



MENTAL HEALTH MEMO

DECEMBER 2024



Holley Elementary School

Food for Families Program

We know that the holidays can be tough financially, which doesn't help when there are hungry mouths to feed at home during the holiday break. Our **Food for Families Program** can help with those "extra" meals that the kids typically get during their school day.

The program will provide your family with a bag of food to supplement your food supply while the kids are home for the holiday break.

The program is first come first serve.

Please call or e-mail Michelle Palmer (585-638-6316 ext. 2558, mpalmer@holleycsd.org) by **12/11/2024** if you're interested.

Elementary Mental Health Team:
Kristina Tese: School Counselor
Holly Curtis: School Psychologist
Michelle Palmer: Social Worker

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Combating the Winter Blues

In children, just as in adults, it is very common to feel a change in mood and energy levels during the winter months. Shorter days mean less sunlight, causing internal clocks to get off. This can effect sleeping habits and energy levels. In addition, chilly temperatures often mean staying inside and swaying from regular schedules. And, if done frequently, can negatively affect mental health. Below are six ways to combat the winter blues for you and your children:

- 1. Exercise:** 60 Minute of movement indoors or outdoors
- 2. Eat healthy:** A balanced diet is key in keeping a healthy body, and that effects the mind!
- 3. Use lights to mimic sun:** Turn on lights when getting up in the morning and keep a brightly lit home throughout the day.
- 4. Stay social:** Attending school, work, and social obligations and staying active can help to combat depression.
- 5. Open up:** Talk to your children about how you are handling the winter and feelings you are having. They may be feeling the same way and you can help each other work through it.
- 6. Fun at home:** Don't feel trapped inside, instead find ways to have fun together! www.familymeans.org

Family Activity

Volunteering: Ever considering volunteering during the holiday season? Volunteering can provide a healthy boost to your self-confidence, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. You are doing good for others and the community, which provides a natural sense of accomplishment. Your role as a volunteer can also give you a sense of pride and identity. Volunteering as a family is a way to spend time together.

Where: Schools, food banks, congregations, animal shelters, libraries, etc.

How to Ease the Transition Back to School After a Long Break

Start with the fun stuff

Ask your child to name one interesting, funny, or positive thing that happened at school that day. It can be something big or small-the idea is to get them talking about their day with you and focusing on the positives!

Create a routine and stick to it

Routine is very important to kids and a large part of their school day. It might be a good idea to create a schedule with your child. When children follow a routine, they are much more accepting of school and it eases the transition from home to school, and school to home. Some kids might like the idea of creating their own schedule (with your approval, of course). Examples include: sticking to a regular dinner schedule, and a specific time when homework needs to be completed. Helping your children establish these goals may show them how much you are interested in their school success.

Have one-on-one time

Children typically respond well to one-on-one time. Schedule some time to play a board game or simply sit and talk to each other. Any activity that will allow your child to have your undivided attention will help them feel special and ease back into the school routine as they will feel supported by you.

Community Spotlight:

Are you in crisis, experiencing emotional distress, or worried about someone you know?

Call or text 988 or chat at
[988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org)

24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Children's Social Emotional Learning Books

- **In My Heart** - Jo Witek
- **My Magical Choices** - Becky Cummings
- **Grumpy Monkey** - Suzanne Lang
- **The Most Important Things** - Antonella Abbatiello