



*Sandcastle Child Care  
Newsletter*

*September -2020*



*Even if  
SOMETHING  
is left undone,  
everyone must  
take TIME  
to sit  
STILL  
and watch the leaves  
TURN.*



## Happy Birthday

Aurora Stuart Thraen - 09/03/2019

Iris Hansen - 09/17/2019

Quinn Sinner - 09/26/2019

Otto Gavin - 09/11/2019

Ivy Clark - 09/8/2018

Graham Farrell - 09/02/2017

Oliver Meunier Ruiz - 09/20/2017

Alafair Conner - Houle - 9/27/2017

Zeb Olsen - 09/11/2013

Jamson Landberg - 09/17/2013

## Happy Anniversary

Jackie Sailer - 09/11/1989

Laura Swenson - 09/13/2010

Tiffany Garcia-Kloos - 09/26/2016

Emily Trudeau - 09/05/2018

Dayna Baty - 09/17/2018

Lillyan Wallace - 09/24/2018

Nicole Zangs - 09/19/2019

# September News

Dear Parents:

Hello and 'Welcome Back' to many of you. For those of you that have been gone, we hope you were able to make the most of your time at home with your children.



There are several families returning after being gone since the stay home order was issued in March. Because of this, we want to remind you of a few procedural changes:

- All parents are required to wash their hands and their child(ren)'s hands when entering each building. Please assist children with handwashing. *(Please don't be offended if a staff member asks you if you have washed your child's hands before they enter the classroom; they have been instructed to do this.)*
- Please use the hand sanitizer that is provided prior to using the pens when signing in your child(ren).
- Please drop-off and pick up your child(ren) at the classroom door or playground entrance to minimize possible exposure in the classroom.
- Screen your child(ren) each morning before bringing them to Sandcastle. If your child(ren)'s temperature exceeds 100.4 degrees, he/she may not come to Sandcastle.
- 
- Children should be kept home if there are any signs of illness.
- Parents must adhere to the six-foot distancing rule.
- All parents entering the buildings are required to wear a face covering.

If you have any questions or concerns about these policies, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

We are excited that we are once again partnering with Minnesota Reading Corps because we know that children who are strong readers by the end of third grade are positioned to be strong learners for the rest of their lives. Tracy will be our Professional Corps member in the Puffer Fish room and Jenna will be our Professional Corps member in the Manatee room. They will each work with children one-on-one and in small groups daily, providing literacy interventions that are tailored to each learner's needs.

If you would like more information on Minnesota Reading Corps, please talk to Lisa, Sandcastle's Internal Coach, or go to [www.minnesotareadingcorps.org](http://www.minnesotareadingcorps.org).

Reminders:

- With SPPS using virtual learning, the decision as to whether Sandcastle will close due to inclement weather will be made by the Director and the Parish Administrator. The announcement will be made on our answering machine, on Facebook, and through e-mail.
- Our rate increase goes into effect on September 7<sup>th</sup>. If you have any questions, please contact Cheryl. Her email is [cschroeder@sf-sj.org](mailto:cschroeder@sf-sj.org).

We hope everyone has a smooth transition into the new school year.

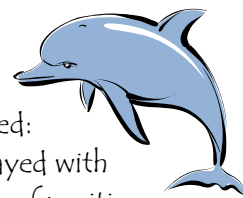
Jennifer, Wendy, Lisa, and Rachael





## "Infant Information"

**Dolphins:** (Ms. Danette, Ms. Angie, and Ms. Jackie)



All babies cry. Crying is their way of communication; it is how they ask for help. They might need:

- to be fed
- to be changed
- sleep
- to be held
- to be played with
- a change of position

What to do:

- rock your baby
- change your baby's diaper
- feed your baby
- give your baby a pacifier or help him/her find his/her thumb
- take your baby for a walk

Baby's cries are different for different things. As you get to know your baby, you will be able to know what they need by the sound of their cry.

What is colic? Colic is stomach pain that makes the baby cry a lot. What can you do to help your baby?

- burp your baby
- feed your baby in a quiet place
- feed smaller amounts more frequently
- if breastfeeding, watch your diet for food that doesn't agree with your baby (ex: cauliflower)
- hold your baby
- talk to your doctor about possible medication
- play with your baby

**Sea Horses:** (Ms. Jody, Ms. Leigh, Ms. Sarah, Ms. Tiffany, and Ms. Molly)

This summer the Infant 2 class had lots of new and exciting experiences. /we took a lot of walks as a class and on those walks, we often stopped to play at and enjoy the park. We got to meet new people and animals!



Everyone has reached at least one developmental milestone over the summer. We have all made new friends, practiced taking long, restful naps, tried new foods. We have also loved the chance to use new toys to help further our developmental skills.

In September we will be learning about fall and all the exciting activities and colors that happen during the season. We are hoping that your child will participate in wearing different colors on specific days! We will let you know our plans ahead of time.

**Clownfish:** (Ms. Emily, Ms. Katie, and Ms. Meriah)

Happy September! We are starting off a new month with a new class of children. Very exciting! We are looking forward to meeting all our new families! Please remember to bring extra (seasonally appropriate) clothing for their cubbies. We will continue to use our play yard to practice our gross motor skills so please make sure that your child has shoes to wear as well as a jacket or sweatshirt.

Fun activity to try at home: Peek-a-boo picture board.

1. Cut out four or more 8-inch squares of pretty cloth.
2. Sew one edge of each square onto a yard of cloth; so that the squares become flaps that hang down.
3. Nail or staple the cloth to a wall, the back of a bookcase, or a closet door. Cover the tacks with strong tape so that the children will not be able to pull them out.
4. Hang pictures behind each of cloth flaps with masking tape or safety pins. Be sure to attach safety pins to the back side of the cloth, where the children cannot reach. Draw your own pictures or cut them out of a magazine, old children's book, catalogs, or coloring books.
5. Show children how to lift the cloth to see the pictures.
6. Change the picture often.



# "Totally Toddlers"

## Sea Lions: (Ms. Mia, Ms. Taylor, and Ms. Jessica)

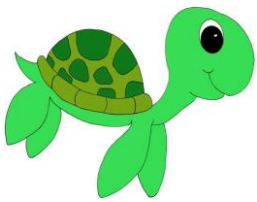
Happy September Sea Lions! This month we will be exploring the theme 'All About Me' to help get to know your child better as well as allowing them to learn more about us!

A lot of changes happened in August as Ms. Jenna and Ms. Dayna both moved to different rooms within Sandcastle. Fortunately, we feel so happy to be the new Sea Lion teachers going forward!

As sad as we are to see summer come to an end, we are happy to be getting back into our usual 'school' routine. This month our focus will be on the letters A – D, the numbers 1 – 4, the color yellow, and the hexagon shape! Also, every week, we will have a 'Show & Tell' day for our letter of the week.



## Sea Turtles: (Ms. Debbie, Ms. Brandye, Ms. Dayna, and Ms. Melissa)



Wow! Where did summer go?! We had a great August. Our theme was 'Farmer's Market; the children loved doing the cash register, wearing a smock, and washing and selling the fruits and vegetables. They enjoyed all the different food experiences! (ex: painting with mustard, watermelon and watermelon Kool-Aid, painting with peppers, trying to grow a pepper and making a Skittles and M&M rainbow)

We would like to welcome Maggie and Raziya to our room and we would like to welcome back Carolyn, Marion, and Everleigh.

Next month our theme is 'All About Me'. In home-living we will have a birthday party theme. Our activities will be centered around our body parts and our five senses.

In September we will be discussing "All About Me!" We will be doing face art, a self-portrait, and we will talk about our families and communities.

### Home-School Connections:

- Ask your child to name / point to different body parts.
- Talk about families and who is in your family.
- Talk about your five senses and plan activities so they can explore with all their senses.

## Sea Crabs: (Ms. Laura, Ms. Myesha, and Ms. Janai)

Summer is coming to an end, but we have so many fun things planned for the fall.

Last month we learned all about camping: we learned how to make s'mores; we got to play with flashlights; and we went on a bear hunt (and read a book about it). We had so much fun!

This month we will be going 'Back to School'. We will be learning about shapes and colors and fun things to do at school! We will be making school bus art, have an apple tasting with caramel apple nachos., and bring in a friendship snack

### 3 Things to do at Home:

1. Taste different colors of apples.
2. Play 'school' at home
  - backpack
  - 'Desk'
  - pencils and paper
3. Help your child practice writing with a pencil.



# "Preschool Players"

Whales: (Ms. Patti and Ms. Sreymao)



The whales are heading "Back to School" This month the class will have the opportunity to role-play as teachers and students in dramatic play. They will be able to play with an easel, a desk, notebooks, books and a "computer," among other things that are part of a classroom. Allowing children to role-play as a teacher encourages them to use their leadership skills in a fun way.

This month we will be having a couple new classmates joining the Whales so we will also be doing various activities to help the class get to know each other! These activities include 'Me' posters and a friendship snack. We are looking forward to starting September! Some of you may already know our experienced aide, Sreymao, is from Cambodia. During our group time she will be teaching some Khmer words (Cambodia's language). She will be teaching us how to say the word we are learning for the week for sign language. She will also be teaching us how to count from one to ten. We are excited to add this to our curriculum.

At Home:

Continue fostering your child's leadership skills by allowing them to be the teacher and you the student. Have fun and let your child be a leader! Also, remember to talk with your child about the color, shape, number and letter of the week. Incorporate these into your daily conversations.

Penguins: (Ms. Allison and Ms. Tiffany)

We are sad to see a great majority of our penguin class moving on, but we wish them luck in their next room.



This month our theme is "All about Me" and during this unit we will be focusing on developing self-awareness in the children by acknowledging and learning about each of their special and individual qualities, likes, and interest.

Here are some of our plans as well as some ideas you can do at home.

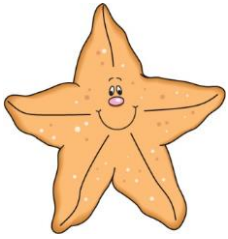
School:

- Activities and games that help us identify and describe our different feelings
- Self-portraits through drawings and photographs to identify our basic physical attributes (hair color, eye color, etc.)
- Measuring charts

Home:

- Sit with your child and look through photo albums and identify their growth
- Make a measuring chart
- Assist you child in learning descriptive words to describe their emotions

## Sea Stars: (Ms. Brianna and Ms. Giovanna)



This summer we had a blast exploring the themes: 'Down on the farm', 'Water Wonderland', and 'Fairy Tales'! We especially enjoyed learning about the different animals that live on a farm, the sea creatures that live in the ocean, and using our imaginations to bring us to faraway lands filled with dragons, mermaids, pirates, princesses, and much more. We also enjoyed soaking up the sun by spending lots of time playing outside, running and playing in the fields at Palace Park, and splashing in the sprinkler!

As we look forward to the fall, we are sad that Ben, Dylan and Macy will be moving to the Manatees and Puffer Fish, but very excited to welcome Kestrel, Kovelyn, Elliot, Teddy, Kain, Wendell, and James to the Sea Stars! We are going to have so much fun learning and growing together!

Our theme for September is 'New Places, New Faces'. The kids will be able to role play as teachers and students and explore different aspects of 'school'. During this time, we will get to know our new Sea Star friends, help them get acclimated to a new room and the Project Early Kindergarten curriculum.

### At Home:

- Go on a shape walk! Walk around your neighborhood searching for different shapes!
- Let your child pretend to be a teacher at home and you be the student!

## Jellyfish: (Ms. Val and Ms. Eva)

Dear Families:

We would like to welcome the families and the new Jellyfish to our classroom. We are excited to start the new school year!

Our them for the month of September is 'New Places, New Faces'. Your children will learn about different places in our community, around Sandcastle, and about their classmates.

Please bring a family photo. We plan to display these and celebrate the things that make each child unique.

Our Dramatic Play area will be set up like a classroom giving the children the opportunity to pretend to be the teachers as well as students. To continue the learning experience at home, take walks or drive around your community to see the different places around you.

Every Thursday, we will make a collage for the letter of the week. Have your child bring in a related letter item for the collage each week. During the month, we will continue to work on rhyming, numbers, picture naming, writing, writing our names, manners, and being respectful to others.

We would like to thank all of the parents for following the guidelines and safety regulations for Sandcastle buildings and classrooms and for being respectful of others.

Reminders:

- Bring in a set of extra clothes for your child.
- Bring in a blanket for nap time.
- Please do not bring toys. We will have one day a month where each child may bring in a toy and play with it.
- Do NOT bring egg products into our classroom. We have a child with a severe allergy.



## "Pre-K Performers"

**Puffer Fish:** (Ms. Margaret and Ms. Tracy)



We were excited to get the Puffer Fish room up and running again this summer! While we were sad that we couldn't do our 'normal' field trips, we love all of our sprinkler, bike, and park days!

We spent time in July learning about kindness and what we can do to make our school, neighborhood, and community a kinder place.

The month of August was themed 'Commotion in the Ocean' and we had fun in our pirate ship dramatic play and talking about all sorts of ocean creatures! Our theme for September is 'Back to School'! We are excited to welcome our new friends to our room.

We are asking families to bring a family picture for our family board. We will also be sending home our letter script so you can help your child practice writing their letters at home.

**Manatees:** (Ms. Sara and Ms. Jenna)

Hello! We would like to start by extending a warm welcome to our new Manatee families. We are so excited to get to know you and your kiddos. Also joining our Manatee team this fall is Ms. Jenna. She recently was given the opportunity to move from the Sea Lion room to our classroom, and she jumped on the opportunity to work with her older sister. We are so excited to have her!



### **FIRST, THE NITTY-GRITTY STUFF:**

- We'd like to remind you to check the monthly calendar for special days and activities. Thank you to all of you who do this each day.
- Please make sure you have extra, weather-appropriate clothing in your child's basket, marked with your child's name.
- Please bring in a family photo as well as a picture of your home so we can update our family board

### **NOW, THE GOOD STUFF:**

We had such a wonderful summer learning about many different things. We enjoyed the sun, park days, sprinkler fun and of course many Freezies!

During the month of September, we are going to be learning about different sports including baseball, soccer, football and basketball. Sport activities for kids offer various benefits, including physical and social. The physical benefits of outdoor sports such as soccer, baseball and football include building muscle, gaining flexibility, improving balance and coordination, and general endurance.

Playing sports with a bunch of kids together can improve general social development, in that kids will learn to interact with each-other. The social interaction will also improve other necessary skills such as leadership, self-esteem, and teamwork

Thank you so much for all you do to make our classroom run smoothly, your participation in your child's education does not go unnoticed.



# The 15 Best Activities for Children to Help Them Learn Through Play

What is Play?

Before we consider which activities are best for helping children to learn through play, let us address: what is play?

The book 'Einstein Never Used Flash Cards' by Golinkoff, Hirsh-Pasek, and Eyer, breaks play down into five core elements. Play must:

- Be fun and enjoyable
- Have no set goals
- Be spontaneous and voluntary
- Involve active engagement
- Involve an element of make-believe

However, some activities have more play potential than others, and are worth establishing in their own right. The adult provides the space, resources, and time. We call these 'invitations to play' – and these are our top 15.

## 1. Sand

Sand play is a fantastic opportunity for the foundations of scientific learning and developing self-confidence and physical development. Scooping, digging, pouring, and sifting, teach children how things work, whilst also building their muscles and coordination. Done alongside a little pal, and it becomes about teamwork, sharing, and social skills.

## 2. Water Play

Similar to sand play, water play enables children to experiment in a safe environment with basic concepts such as volume. Additionally, water play is great for learning consequences of actions. Add in some hand-eye coordination and physical strength, and water play is a firm favorite.

## 3. Play Dough

Play dough has immense potential for learning. Not only does it strengthen fingers in preparation for a lifetime of writing, it teaches fine motor skills, creativity, and hand-eye coordination. Add some beads to the dough for a fine-motor exercise, or get the kids threading beads on to lengths of dried spaghetti held in the dough, for extra play-value.

## 4. Dress-Up and Role Play

Let the children loose with a bunch of dress-up clothes and props such as toy doctor's kits, and let their imaginations run wild. Soon you will discover the budding doctor, vet, nurse, astronaut, or chef. Dressing-up helps children to begin to make sense of the adult world, roles, and interests, as well as boosting social interaction. Not least, dressing-up helps to reinforce the self-care aspects of self-dressing.

### 5. Doll and Character Play

Providing characters in the form of mini-figures and dolls allows children to develop their social play. It encourages imagination and the expression (and labelling) of feelings.

### 6. Drawing and Painting

Letting children run wild with paints and drawing tools allows them to experience their world in a sensory way and develop self-expression, while also developing pre-writing skills. Furthermore, it is an invitation to learn about colors, mixing, and good-old tidying up!

### 7. Blocks, Jigsaws, and Shape Sorters

Playing with blocks, jigsaws, and shape sorters all lay the foundations of spatial thinking, logical reasoning, ordering, and recognizing various shapes, sizes, and colors.

### 8. Music, Dancing, and Singing

Singing and music hugely help to develop language and form the basis of literacy skills, as well as basic mathematical concepts such as counting. Furthermore, they begin to develop rhythm, whilst also refining their listening skills. Dancing helps the child develop strength and coordination, and flexibility.

### 9. Imaginative Play

All play should be imaginative, but this references the type of play that comes naturally to many children. Leave a small child with nothing but a random selection of objects and you will soon find them lost in a world of make-believe. Giving a child time and space for imaginative play is essential. It develops their imagination, which is important for literacy skills and intellectual reasoning. Additionally, it increases their sense of self, and self-esteem, as well as making sense of the world around them, as well as ability to handle boredom.

### 10. Running, Jumping, Climbing, Swinging

Young children have a compulsion to move. Allowing them to do so, and providing safe and age-appropriate challenges, allows them to increase their confidence as well as develop their resilience through risk-taking. Of course, gross motor skills also receive a mighty boost.

### 11. Nature Play

Children's learning is fueled with rocket-fuel when you take the play space out into the great outdoors. Not only is it healthy, it teaches a respect for the environment, and the beginnings of biology. It also helps children to become more independent and inquisitive.

### 12. Sensory Play

In a nutshell, sensory play is any play activity which involves touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing. This can be provided with a plate of jelly, aqua beads, ice, rainbow rice, or even small world tubs. Sensory play stimulates exploration and the building blocks of science and investigation.

### 13. Basic Board Games

There are so many board games available for even the youngest players, and these should be embraced – not only for their fun factor, but for their learning potential. In addition to the themes of numbers, colors, shapes, and early phonics, these games are vital for teaching children turn-taking and sharing.

#### 14. Cooking and Pretend-Cooking

Cooking, and pretend cooking, serving, and shops, are great play scenarios for kids. Cooking itself combines elements of sensory play, mathematical concepts, home safety, and following processes. Pretend cooking, serving, and toy shops also teach basic mathematical ideas as well as social interaction, and how to be thoughtful to others.

#### 15. The Cardboard Box

Yes really! The humble cardboard box is one of the most incredible invitations to play. Will it be a house, a car, a home for their stuffed animals? Provide them with scraps of fabric, cushions, pencils, and paper plates and watch them explore their world, enter their imagination, and begin thinking like an engineer.

## Helping Children Cope with Changes Resulting From COVID-19

### STAY CALM, LISTEN AND OFFER REASSURANCE

- **Be a role model.** Children will react to and follow your reactions. They learn from your example.
- **Be aware of how you talk about COVID-19.** Your discussion about COVID-19 can increase or decrease your child's fear. If true, remind your child that your family is healthy, and you are going to do everything within your power to keep loved ones safe and well. Carefully listen or have them draw or write out their thoughts and feelings and respond with truth and reassurance.
- **Explain social distancing.** Children probably don't fully understand why parents/guardians aren't allowing them to be with friends. Tell your child that your family is following the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which include social distancing. Social distancing means staying away from others until the risk of contracting COVID-19 is under control. Showing older children the "flatten the curve" charts will help them grasp the significance of social distancing. Explain that while we don't know how long it will take to "flatten the curve" to reduce the number of those infected, we do know that this is a critical time—we must follow the guidelines of health experts to do our part.
- **Demonstrate deep breathing.** Deep breathing is a valuable tool for calming the nervous system. Do breathing exercises with your children.
- **Focus on the positive.** Celebrate having more time to spend as a family. Make it as fun as possible. Do family projects. Organize belongings, create masterpieces. Sing, laugh, and go outside, if possible, to connect with nature and get needed exercise. Allow older children to connect with their friends virtually.
- **Establish and maintain a daily routine.** Keeping a regular schedule provides a sense of control, predictability, calm, and well-being. It also helps children and other family members respect others' need for quiet or uninterrupted time and when they can connect with friends virtually.
- **Identify projects that might help others.** This could include: writing letters to the neighbors or others who might be stuck at home alone or to healthcare workers; sending positive messages over social media; or reading a favorite children's book on a social media platform for younger children to hear.
- **Offer lots of love and affection.**

### TAKE TIME TO TALK

- **Let your children's questions guide you.** Answer their questions truthfully, but don't offer unnecessary details or facts. Don't avoid giving them the information that experts indicate as crucial to your children's well-being. Often, children and youth do not talk about their concerns



because they are confused or don't want to worry loved ones. Younger children absorb scary information in waves. They ask questions, listen, play, and then repeat the cycle. Children always feel empowered if they can control some aspects of their life. A sense of control reduces fear.

## BE HONEST AND ACCURATE

- **Correct misinformation.** Children often imagine situations worse than reality; therefore, offering developmentally appropriate facts can reduce fears.
- **Explain simple safety steps.** Tell your child this disease spreads between people who are in close contact with one another, when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or when one touches infected objects or surfaces.
- **Stay up to date on the facts.** Go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> for additional factual information.

## KEEP EXPLANATIONS AGE-APPROPRIATE

- **Early elementary school children.** Provide brief, simple information that balances COVID-19 facts with appropriate reassurances that adults are there to help keep them healthy and to take care of them if they do get sick. Give simple examples of the steps people make every day to stop germs and stay healthy, such as washing hands. Use language such as "adults are working hard to keep you safe."
- **Upper elementary and early middle school children.** This age group often is more vocal in asking questions about whether they indeed are safe and what will happen if COVID-19 spreads in their area. They may need assistance separating reality from rumor and fantasy. Discuss the efforts national, state, and community leaders are doing to prevent germs from spreading.
- **Upper middle and high school students.** Issues can be discussed in more depth. Refer them to appropriate sources of COVID-19 facts. Provide honest, accurate, and factual information about the current status of COVID-19. Engage them in decision-making about family plans, scheduling, and helping with chores at home.
- **For all children, encourage them to verbalize their thoughts and feelings. Be a good listener!**

## KNOW THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

According to the CDC, people with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- cough
- fever or chills
- headache
- new loss of taste or smell

- shortness of breath or difficulty
- fatigue
- muscle or body aches
- diarrhea
- sore throat
- congestion or runny nose
- nausea or vomiting

## MODEL BASIC HYGIENE AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLE PRACTICES

- **Practice daily good hygiene.** Encourage your child to practice these simple steps to prevent spreading the virus.
  - Wash your hands multiple times a day for 20 seconds. Singing “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” or “Happy Birthday” twice is about 20 seconds.
  - Compliment your children when they use a Kleenex or sneeze or cough into the bend of their elbow. Teach them the importance of throwing away used tissues immediately after sneezing or coughing.
  - Sadly, handshakes and hugs need to be limited to immediate family members, at least for now.
- **Foster a sense of control.** Offering guidance on what your child/children can do to prevent infection offers them a greater sense of control, which reduces anxiety.
- **Build the immune system.** Encourage your child to eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep, and exercise regularly; this will help them develop a robust immune system to fight off illness.

## BE AWARE OF YOUR CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH

Most children will manage well with the support of parents and other family members, even if showing signs of some anxiety or concerns, such as difficulty sleeping or concentrating. Some children, however, may have risk factors for more intense reactions, including severe anxiety, depression, and suicidal behaviors. Risk factors can include a pre-existing mental health problem, prior traumatic experiences or abuse, family instability, or the loss of a loved one. Parents and caregivers should contact a professional if children exhibit significant changes in behavior or any of the following symptoms for more than 2 weeks.

- **Preschoolers**—thumb sucking, bedwetting, clinging to parents, sleep disturbances, loss of appetite, fear of the dark, regression in behavior, and withdrawal.
- **Elementary school children**—irritability, aggressiveness, clinginess, nightmares, school avoidance, poor concentration, and withdrawal from activities and friends.
- **Adolescents**—sleeping and eating disturbances, agitation, increase in conflicts, physical complaints, delinquent behavior, and poor concentration.