You will also get tips on understanding your own needs and identify ways to de-escalate these situations.

22. Toddlers & Communication Skills – Is My Child Behind?

Presenter: Amie Stid, Early On Service Coordinator

Age Group Focus: Infant, Preschool

Come and learn about typical language development for children ages 1-3 years. We will also be discussing common reasons why some children are delayed in using speech and what parents can do at home to motivate them to talk. We will also discuss what resources are available for families who want to have their child's speech evaluated.

23. ADHD— How real is it? How do we treat it??

Presenter: Dr. Oren Mason

Age Group Focus: All Age Groups

It is hard to know what to think about ADHD with different opinions and recommendations at every turn. The science of ADHD is rapidly advancing and it is possible to separate fact from myth, changing the life trajectory of kids with ADHD. Dr. Mason treats hundreds of children and adults with ADHD; his insights and recommendations are based on extensive research and experience.

24. School & Your Special Needs Child

Presenter: Kathy Walton

Age Group Focus: Preschool, Elementary, Middle & High School

This workshop provides a brief overview of school programs, services, accommodations, and successful strategies for working with school personnel.

Children Workshops



PM Sessions: 1:15-2:30

11. No Child Left Inside: Connecting Children with Nature

See Description AM Session

13. Parenting with Love & Logic

See Description AM Session

25. Teens Perspective on Drugs & Alcohol

Presenters: Jennifer Bush, LMSW & Michelle Anguiano, LMSW, CAAC
Age Group Focus: All Ages

Discuss with a panel of teens and professionals about how parents affect their children's decision to use drugs and alcohol and what to do when the problem arises.

26. Understanding the Abandoned & Adopted Heart

Presenter: Rev. Lori Jo Schepers
Age Group Focus: All Ages

Youth who have been abandoned in some way through adoption, divorce, death, other separation have unique needs. This seminar will provide understanding, encouragement, and help for parents and caregivers of abandoned and adopted youth from a faith-based perspective.

27. Living Within your Means –The ABC's of Budgeting

Presenter: Jinnifer P. Gibbs, MS, CFLE
Age Group Focus: All Ages, Parent Self Growth

This workshop will provide parents with easy steps on creating a budget, tips on how to shop on a budget, the difference between needs and wants, and information on how to protect and maintain good credit.

28. Reading with Your Child Can Be Fun

Presenter: Melba White Newsome
Age Group Focus: Preschool

Parents and caregivers will leave with ideas and practical activities that support reading by using things found around the house. Resources for finding great books will be given. Come and have fun while we learn together.

29. Talk Early, Talk Often

Presenter: Rachel Mroz
Age Group Focus: Middle School

This workshop is designed to support parents as the primary abstinence and sexuality educators of their adolescents. In this workshop parents will develop the skills to talk with their adolescents about abstinence and sexuality.

30. Making an Informed Decision About Foster Care or Adoption

Presenters: Panel Presentation – Pathways MI
Age Group Focus: All Ages

Have you ever wondered about foster care or adoption? Come and hear about the process from beginning to end. This workshop will feature a panel of presenters including a judge, case worker, former foster care children, Children's Protective Services worker and a foster family. This breakout session will count as training hours for current foster families.

31. Stress Management & Self Care

Presenter: Tesha Post and Shyra Williams
Age Group Focus: All Ages, Parent Self Growth

Are you feeling stressed? Come to this interactive workshop to learn how to identify stressors in your life and find new ways to cope and manage. Participants will take a stress quiz, learn stress management techniques and even take part in relaxation therapy. Reduce stress and discover a healthier you!

32. Increasing Child Compliance Through Collaborative Communication

Presenter: Micheal Jansen PhD, LLP
Age Group Focus: Preschool, Elementary, Middle & High School

This workshop will focus on the use of the collaborative problem solving approaches outlined by Ross Greene, PhD to increase children's ability to be flexible, tolerate frustration, and solve problems while at the same time reducing explosive and oppositional behavior.

33. A Spanish Immersion Education

Presenter: Stacey VandenBosch
Age Group Focus: Preschool, Elementary

If you are intrigued about Spanish immersion, come and learn about how students learn a second language and how the El Puente program is making a difference in the classrooms, the community, and the world.

34. Picking Up on Clues

Presenter: Bette Naruszkiewicz
Age Group Focus: Infant, Preschool, Elementary

This workshop will focus on environmental literacy....reading what is around you. Workshop participants will receive a take home book as well.

35. Ready or Not????? Kindergarten Readiness

Presenter: Kathy Peppin
Age Group Focus: Infant, Preschool

Being ready for kindergarten is much more than knowing the ABCs. Find out the expectations of today's kindergarten and take home suggestions for activities that parents and caregivers can do throughout the year to help their child prepare and be successful in the beginning journey.....KINDERGARTEN!

36. Grieving Children – Grieving Teens

Presenter: Kathy Miedema
Age Group Focus: All Ages

This workshop educates about normal and abnormal grief, complicators of grief, signs and symptoms of grief, traumatic grief, and healthy coping tools for healing.

37. How Media Targets Your Children

Presenter: Jeff Smith
Age Group Focus: All Ages

Children are exposed to an average six hours of screen time every day, with media messages about violence, consumerism, hyper-sexuality, nutrition, and race and gender representation. This session is designed to help parents understand how media influences children, the techniques they use and how we can combat these influences in our homes, schools, and communities.

38. Having Fun with Music

Presenter: Joan Meeusen & Lynn Katt
Age Group Focus: Preschool

In this workshop parents and caregivers will be learning and engaging in movement and music activities. Learn how language, literacy, and math, as well as physical and cognitive development are supported.

39. Positive Parenting Strategies

Presenter: Ann Heerde
Age Group Focus: Preschool, Elementary, Middle School

This workshop will provide effective strategies for parenting. Come learn communication strategies and ways to encourage your children in order to increase compliance in your home.

40. Kinship Group – Relatives Taking Care of Relatives

Presenter: Natasha Ybarra
Age Group Focus: Parent Self Growth

Raising a grandchild or relative can be a joy as well as a challenge. Grandparents or other caregivers that take on a parenting role often face legal issues, financial concerns, strong emotions, and major life changes. This group offers educational information, knowledge and support for its members.

41. Living with Autism

Presenter: Elizabeth VanderWege
Age Group Focus: Infant, Preschool, Elementary

Was your son or daughter recently diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder? Do you have questions about what that means? In this workshop parents and other caregivers will participate in activities to help them understand autism more and learn about strategies they can use at home.

42. Protecting Your Child from Lead

Presenter: Tressa Duncan
Age Group Focus: Infant, Preschool

In this workshop parents will learn to identify possible lead sources as well as lead's link to learning disabilities, aggressive behaviors, and violent crimes. Prevention techniques and resources will be given.

43. Essential IEP Meeting Skills

Presenters: Wanda Joseph & Connie Corriveau
Age Group Focus: All Ages

Learning collaborative communication and conflict resolution techniques can make parents, educators, and service providers more effective in advocating for special education students.

44. Enjoying Your Teenager

Presenter Kathy Walton
Age Group Focus: Middle & High School

Participants will learn about adolescent independence, while maintaining close family ties. We will discuss positive communication skills and family activities, appropriate discipline, and ways to help teens choose positive future goals.

45. Children of Domestic Violence

Presenter: Beth Larsen
Age Group Focus: All Ages

Do you know a child who has witnessed or experienced physical or emotional abuse in their home? Does this child act out, struggle with school, or withdraw socially? Children who witness domestic violence may display a wide range of behaviors that impact their daily functioning. This workshop will help parents/caregivers understand the impact of domestic violence and learn how to recognize the signs that a child may have experienced trauma.

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May 14

