Sandwich Generation: Caught in the Middle
By Michelle Houriet, Executive Director
Independence Hill Retirement Resort Community
(210) 209-8956

Thanks to advances in life expectancy, more middle-age people have living parents. Some still are caring for dependent children and find themselves having to provide care to their parents as well. This has created many challenges for what we call the “Sandwich Generation”. Three basic challenges to deal with and to try to find balance with are: 1) Raising their children and being part of their lives, 2) Assisting their aging parents, and 3) Maintaining their own identity; leading their own lives and careers. Far too often this balancing act has brought on stress and sometimes depression. Being open and honest about how much responsibility you can handle can help you navigate this stage of life. Many family caregivers are reluctant to ask for help because they are burdened by guilt and a sense of obligation. However, it’s in the best interest of both the caregiver and the aging parent to acknowledge when help is needed. It is not a sign of failure to ask for help. Many people have the misconception that they will have to become the parents to their aging parents. Your parents are your parents and they always will be. They deserve respect, and it is most important for you to help them maintain as much independence and dignity as possible. As their child, you might need to take charge of some things or help out more than before but you are not becoming their parent. Resist the temptation to over do for them. The more they can continue to do for themselves the better; physically and mentally, they will remain in better health and more confident. It will truly benefit them to be active participants in their own decisions and care.

While driving may no longer be possible for your parents, it doesn’t mean they cannot get out and go to the theater, do some shopping, run errands or visit friends as long as an alternative means of transportation can be arranged. They don’t have to be a prisoner in their own home, waiting for you to take them places.

An independent living retirement community like Independence Hill makes this, and much more, possible. Here, your parents can choose their “fun of choice.” Not only will they make new friendships, rekindle old hobbies and start new ones, but all of their home needs are taken care of so they can focus on the things they want to do. Not having to worry about your parents can allow you to focus on your children, marriage and career. Your visits with them will be about spending quality time together building your relationship with them.

We know life can be hard, busy and unpredictable… that won’t change. But helping to choose the right home for your parents where they are happy, feel safe and are enjoying life in an upbeat community can definitely reduce concerns for both.

At Independence Hill Retirement Community, we encourage families to work together with our Lifestyle Specialists to determine the best plan for their parents’ changing needs. Come tour, have lunch or even stay for some of the fun events to experience the lifestyle yourself. Give Sherrill, Kathleen or Laura a call at (210) 209-8956 to discuss the independent lifestyle choices available.

Independence Hill Retirement Resort Community is located at 20450 Huebner Rd., San Antonio, TX 78258. For more information, call (210) 209-8956 or visit www.independencehill.com.

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The beginning of a New Year comes with excitement and novelty. The lists are written, the goals are set, and the beginning of the year is here. After a few weeks of 2014 have passed, I can say that interior designing and decorating is at the top of the list for many of my clients…and for those potential clients that is at the top of the list for many of my neighbors.

I have not met yet. 2014 brings a fresh new interest of both the caregiver and the aging clients…and for those potential clients that is at the top of the list for many of my neighbors.

Excited about attending and seeing all the new items that are being introduced. Our vendors have been preparing for these markets for weeks.

Decorating Introductions:
- Our chocolate colors continue to lead the way with some beautiful spa blues and greens.
- Textures are again heavy with animal prints.
- Bling has come into our lives with our accessories and even new furniture lines.
- More functional tables are emerging to accommodate the technical lives that we live.
- Rugs are hotter than ever and so are drapes. Softness mixed with heavy textures

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Step Into Decorating
By Mary Lozano-Jenkins
The Jenkins Group, Inc.
(210) 490-0161

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What Do You Do When Your Child Has An Attention Problem?
By Leslie Jernigan, M.A.
Learning Foundations
Diagnostic and Learning Center
(210) 495-2626

Christmas vacation is over and you hoped that school would be a little bit better after your child had some time to rest, relax and decompress over the break. But it’s the first week back and you’re already getting phone calls and emails from his teacher: “If he would only focus better, “She does not want to follow instructions,” “He just won’t pay attention.” Sound familiar?

A child’s ability to focus can be influenced by any number of things: time of day, type of activity and level of interest, fatigue, stress, even what the child has eaten for breakfast. Johnny may love hands-on learning and be active and engaged during his morning science class, but tune out during the social studies class that’s right before lunch.

A child may be super-focused for hours on his iPad, but can’t sit still for more than 2 minutes in church or in math class. One reason for this disparity is that a video game can provide a stream of constant and constantly changing stimuli that many real life situations can’t.

Leading Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) expert Russell Barkley has suggested that ADHD might better be termed Attention Dis-regulation Disorder because these students have difficulty regulating their attention and can seem to veer between inattention and hyper-focus.

So is it your child’s fault that she can’t seem to pay attention? Is it YOUR fault? The answer is neither. A child with attention disorders often is unaware that she has shifted her attention. These shifts of attention are not intentional. She simply has not learned how to regulate her attention or even recognize when she is not paying attention.

Kids with true ADHD are often bright and highly creative. I frequently hear from parents that their son or daughter is smart and seems to understand the material, but just can’t manage to get the schoolwork done. If this frustrates you, could you imagine how frustrating it is for your child?

Although having the ability to process multiple trains of thought does lead to creative thinking, it also makes it difficult to focus and follow through with one idea. Your child may have all these great ideas, but doesn’t finish what she starts.

When attention is focused inward, the tracking of time may be lost on children with ADHD. They may appear slow, irresponsible or inconsiderate of your time, but it is likely that they are simply unable to judge time accurately.

So how do you teach your child to control his attention? Try teaching your child these four steps and have her practice using them at home.

Help her begin to recognize what it feels like to be focused and what it feels like not to be. Help her in becoming aware of what she does when she is not focused on the task at hand. What is her body doing? How is she sitting? What does her breathing feel like? Identify what triggered the loss of attention. A tapping pencil? The ringing of a phone? Children playing outside the classroom?

Help her develop a strategy for regaining focus. For example, “When I feel tired and get distracted, I will get up and stretch my legs and drink water.”

Although many problems with attention are associated with ADHD, attention difficulties can be caused by inefficiencies of cognitive processing. If your child is having difficulty staying focused in the classroom, the smart thing to do is to assess his or her processing skills. If there is an uneven pattern of strengths and weaknesses in your child’s processing skills, then 1 on 1 attention training is the most effective way to boost your child’s attention self-control and confidence.

Leslie Jernigan, M.A., is Program Director and Diagnostician at Learning Foundations Diagnostic and Learning Center in San Antonio. Email questions or concerns about your child’s learning challenges to lesli@learningfoundations.com or call (210) 495-2626 for a Free Consultation.