



## Quality Spotlight - Childhood Wellness

HopeHealth's quality focus this month is childhood wellness. Below, read about picky eating and teaching children valuable coping mechanisms.

### Strategies to Stop the Food Fights with Your Child

**Camille Montes-Ramos**  
MD

Many parents worry their kids don't eat enough, eat too much, or are too picky with food choices. Fighting with kids about food is a common occurrence in the United States, and many parents ask for strategies to help feed their child without arguments. The first step is to understand the delineation of roles: it is the parent's responsibility to feed, and it is the child's responsibility to eat.



Parents' basic responsibilities are to provide proper food choices and develop a structure for meals and snacks. Other responsibilities include making eating times pleasant without guilt, shame, or pressure around eating, guiding children on how to act at meals, and letting each child grow into the body that is right for him or her, without expecting them to look a certain way.

Kids thrive with structure, so it is vital to establish a consistent schedule with food choices available for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks. While meal times may change depending on the season, children learn how to regulate food intake when they know food will be available at certain times.

When planning meals and snacks, start with a nutritious balance of food including protein (poultry, seafood, eggs, cheese, and beans), carbohydrates (milk, grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables), and healthy fats (nuts, seeds, avocados, and olive oil). Once basic nutrition guidelines are met, add foods that may not be considered "healthy" but are a daily part of our culture such as sweets and crunchy snack foods. If kids have after-school activities, make sure to pack or have extra food available for snacks.

Since children learn and watch their parents' eating habits, being a positive role model is important. A child is more likely to try an unfamiliar food if they watch a parent eat it first. If a parent restricts food or diets, this can influence a child to restrict or not trust food. Take time to examine your relationship with food and

learn to enjoy balance, variety, and moderation. Remember not to judge food as good or bad or make negative comments about weight and bodies.

Analyze how much you pressure your child about eating. Any pressure put on children to eat more or less, or to eat or avoid certain foods will backfire. Food pressure can make kids feel something is wrong with them or the food, can increase or decrease cravings for food, can lead to emotional eating or refusal to eat, and can also blunt hunger and fullness cues.

Learning to trust your child to eat may sound counterintuitive and it takes time to see change. Giving a child the freedom to make their own choices of what to eat from the foods you provide helps them develop a healthy relationship with food. Kids may eat too much or too little or too much “junk” at times, and that is okay. Keep providing balance and variety at consistent times and learn to stay calm. For example, if a child eats very little and then five minutes after the meal asks for ice cream, let them know a snack will be available soon. Expect tantrums when new rules are made, and hold strong to the routine.

Children are responsible for eating and need exposure to many food options with time to explore different tastes and textures. Food is new to young kids, and their brains are rapidly changing – like any habit, this takes time to learn. Kids, like adults, may eat more on some days and less on other days and may refuse a food they ate yesterday. With a wide variety of nutritious food and a schedule of meals and snacks, a child will learn to eat enough to grow properly for their body, enjoy food and the eating experience, and learn to behave at the table. This means the parents can enjoy the meal too!

It takes patience and self-control for a parent not to control their child’s intake but it means freedom for the kids to learn more about food and eating on their own terms. It is also important not to use food as a reward such as “you can have dessert if you eat your vegetables.” This pressure encourages increased cravings for dessert foods, increased avoidance of the food you want them to eat, and sneaking food. Ideas to get kids more interested in food choices include encouraging their help in the kitchen, exploring produce in grocery stores and farmer’s markets, growing veggies or fruits at home, and picking produce at a farm.

Eating meals together strengthens family bonds and improves mental health. Plan to have at least three meals a week when the family sits down together without screens and can catch up with each other. Developing traditions such as Meatless Monday, Taco Tuesday, Whatever Wednesday, Stir Fry Thursday, or Pasta Friday is an easy ritual kids look forward to. Make sure to keep hot topics off the table for a pleasurable experience for everyone.

For picky eaters, offer foods in different ways such as broccoli served raw with dip, cooked with cheese sauce, or added to a stir fry. It can take 15-20 exposures before a child will even taste a food. Parents do not need to prepare a different meal for a child. Aim to serve at least one to two items at meals and snacks you know they will eat. If they refuse all food, have one or two alternate options such as cereal or a sandwich.

Children grow at their own rate. Keep up with your child’s growth chart at pediatrician visits. As long as they are growing appropriately, it is not a cause for concern. If a child rapidly loses or gains weight, talk to your provider about options to help your child get back on track. Stay away from talking about weight with your child and focus on health.

When starting the process of change, take it slow and build habits over time. A first step can be to establish consistent meal times or add more produce to meals and snacks. Stay patient even when you may think nothing is changing or that your kid is eating too much or too little. The long-term goal for our children is for them to grow and develop a healthy relationship with food that lasts a lifetime.

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## Teaching Your Kids to Cope

*Nurture resilience against anxiety in your children with these simple tips.*



The CDC reports that anxiety in children is on the rise. From 2016-2019, 9.4% of children aged 3-17 years received an anxiety diagnosis. This percentage shows an increase when compared to reports from previous years of 5.5% in 2007 and 6.4% in 2011-2012 for children aged 6-17 years.

The last three years have been tremendously stressful and traumatic for everyone, and this is especially true for families with school-aged children. In addition to managing common stressors like balancing work with family and paying the bills, parents have faced the extraordinary challenge of navigating the COVID-19 global pandemic, virtual learning, increased economic stress, growing violence in schools, and foreign conflict.

Parents are overwhelmed, and it is no surprise that their fears and anxieties are felt by their children too. Routines have been disrupted, plans and celebrations were postponed, and uncertainty has become the norm for many. But by regularly practicing a few positive coping strategies, parents can foster resilience and promote self-regulation to combat anxiety at home and in school.

Set your children up for success by adopting these coping strategies for managing stress and reducing anxiety:

**Talk to Your Kids** - While this might seem like an obvious solution for staying involved with your children, some parents find it hard to maintain an open dialogue for a number of reasons. Whether your children become guarded about their troubles, such as struggles with academics or dealing with teasing or bullying, they feel uncomfortable talking about their feelings, or they lack the language or insight into their emotions to talk openly, you can help by continuing to engage your children and reassure them that you are available to talk. Most importantly, use active listening skills by giving them all your attention, avoiding interruptions, and repeating back what you understand to show that you are listening and care about what is being said. You can use this time to process with your children and problem solve together.

Making a habit of talking to your children and staying involved will build trust and encourage them to be open and honest with you when they are struggling with critical issues rather than keeping secrets or trying to cope on their own.

**Provide Predictability with Structure** - Uncertainty can be a significant source of stress for both adults and children. Children lack the control that adults have, so improving predictability can help reduce their stress. Create regular routines to help foster self-regulation and social development in your kids. Be consistent with rules, set and hold boundaries, and strive to keep unchanging bedtime schedules and mealtimes.

**Modeling** - Another way parents foster resilience and healthy coping is by modeling those behaviors for their children. It is not simply enough to talk the talk, you must show children through your own behaviors how to deal with disappointment, anxiety, and fear. If you struggle to hold it together when things go wrong, you can't expect your children to stay calm and collected. By talking openly about your anxieties and other emotions, you normalize healthy discussion around feelings and show children that it is safe to open up. You can follow this up by sharing and showing how you manage stress by going for a walk (exercise), talking to a friend or your parents, or taking a break and eating a healthy snack with your child.

**Eliminating Unhealthy Stressors** - Identify and limit unhealthy behaviors and habits that may contribute to increased anxiety and stress for your kids, such as consuming caffeine before bed, inactivity, or spending too much time on their phone, especially on social media.

If your children complain about teasing or bullying at school, encourage them to resolve it themselves in a positive manner, but if it continues, don't be afraid to schedule a meeting to address it with the school.



By teaching these stress-management strategies, you can foster confidence and instill invaluable skills that can serve your children for life. For additional resources, check out behavioral health offerings at HopeHealth.

## Welcoming New Providers

Join us in welcoming our newest providers!



**John Browning, MD**  
OB/GYN  
HopeHealth Medical Plaza



**S.M. Ravi Prakash, DMD, MDS, BDS**  
Dentist  
HopeHealth Medical Plaza

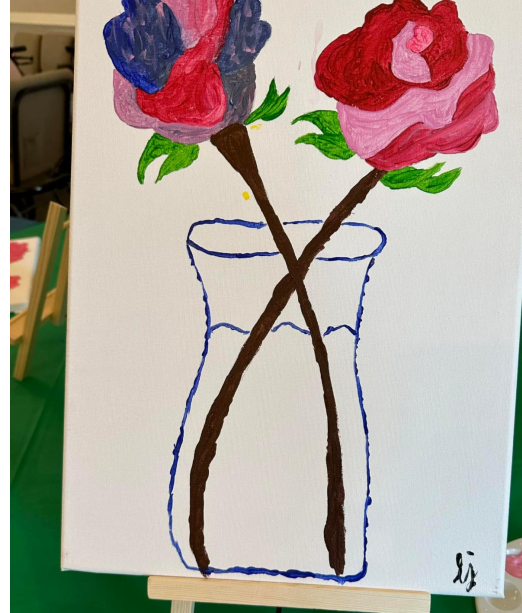


**Tara Trammell, LPC**  
Licensed Behavioral Health Counselor  
HopeHealth in Manning



**Mary Nutter, MD**  
Physician  
HopeHealth in Manning

## Upcoming Seniors with Hope Events



### **Seniors with Hope at Bethea**

**August 3, 2-3:30 PM**  
157 Home Avenue, Darlington

### **Seniors with Hope at the Medical Plaza**

**August 10, 2-3:30 PM**  
360 N. Irby Street, Florence

### **Seniors with Hope in Kingstree**

**August 17, 2-3:30 PM**  
520 Thurgood Marshall Hwy, Kingstree  
Please wear a mask.

Seniors with Hope is held monthly and includes speakers, games, snacks, door prizes, and more. For more information about participating in the program, email **Diane Davis** or call 803-525-4241.

## **National Health Center Week is Coming!**



National Health Center Week, celebrated this year from August 6-12, is an annual celebration aiming to raise awareness about the mission and accomplishments of America's health centers over the past five decades. HopeHealth will join communities across the country in spotlighting the work community health centers do to keep our communities healthy and safe.


HopeHealth serves nearly 60,000 patients across Aiken (infectious diseases),



## Medicaid Renewal Continues



# Have Medicaid or CHIP?



SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEARN MORE, OR VISIT: [MEDICAID.GOV/RENEWALS](http://MEDICAID.GOV/RENEWALS)

Take these steps to find out if you can keep your coverage:

 <p><b>Make sure your state has your current contact information.</b></p>	 <p><b>Check your mail for a letter.</b></p>	 <p><b>Complete your renewal form (if you get one).</b></p>
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For more information, contact one of our HopeHealth Patient Benefits Counselors at (843) 667-9414



**HOPEHEALTH**  
YOUR HEALTH BEGINS HERE

Do you or a loved one have Medicaid or CHIP coverage? Medicaid renewals were paused due to COVID-19, but they're back! Don't wait – update! Make sure your address and other information is up to date so that you can receive critical updates and re-apply. [SC residents can do that here.](#)

[Click here](#) to view a helpful video providing information on the Medicaid renewal process! Additionally, [click here](#) to read an article about what to know if you lose Medicaid coverage in South Carolina.

## Best of the Pee Dee

**Congratulations to HopeHealth's**

## Morning News Best of the Pee Dee Winners!



**Sydney Murphy, PA-C**  
*Best Primary Care Provider*

*Best Behavioral/Mental Health Care Provider*  
+  
*Best Pain Management Clinic*

## Nutrition and Wellness Class Offerings

**Click [here](#) to access the full list of nutrition and wellness classes offered by HopeHealth!**

For more information on the classes offered, contact Sonda Jett-Clair at (843) 432-3717 or email [sjclair@hope-health.org](mailto:sjclair@hope-health.org).

## HopeHealth Volunteers

# HopeHealth Volunteers

## 2022 Impact Report

Volunteers  
gave over  
1080 hours to  
HopeHealth

1080



That's worth \$28,717 in service hours!

12,500  
guest interactions

425 hours of wayfinding  
resulted in an estimated 12,500  
guest interactions.

### Volunteers Contributed:

30  
hours

Diabetes and  
Nutrition Institute

working with the  
CRD department on  
projects and organization

221  
hours

169  
hours

wrapping gifts for 254  
children in the Children of  
Hope Program

creating content  
for the Hope Fresh  
pilot program

45  
hours

33  
hours

Seniors with Hope Program

Bilingual assistance at  
HopeHealth Pediatrics in Florence

31  
hours

36  
hours

Assembling Annual  
Well Visit packets

Guest assistance  
in Kingtree

33  
hours

Volunteers at HopeHealth  
work to improve our guests'  
experiences as well as  
assisting staff.

For more information, visit  
[hope-health.org/volunteers](https://hope-health.org/volunteers)



For more information about the HopeHealth volunteer program, contact Cindy Averitt, manager of volunteer programs, at (843) 432-2942 or [volunteer@hope-health.org](mailto:volunteer@hope-health.org).

## Coffee with Joe





Calling all Veterans and active duty service members:

**Join us on August 17 at 9 am for "Coffee with Joe!"**

HopeHealth Medical Plaza, Magnolia Room  
Fellowship, coffee, donuts, and raffles!

Contact [Graham Jordan](#) for further information.

**Access Hope: After-Hours Care**



Access Hope is our convenient after-hours program for patients to receive care when life doesn't go as planned.

#### **Why HopeHealth patients use Access Hope:**

- Your primary care provider isn't available when you're not feeling well
- You are sick after-hours or on Saturday
- You are a new patient whose busy schedule doesn't allow you to be seen during normal provider hours

Our staff of health care providers at Access Hope is available in Florence and Manning, **Monday-Saturday from 8 am-8 pm**. Examples of after-hours care services provided by Access Hope are minor aches and pains, cold and flu sick visits, treatment of high blood pressure, management of diabetes and other chronic conditions, immunizations/flu shots/PPD testing, urinalysis, annual and pre-employment physicals, and STD treatment.

For more information about Access Hope, [visit our website](#).

**Save the Date: Golf Classic**



Save the Date: November 16, 2023 | Wyboo Golf Club, Manning, SC  
4-Man Captain's Choice | Social and award presentation to follow

For more information about the HopeHealth Golf Classic, contact [Charlee Rhodes](#).

## Behavioral Health Seminars

### Free Educational Classes

HopeHealth is offering free classes which are open to the general public. Each class serves as a 3-hour, informal lecture with handouts and time for questions and answers. These are not emotional support groups, and participants will not be asked to process personal feelings in the class setting.

#### Good Grief Seminar

This 3-hour educational seminar is for anyone dealing with the transition of death, chronic illness, trauma, divorce, job loss, career change, retirement, and/or relocation. It is helpful for individuals dealing with grief directly, as well as for those who are supporting others through the grief process.

**Tuesday, August 1, 2-5 pm**  
**Monday, August 14, 9 am-12 pm**

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#### Building Stress Resilience Class

This 3-hour class provides interactive and practical information to better understand stress and the impact it has on our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. A light-hearted, motivational approach with specific tools and strategies to help participants better manage challenging situations and receive inspiration to make changes to improve well-being.

**Friday, August 4, 9 am-12 pm**



**Tuesday, August 15, 9 am-12 pm**

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## **Healthy Communication and Conflict Resolution Workshop**

This 3-hour workshop provides practical information to help participants strengthen interpersonal skills. It is a hands-on interactive format with specific tools and skills practice for improving relationships.

**Wednesday, August 9, 2-5 pm**

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## **Building Self-Esteem Workshop**

This 3-hour workshop provides strategies and practical information to help participants improve their self-esteem, set goals to improve productivity, and strengthen relationships.

**Friday, August 11, 9 am-12 pm**

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Classes are led by Georgann O'Quinn, LPC, NCC, BCC at the HopeHealth Medical Plaza (360 N. Irby Street in Florence). Masks are optional and social distancing will be observed. Pre-registration is required - seating limited to 22 participants.

**To register, call (843) 413-3245 and ask for Hannah McCutcheon Stallings.**

## **HopeHealth QuickLinks**

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**[hope-health.org](https://hope-health.org)**

**Support Community Health Centers at [hcadvocacy.org](https://hcadvocacy.org). Become an Advocate Today!**