

Beyond the Surface:

Building Strong Foundations in Youth



Welcome to the First Edition of Beyond the Surface:

Sanilac CMH is proud to partner with Sanilac County School Districts, Health Department, local law enforcement, and other community partners to provide parents with critical knowledge, practical advice, and valuable resources to protect their children from everyday risks. We are thrilled to introduce this newsletter as a new way to continue supporting our community.

Each edition of *Beyond the Surface* will explore important topics such as mental health, substance use, social media, and bullying, providing valuable insights and resources for parents and caregivers. We'll also be shining a spotlight on the many positive activities and inspiring initiatives happening in our community, celebrating the efforts that make a difference in the lives of our youth and families. Our goal isn't just to inform but to empower parents, grandparents, and caregivers, to identify risks, build resilience, and support children and youth navigating today's complex world.

To enrich these conversations, we'll feature insights from local professionals and experts, highlight available resources, and guide you to community organizations ready to help. This newsletter is designed to be more than a resource; it's a tool for action, connection, and hope.

We also want to hear from you! What questions do you have? Are there specific challenges you'd like us to address in future editions? Your input is vital in making *Beyond the Surface* as impactful as possible. Feel free to reach out with your suggestions or questions at publicrelations@sanilaccmh.org.

Together, we can make a difference in the lives of our community's youth.

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To view a digital copy of this newsletter and access all the resources featured in this edition, visit www.sanilaccmh.org/resources/Beyond-the-Surface or simply scan the QR code.



Want to receive future issues directly in your inbox? **Subscribe by emailing us at** publicrelations@sanilaccmh.org.



Improving Lives Through Healthy Minds
810-648-0330

Additional Resources

♦ **Sun Bucks**— MDHHS [Summer EBT Program](#) provides grocery benefits to low-income families.

♦ **Meet Up & Eat Up** is a service provided by the Sandusky School District. Utilizing their Wolf Den Truck. They offer free lunch for children up to 18 years old, and special needs youth up to 26 years old during the summer. Visit [Sandusky Schools Food Service](#) page for schedule.



Preparing for Summer

Camping, vacations, swimming, sleeping in, picnics, and playing at the park are just some of the great hallmarks of summer. However, as parents and caregivers, there can be a lot to think about and plan for during the summertime when kids are out of school. Here are a few resources for you to consider that we hope will help you develop your summer plan.

If you are looking for child care, the [Great Start to Quality](#) website has a search tool to help you locate child care centers in our area. Their search tool can tell you what age range the center accepts, if they have openings, and includes links to quality and licensing reports. There is also a tool to help you determine if you might qualify for assistance in paying for child care. You can also visit the [MI Bridges](#) website for more information regarding their Child Care Assistance Program.

Looking for an alternative to traditional child care? [Camp Cavell's Day Camp-Guardians of the Wild](#) – provides boys & girls ages 7-12 years old the opportunity to spend time in nature and participate in great outdoor activities while learning more about caring for the environment.

When kids are out of the school, a family's food budgets can become strained. There are several food pantries and pop-up pantries available in Sanilac County. You can find a complete list posted on the first of each month on the [Sanilac CMH Facebook](#) page. Your local school district may have a summer food program. Cros-Lex Schools will be giving away food this summer. **Call Croswell-Lexington Community Schools for more information: 810-679-1000.**

Children and Smartphones

Deciding when to give your child a smartphone is a common concern for many parents, and expert opinions can provide helpful guidance. We consulted articles from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) for insights on this topic. The AAP emphasizes that the decision to provide your child with a smartphone shouldn't focus solely on their age; other factors should also be considered.



One essential question parents can ask themselves is whether their child truly needs a smartphone or if a simpler communication device would be sufficient. Alternatives like flip phones, smartwatches, or child-specific phones that allow texting and calling while blocking access to apps may be more appropriate.

Owning their first cell phone is a significant milestone for young people. However, not all 13-year-olds exhibit the same level of responsible behavior. Will they keep track of the device, keep it charged, and follow established rules for usage? The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) offers a quick 10-question readiness tool to help parents navigate this decision.

But it's not just about your child's readiness, it's about yours too. As a parent, are you prepared to set and enforce rules around screen time, internet safety, and responsible phone use? Clear expectations and rules can make a big difference in helping them use technology wisely.

While there's no scientific evidence linking cell phone radio waves to cancer, excessive screen time can have other negative effects, such as disrupted sleep, increased exposure to cyberbullying, and a more sedentary lifestyle. Setting limits on screen time can help prevent these issues and encourage healthier habits.

Before handing over that first smartphone, take the time to assess both your child's and your own readiness. Establishing clear guidelines from the start can set the foundation for responsible and balanced device use.

Learn more about making this decision and find a link to the readiness assessment in the article ["Your Child's First Phone: Are They Ready?"](#)



Growing Tenacity: Adalynn's Story

Adalynn, affectionately known as Addie, is an 11-year-old girl who was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) at the age of two. From the beginning, her journey has been a whirlwind of therapies, challenges, and small victories. Diagnosed early, she was one of the first children in our community to attend Sanilac County Community Mental Health's Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Program and speech therapy, making her a pioneer in her own right.

Despite the hurdles, Addie's family never gave up. "Early on we were told she would never speak or be able to take care of herself," says Addie's mom. "And that's the problem," interjects Addie's dad, "kids with her severity are given up on by society". It was a fight every day, but we never gave up," states Mom as she and Addie smile at each other.

Today, Addie is fully potty trained, uses 15 to 20 words, and has learned to mimic those around her, a significant milestone that brings immense joy to her family.

Addie's favorite activities include playing on the water slide, watching people, and parties! "She is always using the party emoji when she types because they are her favorite thing," says Mom. She is also particularly fond of pinatas, because what is a party without a pinata! Her family remains hopeful and motivated by her progress, finding joy in every small victory and using each challenge as an opportunity to prove that Addie can lead a fulfilling life.

Her parents wish to dispel misconceptions about autism. They emphasize that autism is not a trend or a fad, but a serious condition that requires understanding and support. They urge others to treat children with autism like any other kid, allowing them to grow and thrive in their own unique ways.

Addie's story is one of tenacity and hope, showcasing the strength of a family's love and the incredible progress that can be made with patience, dedication, and belief in the possibilities. Her journey reminds us all that with the right support, children with autism can achieve great things and lead enriching lives.

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by difficulties in communication, social interaction, and repetitive patterns of behavior. According to the CDC, about 1 in 36 children have been identified with ASD, though it is over four times more common among boys. ASD affects all racial, ethnic, economic, and social groups.

Resources for ASD

Autism Speaks offers free digital tool kits and guides for parents, educators, siblings, grandparents, communities, and people with autism to help them navigate every stage of life. Visit www.autismspeaks.org/autism-speaks-tool-kits to learn more.

The Michigan Alliance for Families is a statewide organization committed to supporting families with children with special needs, including ASD, to help improve their children's education. If you would like to connect with the Michigan Alliance for Families, contact, Chris Moore, Parent Mentor, at 989-863-4053 or visit their website at michiganallianceforfamilies.org to learn more about their services and find links to resources, parent education and training, support, and the advocacy they offer.

Michigan Rehabilitative Services can provide support and resources for persons with disabilities to assist them with entering or maintaining the ability to participate in the workforce. Reach out to Deborah Carroll-Smith at 810-982-8571 to get started or visit www.michigan.gov/leo/bureaus-agencies/mrs to learn more.

About Sanilac County Community Mental Health

Sanilac County Community Mental Health is dedicated to delivering high-quality care to those it serves. We are committed to addressing the needs of each individual comprehensively to improve lives through healthy minds



Sanilac CMH Offers Classes Supporting Parents

Navigating family transitions such as divorce, co-parenting, grandparents raising grandchildren, foster/adopted parenting, and step-parenting can indeed be challenging. That's why we're excited to introduce Parenting Through Change (PTC), a vibrant and interactive group designed to empower parents with the skills needed to thrive during these times!

Every parent is an expert in their child's life and their best teacher. PTC focuses on strengthening those innate abilities in a creative and enjoyable way. During this ten-week course, we'll explore essential topics like promoting cooperation, enhancing communication, and fostering positive behaviors.

Join us this summer for this transformative experience! New dates available soon. For more details, please contact Breonna Galvan, Sanilac CMH Children's Services Supervisor, at (810) 583-0341 or via email at bgalvan@sanilaccmh.org. We can't wait to connect with you!



Improving Lives
Through Healthy Minds

Talk To Us:

Sanilac County
Community Mental Health
227 E. Sanilac
Sandusky, MI 48471

☎ 810-648-0330 Assistance 24/7
🌐 www.sanilaccmh.org
📘 facebook.com/sanilaccmh

Help is available; you are not alone.

If you need assistance for yourself or a loved one, we are here for you 24/7. If a situation is potentially life-threatening, call 911 immediately.

Supporting Youth Mental Health

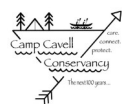
People can experience mental health challenges at any point in their lives. When children and adolescents face emotional challenges, they rely on adults to guide them through these tough times and help them access the appropriate treatment and care.

Sanilac CMH offers a free Youth Mental Health First Aid Program that trains caring adults to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health challenges in children and youth. This course is valuable for teachers, coaches, camp counselors, youth group leaders, parents, grandparents, foster parents, and anyone who works with young people.

Check out our Facebook Page for upcoming courses. Pre-registration is required. For more information or to register call Kellie Phelps, Mental Health First Aid Coordinator at 810-583-0394 or email kphelps@sanilaccmh.org.



Thank you to the community partners who
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Michigan Rehabilitation Services
<https://www.michigan.gov/mrs>

