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*Dedicated to helping children with emotional and behavioral problems,
by developing stronger more positive family relationships*

Could My Child Have the Winter Blues?

Could my child have the winter blues? This is a question we find ourselves asking this time of year. The holidays are over, school has resumed, and daylight seems to be at a minimum. Children can be just as sensitive to these changes as adults.

So, you may be asking what signs should I look for and how can I help. You need to become somewhat of a detective.. Start by asking yourself the following:

- Has my child's energy level changed?
- Has my child stopped playing with their friends or with the family pet?
- Has my child's appetite changed?
- Is my child suddenly sleeping more?
- Is my child irritable, but can't identify what is wrong?

Most of us get irritable and don't want to socialize when we are stuck in the house for too long. This means it is time to get creative. Plan some activities that can be done in the house to help shoo the blues away. Remember just because it is cold outside, does not mean you have to stay in the house.

Increasing physical activity during the winter months is important. You can still take brisk walks during the cold days, just make them a little shorter. If it is snowing, you can always make snow angels or build a snowman. Children like to help shovel snow. You can even take turns hiding objects in the snow and see how long it takes to find them.

- Some activities you can do in the house include:
- Play hide and seek
- Bake some cookies



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- Help the children produce a play
- Keep craft activities on hand
- Try some science experiments
- Play a game as a family – or let the children make up a new game
- Make snowmen out of marshmallow

You can also spend time special “floor time” with the children. It is best if you let the child lead during this time. They get to pick the activity and direct the play. You may be asked to play dolls, build legos, or play dress up. Whatever it is, the important thing is to let the child feel as though they have some control during this special time. Please try not to interrupt this special time with phone calls or other interruptions. The children need your undivided attention.

Plan ahead so that you don't have to dread the cold winter months. It is a good time to connect in a special way with your children. Bring back some of your own special childhood memories! ■

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