



# FAMILY RESOURCE SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

*Columbine Elementary School*

*November-December 2007*

*... building family strengths*

## TEACH YOUR CHILDREN HOW TO SHOP WISELY

Advertisements and marketing messages reach young consumers through a variety of vehicles—television, radio, magazines, music, the Internet, etc.—in many different venues, including homes, schools, child-care settings, grocery stores, shopping malls, theaters, sporting events, and airports. It is important for parents to be aware of how ads and marketing messages influence their families' habits.

Food and beverage marketing, among other factors, has been found to influence the preferences and purchase requests of children ages 2 to 11, in addition to influencing their short-term consumption patterns. Moreover, the foods being marketed to children and youth are not in line with recommended healthful diets. "Food and beverage advertising on television influences children ages 2–11 years to prefer and purchase high-calorie and low-nutrient foods and beverages," states the Institute of Medicine's *Food Marketing to Children and Youth: Threat or Opportunity?* report overview.

Parents need to educate their children about the way advertising may influence their purchases. According to the Institute of Medicine, "Of the more than \$200 billion children and youth collectively spend annually, the top four leading items children ages 8–12 years select, without parental permission, are high-calorie and low-nutrient foods and beverages." In addition, "Foods and beverages, particularly candy, carbonated soft drinks, and salty snacks or chips, were ranked among the top leading items that teens ages 13–17 years old purchase with their own money." By educating your children about nutrition and advertising techniques, however, you can act as counterinfluence on your children's purchasing decisions.

### Talk to Your Kids

Kids, especially young kids, don't yet understand the persuasive intent behind advertisements. As a parent, it's your job to help your children learn how ads try to affect the choices they make in their daily lives. The prevalence of ads means there are many opportunities to talk about this. When watching television together or listening to the radio in the car, ask your children about the products in the ads and how the ads are persuading the audience to buy that particular brand. When at the store, take a look at packaging and the placement of different items and discuss how this may make you notice some brands over others.

### Make a List

To cut down on impulse purchases and the "nag factor" from your kids, make a list before you head out to the supermarket. If your children are along for the trip, make sure they have eaten before you shop, and make it clear to them before you enter the store that you are buying only the items on your list, and only certain brands that you know to be healthier options. Once in the store, give your children portions of the list and have them help you find the items.

By sharing with your children the importance of thinking about what you are buying and why, you can help them learn to make healthy decisions for themselves in the future.

## 'TIS THE SEASON

Whether you like it or not, whether you are ready or not, winter is right around the corner. Regardless of your family's traditions, one thing this time of the year brings us all is a change in the weather.

Colder weather equals higher heating costs and for some families that means a strain on their budget. There are many things that you can do to save money on energy costs. Here are a few tips:

- Replace old light bulbs with energy efficient ones (such as compact fluorescents); turn off all lights when leaving a room
- Use cold water for your laundry; line dry clothes as possible
- Set your thermostat as low as possible when you are at home; wear layers to keep warm
- Lower your thermostat at 3 degrees when you leave your house for extended periods of time
- Keep your furnace filters and heat registers free of dust, dirt and blockage

If you are still worried about covering your heating bill this winter, you can apply for the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) at 303- 678-6097 by April 30, 2008. More information about LEAP and other energy saving tips are accessible by calling 1-866-432-8435.

## KEEPING YOURSELF WARM THIS WINTER

Keeping yourself warm this winter is just as important as keeping your house warm. When your body is constantly cold, you raise the risk of coming down with winter colds and flu as well as it can aggravate respiratory conditions such as asthma.

Wearing layers keeps you warm and comfortable inside the house as well as outside. When inside, wear a long sleeve shirt underneath your clothes or a sweat shirt over top that you can take off if you feel too warm.

When going outside, keep in mind that body heat that keeps you warm, escapes from your head so wear a hat. Always wear layers under your coat and wear a scarf to help keep body heat from escaping.

If wearing layers seems cumbersome, look for wool, cotton and fleecy fabrics that are thin and light, but much warmer than other materials.

These are a few simple things you can do to take care of yourself and your finances this winter. If you'd like more ideas, Bea Blum, our FRS therapist offering a parent group on Healthy Winter Habits. Please call her at 303.443.0792 for more information or to sign up for the group.

## FRS WELCOMES NEW PROGRAM ASSISTANT

Please join FRS in welcoming our new program assistant, Gerard Dillehay. Gerard speaks Spanish fluently and also works as a personal Spanish tutor. He will work mostly with the after school program, but also with some other FRS projects. Welcome!