

# Tender Hearts Child Therapy Center



## Monthly Newsletter



*Specializing in Child, Adolescent & Family Counseling*

### Could it be ADHD?

Everyone has probably been there at one point or another. You come home from a hard day at work. You're tired. You still have dinner to cook, homework to help with, and laundry to do.

Then your kids burst through the door—jumping on the furniture, shouting at each other, throwing their bags on the floor. You try to get them to sit down to do their homework. They can't focus. They quickly lose attention. You want to pull your hair out—fighting with them to complete even the simplest of assignments. You secretly curse the teacher for sending home so much homework. You wonder, is this normal? Do my children have ADHD?

Hyperactivity and inattention are common traits for many children, and it doesn't necessarily mean they have ADHD. Paula Johnston gives you an easy guide to help determine if your child has ADHD or is just going through a normal childhood phase.

Also, in this edition, Teri Kluesner has written an excellent article about the impact of technology on our children. Do you ever feel guilty for plugging your kids in to video games just to get some peace and quiet? Teri helps ease parents' guilt and gives some suggestions of things to look for to protect your kids from the effects of too much technology!

*If you haven't already signed up for our Newsletter, just click [Tender Hearts Monthly Newsletter](#) to sign up!*



### March

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#### *Location*

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# Stronger Families Campaign



Spring is FINALLY on its way and it is time to shed our winter clothes and get out and enjoy some family friendly outside activities! There are so many great things about spring- singing birds, sunshine, and enjoying the outdoors. Below are some family fun activities to help get you started:

- Take a nature walk
- Take a walk in the sunshine
- Blow bubbles
- Dance outside in the rain
- Plant a flower garden
- Draw with sidewalk chalk
- Play hopscotch
- Fly a kite

Send us a picture of your favorite springtime activity for a chance to win a gift certificate to a local business!

(Send answers to [TenderHearts@TenderHeartsChildTherapyCenter.com](mailto:TenderHearts@TenderHeartsChildTherapyCenter.com). Contest ends **March 31st, 2014**. The winner will be announced in our April Newsletter so be sure to sign up to see if your entry is the big winner.)

## How does the Stronger Families Campaign Monthly Contest Work?

As you know, we are 100% committed to helping Families in our area build **Stronger Relationships**. Each month, we will introduce a new, Family Friendly Contest to promote and encourage family involvement and family connectedness. And, even better, the **Monthly Contest Winner** will receive a Gift Certificate to a local business that offers fun, family friendly activities or products. Our Counselors will all vote each month for the winner. What a combination! **Supporting Stronger Families and Local Community Businesses at the same time!**



# Tender Hearts Happenings

## Get Ready to Get Messy!

Tender Hearts is proud to be a  
sponsor of  
Messy Morning!

**When: Saturday, April 5, 2014  
10am-1pm**


**Where: Show-Me Center**

Come Join us for a morning of  
creative, messy family fun!

Activities for all ages of kids—even a  
Toddlers Only area this year!

**Need a break from the  
chaos of the main floor?**

University Autism Center  
is sponsoring a Sensory Room  
with less crowds and quieter space!



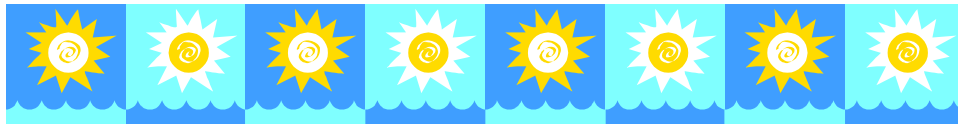
**Happy  
Birthday!  
Marcia Smith**



**Congratulations,  
Melissa Vogelsang!**

**March 1<sup>st</sup> marks her 1  
year anniversary with  
Tender Hearts**

# Family Friendly Events



1. 2nd Annual Cousin Carl Farm Show. March 7-8, 2014, 9:00am-5:00pm. An AG Expo Featuring Max Armstrong, "the voice of American agriculture." The expo includes a tractor parade, antique tractor pull & display, farm toy show, and great food. The event will be located at Arena Park in Cape Girardeau. Contact: 573-334-7800. This is for all ages and cost is free.
2. Let's LEGO! at Cape Girardeau Public Library. March 19, 2014, 4:00-5:00pm. This is a monthly LEGO building program with different challenges each month. This month's challenge: take only 31 specific pieces of LEGO and create something unique! This is for children ages 5-12 and the cost is free.
3. Cape West 14 Cine Sensory Saturday. Saturday, March 22, 2014, showing *The Lego Movie*. Showtime is at 10:00am. Cost is just \$5 for adults & children!  
Sensory Saturday Includes:
  - ☞ Moderately dimmed lighting
  - ☞ Lowered volume
  - ☞ Comfortable temperature
  - ☞ Guests are welcome to move around, sing, dance, and be themselves



## **ADHD: What does it really look like?**

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, more commonly known as ADHD, is one of the most common childhood disorders and can continue through adolescence and adulthood. Scientists are not sure what causes ADHD, although many studies suggest that genes play a large role. In addition to genetics, possible environmental factors, nutrition, and the social environment might contribute to ADHD. Many children have energy – more energy than most adults could dream of having. So how do we know which children fall into the ADHD category, and which children are simply in a developmentally energetic and attention-seeking stage?

The key behaviors of ADHD are inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. While it is normal for all children to be inattentive, hyperactive, or impulsive sometimes, for children with ADHD, these behaviors are more severe and occur more often.

Some things to look for are:

- Being easily distracted, forgetful, or missing items
- Having difficulty focusing on one thing
- Becoming bored easily, unless it is an activity they enjoy
- Trouble turning in or completing homework assignments, often losing things needed to complete the assignment
- Struggle to follow instructions
- Struggle to sit still, fidgety, squirmy
- Talk nonstop
- Have trouble playing or completing tasks quietly
- Very impatient
- Trouble waiting their turn
- Often interrupts others

Currently available treatments focus on reducing the symptoms of ADHD and improving functioning. Therapy can address and relieve many of the major symptoms of ADHD, but there is no cure. With treatment, most children with ADHD can be successful in school and lead productive lives. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, or CBT, is a therapeutic approach proven to be successful in the treatment of ADHD. CBT teaches your child about the link between thoughts and feelings and behaviors. CBT addresses ADHD by working to improve your child's behavior through praise and rewards that motivate them to calm down enough to cope with school or other challenges. This proven approach is one Tender Hearts Therapists utilize to assess and treat children with ADHD.

~ Paula Johnston, MA, LPC, NCC

## **Technology and Its Impact on Our Children**

Did you know the first video game console was sold in 1972? In just 42 short years, the world of technology has exploded with invention and our homes have changed from electronic devices being a luxury to computers, tablets, multiple gaming systems, hand held devices and cell phones. It is hard to imagine what life would be like without these conveniences. Yet, believe it or not, people did survive for centuries without them.



As electronic devices have become increasingly affordable and available, usage has increased. Recent statistics have shown, elementary and middle school girls average 5.5 hours a week playing video games. For boys, it is 13 hours a week. Combined with television and other electronic devices, it is said the average school child spends 37 hours in front of an electronic screen (in other words, an average on 7.5 hours a day). It is known our brains are changeable structures that evolve with every stimulus received. Much research has been done on how video gaming and the use of these devices affects us and the impact both positive and negative for children.

So let's talk about the good news first. Research has suggested some of the positive effects of video gaming include:

- Improving ability to follow instructions, problem solving and logic skills
- Improving hand eye coordination, fine motor and spatial skills
- Developing reading and math skills
- Encouraging perseverance
- Providing opportunities to practice reasoning, quick thinking and decision making skills
- Improving situational awareness, memory and concentration including the ability to rapidly recall visual information
- Opportunities to practice planning, resource management, logistics and multitasking skills
- Opportunities for teamwork and cooperation

### *The bad news?*

- Recent studies have shown that the brain areas which respond to video game stimuli in patients with on line gaming addictions are similar to those that respond to drug and alcohol addiction. In other words, video games can be addictive.
- There is an association between increased risk factors for health issues and video gaming. Some of those health risks include obesity, postural, muscular and skeletal disorders like carpal tunnel syndrome and tendonitis, vision problem, sleep impairment and video induced seizures.
- An increased amount of time playing video games is associated with poorer academic performance.
- Playing violent games is associated with increased risk of aggression and desensitization to violence.
- Excessive game playing can result in increased social isolation, decreased activity level and less time for play, reading, sports and family interaction.
- Some games teach wrong values such as those which reward violent behavior, vengeance and aggression.
- Reality and fantasy often become confused.

*What do parents need to know?*

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children under 2 not have exposure to television or video gaming and that school age children not spend more than 1-2 hours a day in front of electronic screens. That means 14 hours a week including: TV, DVDs , video games and cell phones.

*What can you do?*

- Decide what games are acceptable in your home and explain why you think a particular game may be bad for your child.
- Check the video game's rating before you buy and read reviews of the game available on line to know more about it. Talk to your child about the games they are playing and why they enjoy them.
- Establish rules about what games are acceptable and how much time you will allow them to be played.
- Supervise video gaming activity. Do not allow video game equipment in bedrooms. Keep them in areas you can easily monitor.
- Pick games that require a player to come up with strategies and make decisions.
- Look for games that involve multiple players to encourage group play and interaction.
- Encourage a healthy lifestyle and lead by example. Children learn what they see.
- Encourage a variety of activities that includes reading, exercise and interaction with other children and family.
- Monitor the effects of video games on your child. Limit gaming activity when your child is showing increased signs of aggression, getting lower grades, becoming sedentary and avoiding interactive activities or is becoming agitated and anxious when they can't play a game or has difficulty stopping play.

~ Teri Kluesner, MSW, LCSW