



## Holistic Moms Network Gives Advice:

# PREPARING FOR SCHOOL

by Judi Burton

**N**atural Awakenings spoke to three of the women who are members of the new Holistic Moms Network, a nonprofit organization in Myrtle Beach, on how to prepare children for school. Lennea Aurilia, Meaghan Gretano and Connie Bennet all have kids in elementary school and understand the hectic life of a Holistic Mom.

### NA: Why do you consider yourself a Holistic Mom?

**HMN Meaghan:** For me, I place a lot of emphasis on how I feed and raise my kids. Educating them is the biggest thing for me, because it's not easy these days. The world is very conventional, and you're taught to go to the doctor and take your antibiotics and eat your Lunchables and drink your juice boxes because it's convenient. There is a growing epidemic in this country of children with diabetes and, in my opinion, the overuse of pharmaceuticals. It drove me to take a different approach with my kids.

### NA: Are the teachers and administrators aware of the special approach you take with parenting?

**HMN Meaghan:** Well, they found out soon enough when I handed them my forms. I choose not to vaccinate my kids, and I had to fill out a religious exemption form. They didn't know what it was, so I had to explain to them my parenting philosophy. They asked me if my kids got sick a lot, and I told them that in fact they never really get sick at all. Some other parents were concerned, but I pointed out that if their kids were vaccinated they shouldn't have cause to worry.

### NA: What kinds of things do you do for their lunches?

**HMN Connie:** Using reusables for your lunchbox helps your

family all around. We try to focus on as much waste-free eating as possible. We put fresh-cut fruit, nuts, sandwiches, applesauce, yogurt and more into Kids Konserve stainless steel containers. We also have wonderful reusable zipper snack bags by Snack Happened. They are the only ones FDA approved with no PVC, phthalates, lead, BPA or nylon. Instead of plastic water bottles, we use Kleen Kanteen, which have leak-proof sippy tops for the younger children. Sometimes, I cut cheese into fun shapes, like squares, circles or triangles. Other times, I put low-fat, plain, organic yogurt with a dollop of honey in a container, and they dip fruit in the yogurt and honey. The best thing you can do is to buy in bulk and stay away from the "throw away" packaged meals and juice boxes.

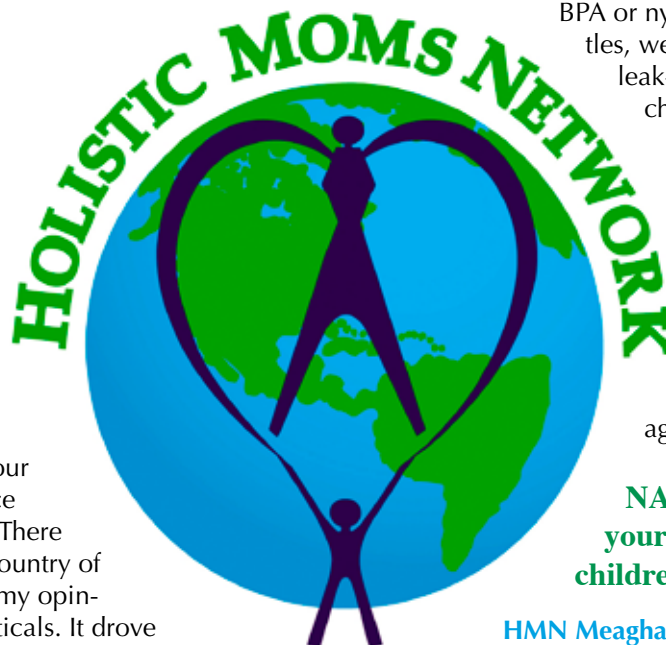
### NA: If you don't immunize your kids, how do you keep your children from getting sick?

**HMN Meaghan:** I give my kids a multi-vitamin every day and I am very strict about no TV and going to bed at 7:30 to 8 pm. I feel that a well-structured day with lots of play and a good amount of sleep every night helps with their immune systems.

**Lennea:** I give them "thieves oil" as well, which I spray on them before they walk into school. The teacher often remarks that my kids smell like cinnamon, because it contains that and lemon, rosemary, eucalyptus and clove, which are all high in phenols, carvacrol, thymol and terpenes. These properties are effective against fungi, viruses and bacteria.

### NA: Recess is often outside, what type of sunscreen do you use?

**HMN Connie:** Most of the sunscreens on the market are just not good for you. We use Badger Balm and California Baby, which are safe, natural, organic products. I send my children to school or camp with a hat and tell them to put



their hats on when they play outside. They have fun hats that they picked out, so they love wearing them. Protecting children's eyes at a young age is extremely important so they wear sunglasses, too.

**NA: What do you tell your kids when they ask why they can't eat what other kids are eating?**

**HMN Lennea:** Well, they really grew up knowing what foods are good and what foods are bad. We went to the beach the other day with another family and we packed a lunch while they stopped at McDonalds. My kids love the food I give them, so it's really not that much of an issue.

**Meaghan:** Of course, once in a while my kids get a bit curious and I have to tell them that their friends' parents are responsible for what they eat and I am responsible for what you eat, and that is that. My daughter has a nut allergy, so I have a pretty good excuse for not allowing her to eat cake with butter cream frosting on it or cookies from a box.

**NA: What would you tell other parents who are experimenting with a wholistic lifestyle?**

**HMN Connie:** Pick one area to start with, whether it be cutting out your waste or going organic. Baby steps are the way to go. I started about 10 years ago by cutting out high fructose corn syrup and hydrogenated oils from my diet, and it spurred on from there. I am still learning new ways to be more wholistic every day. Also, ask around and find more people out there who are already doing it.

For more info on the Holistic Moms Network, visit [HolisticMoms.org](http://HolisticMoms.org) or email Meaghan Grettano at [Meaghan810@gmail.com](mailto:Meaghan810@gmail.com). To find some of the lunch container items online, visit [HolisticParent.com](http://HolisticParent.com)—a 10 percent discount will be deducted from your shopping cart if you mention this article. For Kleen Kanteen, visit Myrtle Beach-based Southlantic's website [Southlantic.com](http://Southlantic.com).

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