

July is a month that focuses on awareness around children! July is National Make a Difference to Children Month, Child-Centered Divorce Month, as well as Purposeful Parenting Month.

The goal of National Make a Difference to Children Month is to raise awareness about the vulnerability any child in the world can face if they do not have the right person in their lives to guide them. Children need guidance in order to choose the right paths in life. This guidance can come from parents, grandparents, older siblings, teachers, or any other type of guardian. Some ways to participate in National Make a Difference to Children Month include: doing something with a child that will make some type of positive difference or impact on that child, or supporting an organization that serves children (examples are boy scouts, girl scouts, YMCA, parks, etc.), or telling other people about this campaign.

July is also child-centered divorce month. It is important to observe as it brings awareness to the ideal and most effective way parents can handle divorce when it comes to their children's mental health. This awareness campaign is dedicated to alerting parents about the effects of divorce on children – and how to prevent emotional and psychological damage to children during and after a divorce. There are many ways to support your child and their emotional state. One way is through age-appropriate honesty and communication. An example of this would be being honest while minimizing details and keeping messages simple and direct. It is important to not belittle the other parent while speaking to children. It is important to validate your child's feelings. This could be done by really listening to your child and focusing on the child without distraction. A parent/caregiver can do this by showing they're listening through body language, nodding as the child speaks, and telling your child that you understand what they're feeling and why. Remember that your child's problems are as real to them as yours are to you.

The summer months are a great time to practice purposeful parenting as children are on summer break and families are more frequently together in the summer months. Purposeful parenting is all about being an active and engaged parent to build strong, positive, and functional families. Some ways to partake in purposeful parenting include engaging your child in open discussions. Another way to partake is by defining clear expectations of their behavior, chores, interactions with others, and household rules.

Summer break is in full swing and that can sometimes mean children are left alone at home. It is important to note the Minnesota Guidelines for child supervision.

- **Children age 7 and younger are always to be supervised!**
- **Children age 10 and under cannot provide babysitting!**
- **A child's age, mental ability, and maturity level are different in every child. Children may not be ready even if they fit the age requirements.**

Minnesota Guidelines for Supervision:

- Children who are age 7 and under must always be supervised.
- Children ages 8-10 can only be left alone for up to 3 hours.
- Children ages 11-13 can only be left alone for up to 12 hours.

- Children ages 14-15 can only be left alone for up to 24 hours.
- Children ages 16-17 need a plan in place about how to respond to an emergency.

Babysitting requirements:

- Children ages 11-13 can only babysit for up to 12 hours.
- Children ages 14-15 can only babysit for up to 24 hours.
- Children ages 16-17 can babysit for more than 24 hours with an adequate adult backup supervision.

If you have questions about any of these guidelines, please reach out to your county human services office.

WRAP provides free & confidential services to victims of domestic violence and/or human trafficking in Lincoln, Lyon, Redwood, & Yellow Medicine counties. WRAP can be reached at 1-800-639-2350 (after business hours calls are forwarded to Safe Avenues in Willmar). If you would like to learn more information about WRAP please visit www.letswrap.com or check out our Facebook or Instagram pages!