To access links to any of the articles referenced in the newsletter, visit the electronic version of our newsletter on our website or scan this QR code:

"Who you are is defined by the next decision you make, not the last one."
Rachel Hollis
Girl, Stop Apologizing

Handwashing

is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from getting sick. Wash:

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before and after eating food
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage

How to wash your hands the right way:

- Wet your hands with clean, running water, turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds (the time it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol to clean your hands. Learn more at: https://tinyurl.com/ynsptyca

Also, remember to cover your coughs and sneezes, clean and disinfect surfaces and toys, and stay home when you are sick to protect others!

What is RSV? RSV stands for Respiratory Syncytial Virus. It is a common respiratory virus that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms that most people recover from in a week or two. RSV can be serious for infants and may lead to bronchiolitis (inflammation of the small airways in the lungs) or pneumonia (infection of the lungs). Early signs include irritability, runny nose, decrease in appetite or activity, and/or cough that may progress to wheezing or difficulty breathing. Fever may not always occur with RSV infections.

What is Influenza? Is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs, which are part of the respiratory system. Although it is often shortened to "the flu" it is not the same as a stomach virus that causes diarrhea and vomiting. Influenza symptoms may include: fever, muscle aches, chills and sweats, headache, dry persistent cough, shortness of breath, tiredness, runny or stuffy nose, sore throat.

Talk to your child's healthcare provider about which signs and symptoms you should bring your child in to be seen. Some of those symptoms may include: high fever, rapid or difficult breathing, extreme irritability, decreased urination, or other symptoms that are out of the ordinary.

MINDFUL MINUTE

Dragon Breathing:
a fun way to get kids to practice slow, deep breathing.

1. Take a deep breath in, filling your belly and chest.
2. "Breath out your fire" with a long, slow exhale.

For a craft version of dragon breathing, visit:
https://tinyurl.com/y34wmwzs

📅 A look at December Holidays

- **Hanukkah: is an eight-day joyous Jewish celebration that falls on Dec 19 evening through Dec 26 evening this year. It includes traditions like lighting of the menorah each evening, daily reading of Scripture, almsgiving, singing of a special hymn, as well as other nonreligious customs such as eating treats fried in oil, games, and gifts to children.**
- **Christmas: originated as a Christian celebration for the birth of Jesus on Dec 25. It has also become a secular family holiday over the years, observed by Christians and non-Christians alike, marked by exchange of gifts.**
- **Kwanzaa: is an African-American celebration from Dec 26 to Jan 1. The week long celebration may include songs, dances, storytelling and a large feast on Dec 31 called Karamu, that all honor their heritage.**

Milestones Early Learning Scholarships

- Early Learning Scholarships provide financial assistance to low income families to support the enrollment of their young children in high quality early childhood programs (childcare or preschool. Families must be at or below 185% of federal guidelines or receive a type of public assistance. Other eligibility is listed online at https://www.milestonesmn.org/early-learning-scholarships. Contact Mindy at 320-251-5081 ext 225 or mhortsch@milestonesmn.org for more information.
- Milestones also has a new program that prioritizes scholarships to children who have a parent, primary caregiver, or legal guardian who is either currently or had past time in jail, prison or detention center. Contact Carly at 320-251-5081 or cheinen@milestonesmn.org for more information.

Child-Led Play

Every day for at least five minutes, engage your child in a child-led play session. This special time gives young children a chance to interact with you without the stress of having to follow directions. It can build attachment, provide positive attention, and reinforce appropriate behaviors. Researchers developed the acronym PRIDE to help parents remember the characteristics of this special time together:

- Praise: be specific
- Reflect: repeat what they said, reflect their emotion
- Imitate: copy what they're doing, join in parallel play
- Describe: what your child is doing or what you see
- Enthusiasm: give authentic verbal and non-verbal responses

Read more or listen at NPR News: https://tinyurl.com/y9vff83s

First Steps Billboards: Keep an eye out for our new billboards across central MN now through the end of 2022. They are located in Sauk Rapids off Benton Drive, SE St. Cloud off Hwy 10, Sauk Centre off of I-94, and Clearwater off of I-94. We would love to hear from you whenever you see the billboards! Take our quick survey here: https://tinyurl.com/ycxnpf8z

WASH YOUR HANDS!

1 Wet

2 Get Soap

Hands that look clean can still have icky germs!

3 Scrub

4 Rinse

5 Dry

SOAP