

America at War: Helping Children Cope

By Hazel Jackson • County Extension Agent for Family & Consumer Sciences

Now that America is at war against Iraq, an edge of anxiety and uncertainty pervades our nation, and children are quick to pick up on the resulting tensions and concerns. With the constant threat of terrorism since the tragedy of September 11, 2001, most parents have had practice in helping their youngsters cope with violence, confusion, and uncertainty. As your child's first and most important teacher, recognize that this is another "teachable moment," albeit a difficult one. Here are a few suggestions that you may find helpful.

All children and their particular circumstances are unique; therefore, it's important that we sensitively respond to the individual needs of each child. While a few children may not seem particularly bothered by this war, others may experience a range of emotions including fear, worry, doubt, confusion, sadness, anger, and guilt. Every youngster will benefit from an extra dose of adult sensitivity, wisdom, and love during this time of complicated international strife. Keep family routines uninterrupted and enjoy your usual times of family fun.

In a way that is appropriate to your child's needs and level of development, be there when he needs a hug or seems troubled by fears. Be generous with heartfelt smiles and affectionate touches. Your caring attention and physical touch will reassure him and help him feel safe in expressing all his feelings and thoughts.

Observe carefully and listen attentively for clues from your child about her thoughts and feelings. Her tone of voice, body posture, facial expression, indirect questions, or comments may help you out. Younger children might express their concerns in behaviors such as withdrawal, clinging, or irritability, rather than words.

Because of limited language ability, they may benefit from drawing pictures or acting out their worries with toys. A sensitive adult might use an open-ended question, such as, "Would you like to tell me about your picture?" to gain insight into a younger child's thoughts.

Older children are likely to state opinions or ask questions about the war. In addition to anxieties, they may display qualities such as pride, confidence, faith, and compassion for all those killed and injured during the conflict. They may also want to affect the situation by

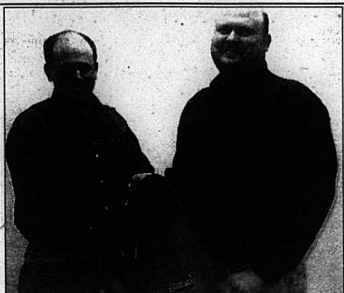
helping out—a healthy response that should be appropriately encouraged. This might involve reaching out to victims or military personnel by sending gifts or monetary aid, writing letters, saying prayers, or offering other forms of support. Younger brothers and sisters might also ask to participate. Encourage such gestures; they foster a healthy sense of control and compassion while aiding children in working through their feelings.

According to Purdue University's Dr. Judith Meyers-Walls, media images of troops deploying for war can be confusing to young, non-military children. When they observe other children saying goodbye to family members, they may become anxious, thinking the same thing may happen to them. "It was a common misunderstanding in the Persian Gulf War," says Meyers-Walls, "and the same problem is happening today." As a parent, be on the lookout for such confusion and clear it up.

In a way that is appropriate to the developmental level of your child, feel free to share your personal viewpoints about the war. It's okay to let children know that you find a situation frightening or disturbing. Be honest and realistic. You cannot guarantee that the violence will be confined to Iraq. The war could spark other international conflicts and terrorism may become more prevalent on American soil. Strive to find a balance between helping a child feel safe and acknowledging the existence of danger and evil. Your honesty opens lines of communication that will help your child work through her own thoughts and emotions.

Avoid talking unnecessarily about war or other acts of violence in a young child's presence. Unnecessary exposure to televised coverage of such events is also harmful. Why give a child an overdose of information that would likely promote anxiety?

Remain calm and in control. Children react strongly to the feelings of parents, caregivers, and teachers. Even very young children pick up on adult uncertainty, helplessness, sadness, and anger. You cannot hide your feelings, but you can rise to the occasion and exercise your innate courage and strength. The little ones in your care, and older children, too, are depending upon you for stability in a time of uncertainty.



Tim Mink, vice-president of the Rockcastle Cattlemen's Association, presented Geoff McGuire with a Kentucky Cattlemen's jacket at the annual Cattlemen's Banquet. Geoff was recognized for his many years of service to the local Cattlemen's Association as secretary/treasurer.

"Love Them. Protect Them. Immunize them" National Infant Immunization Week is April 13-19

Immunizing is one of the most effective ways of protecting your children against disease and one of the most important ways you can protect your child's health. Since the introduction of vaccines, the level of vaccine-preventable disease has been reduced by more than 99%.

Babies need vaccinations to protect against several dangerous diseases: Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Chickenpox, Hepatitis B and Hib Meningitis. Each year, children who are not fully protected against these diseases become sick, disabled or die. A series of vaccines by the age of 2 can protect against these diseases and give them a healthy start in life. This requires multiple doses of vaccines given in about five visits to a health

care provider.

The week of April 13-19, 2003 has been declared National Infant Immunization Week. This is a good time to focus on the importance of getting your children immunized, not only to protect the individual child, but also to protect the health of the entire community. The more children who are immune to these preventable childhood illnesses, the less risk there is for those in the community who may be vulnerable to disease—from the very young to the very old—those with weakened immune systems, those without access to immunization services and those who have not been vaccinated—either by choice or because of medical reasons.

Don't Wait—Vaccinate!!

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Church News

Corinth Baptist Church

Easter Musical Drama
Corinth Baptist Church will be presenting the Easter Musical Drama "Behold The Lamb" April 18 at 7 p.m., April 19 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. and Easter Sunday, April 20 at 7 p.m. Nursery will be provided. For more information, please contact the church at 606-864-5440.

Special Singing at

Mt. Vernon Nazarene
Mt. Vernon Nazarene Church, 40 Fair St. in Mt. Vernon, will have a special singing April 13th, featuring Blood Bought. Song service will begin at 11 a.m. and lunch will follow in the fellowship hall of the church. Join us for this special service.

Revival at Pine Hill

Revival will be held at Pine Hill Baptist Church April 13-16 at 7 p.m. Evangelist will be Roy Faulkner. Pastor David Sargent and congregation invite everyone to attend.

Good Friday Service

The Rockcastle Ministerial Association is sponsoring a Good Friday Service on Friday, April 18, at 7 p.m. at the Rockcastle High School Auditorium. Mike Bryant, pastor of Faith of Faith Harvest's Worship Band will lead the worship.

Revival at New Hope

Revival services will be held at New Hope Baptist Church the week of April 14 at 7 p.m. each evening. Evangelist will be Rick Holt. Joe

Vanwinkle, pastor, and congregation invite everyone to attend.

Gospel Meeting at Mt. Zion
Mt. Zion Church of Christ, located on Hwy. 39, will be holding a gospel meeting April 21 thru April 25 at 7 each evening. Speaker will be Wilbur Bass. Everyone welcome.

Palm Sunday Youth Service

Please join us on Sunday, April 13 at 11 a.m. for our Palm Sunday Youth Service. The youth will present a play, "The Last Supper." This will be a great inspirational service, presented by our next generation. Hope to see you there. In the Love of Christ.

Pine Hill Holiness Singing

The Dalton Gang from Nashville, Tenn. will be at Pine Hill Holiness Church Thursday night, April 10 at 7:30. Pastor Allen Hensley and congregation invite everyone.

McNew Chapel Baptist

Benefit Singing

There will be a Benefit Singing April 15 at 7 p.m. for the Robert Burke family. Featured will be the Gabbard family from Jackson Co. and other singers. Pastor Eugene Gentry urges everyone to come out and help with this special cause.

Crossroads Presents

Easter Drama

Crossroads Assembly of God will present "Strike Down the Shepherd," an Easter Drama Sunday, April 13 at 11 a.m. Pastor Nathaniel Fugate and congregation invite everyone to attend.

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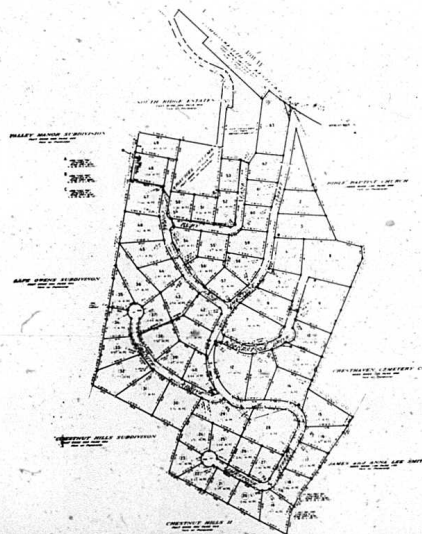


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