



FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

Newsline

April 2008 Blaine County Cooperative Extension Service, 212 N. Weigle, Watonga OK 73772 580-623-5195
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Promoting healthy families during Child Abuse Prevention Month

While it is extremely rewarding, being a parent is tough. It is a 24-hour-a-day job that does not offer sick leave or vacation pay. It often can feel overwhelming.

There are a number of factors that can make parenting challenging, including financial issues, having a child with a disability, feeling alone, not having friends or family nearby or being a single parent, said Debbie Richardson, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service parenting assistant specialist.

April is "Child Abuse Prevention Month" in Oklahoma and communities throughout the state are joining together to spread the word that everyone can and must play a role in creating safe, healthy, nurturing environments and experiences for children.

"One way to help parents become the best caregivers possible is to focus on 'protective factors.' Protective factors are conditions in families and communities that, when present, increase the health and well-being of children and families," Richardson said. "They are attributes that serve as buffers, helping parents who might otherwise be at risk of abusing their children to find resources, supports or coping strategies that allow them to parent effectively, even under stress."

Researchers for decades have been studying both the risk factors common among families experiencing abuse and neglect and those factors that protect families who are under stress. Research findings include that successful interventions must both reduce risk factors and promote protective factors to ensure the well-being of children and families.

Richardson said focusing on promoting protective factors is a more productive approach than reducing risk factors alone.

"Protective factors are positive elements that strengthen all families, not just those at risk. In addition, focusing on the positive helps service providers develop a good relationship with parents,

who then feel more comfortable seeking out extra support if needed," she said. "When service providers work with families to increase protective factors, they also help families build on natural support networks with their family and community. Research shows that parents who have support and skills for managing stress will be better able to cope with day-to-day challenges."

It is important to help parents learn about normal infant, childhood and teen development. This knowledge will help parents understand what to anticipate as their children grow and what type of support and discipline may work best at each state.

"When a parent treats a child with respect, love and understanding, it affects the child for a lifetime, and in turn makes it easier for these children to develop and keep friendships, succeed in school and work, sustain a happy marriage and parent effectively," she said.

Nurturing relationships, knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development, resilience to stress, social connections and solid support systems for parents are protective factors that are linked to lower incidence of child abuse and neglect.

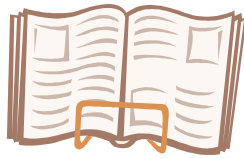
"These protective factors are critical for all parents and caregivers, regardless of age, ethnicity, economic status, special needs, or whether the child is being raised by a single, married or divorced parent, or other caregivers," Richardson said. "By working together as a community, we can foster positive relationships between children and parents."

OHCE NW District Meeting

The OHCE NW District Meeting in Ponca City was attended by six Blaine County members. Attending were Darlene Till, Maxine Strack, Patsy Sinclair, Janice Hood, Clella Lookabaugh, and Sandra Maddux. Also, attending was Joy Rhodes, Blaine County OHCE advisor. Attendees participated in a variety of workshops offered during the day, toured the local area and were guests at a reception sponsored by Conoco Oil. Everyone enjoyed the pleasant weather and the hospitality of the hosting counties and city.

Green OHCE Cookbooks

A limited number of the famous 'Green OHCE Cookbook' are now available in Blaine County. Cost is \$10.00. These would make wonderful Mother's Day gifts.



Farm Safety Day – April 29th

Blaine County OHCE groups are being asked to donate cookies for Farm Safety Day. Each group will need to bring 10 dozen cookies to the Fairgrounds on Tuesday, April 29th before 10:00 a.m. You may also deliver to the Extension Office the day before. One-hundred & fifty (150) 4th graders from the county will be attending the Safety Day. We are also in need of volunteers to assist that day. Please call with your names by April 21st. We will need volunteers to help with lunch and monitoring workshops. Please call as it is a fun day; however, extra help is always needed. Lunch and a T-shirt will be available to all volunteers.

This newsletter is one way of communicating educational info to the citizens of Blaine County in the area of Family & Consumer Sciences. The info given is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service is implied. This info was produced at a cost of 1 cent per page for a total of \$15.00.

Editor, Joy Rhodes, Ext. Ed-FCS

Meals on Wheels

Don't forget about an opportunity to volunteer a few hours each week. The Watonga Senior Citizens need assistance with delivery on three-days of the week. Call Pansy Hollis at the Center to help out.

County Association Meeting

We had 30 Blaine County HCE members attend our meeting in March. The favorite food buffet was delicious as we presented awards for the 2007 year. A special guest for the evening was Recia Garcia our District OHCE advisor.



Tooth Fairy Pillows

A group of ten (10) volunteers met to construct Tooth Fairy Pillows for the 1st graders. Over 65 pillows were delivered that afternoon. Thanks to all who helped out!

Support Our Military Families

It was decided at the County meeting that each group would send individual care boxes to service people overseas. If you need assistance with items to send or names, please contact the Extension Office.

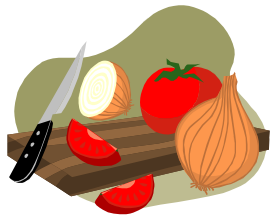


HCE Leader Lesson

The lesson for May will be presented April 24th, 10 a.m. at the Fairgrounds. Topic for the lesson is "Home Maintenance". We will be learning some easy ideas to keep your home in tip-top shape and ready for the upcoming spring session. Be sure and attend. No lesson is scheduled for May as June is our FREE month. Be sure and plan a family or group activity for June.

OHCE Week – May 4-10, 2008

OHCE Week is scheduled for May 4-10, 2008. Be sure and make plans on how your group can share with others in the community about OHCE and all the good things your groups do for our community. Be proud and share the news with others.



Cutting Board Sanitation Helps Ensure Food Safety

“Whether you are cutting, chopping, mincing or slicing, a cutting board and a good knife are essential tools in the kitchen. Cutting boards come in a variety of materials,” said Barbara Brown, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service food safety specialist.

“Cutting boards can be made of wood, plastic, marble or other material,” Brown said. “What you need to keep in mind is to follow proper food handling and sanitation practices to help prevent cross-contamination that can lead to food borne illness.” Every kitchen should have at least two cutting boards. One should be used exclusively to cut raw meat and poultry. The other cutting board can be used for cutting fruits and vegetables.

Brown said it is crucial to frequently sanitize your cutting board. Use a solution of 1 tablespoon bleach to 1 gallon of water to sanitize the board after it has been thoroughly cleaned with soap and hot water.

Be sure the surface of the cutting board is hard and smooth to prevent pitting. Cutting boards that are pitted could harbor growth of illness-causing bacteria,” she said. “Replace cutting boards that have become worn and battered.”

Preparing for the Digital Television Transition

Digital television is here. Are you ready?

Do you have a television in your home that works with the help of “rabbit ears” or a rooftop antenna? If so, read on to prepare for an important change in broadcasting coming in February 2009.

Television broadcasting is moving from an old standard—known as “analog”—to a new standard, called “digital”. Beginning February 17, 2009, all television broadcasts will be digital.

After that date, all analog televisions receiving programming “over the air” through an antenna will need to be plugged into a special television converter to receive digital broadcasts. The converter option is not for everyone. Many people have television sets connected to cable, satellite, or other pay television service. Converters will not be needed for these sets.

If you have a television with a digital tuner, then you will not need a converter. If you haven’t bought a TV within the last five years, it probably doesn’t have a digital tuner. An older TV that is not

connected to cable or satellite is a good candidate for a converter.

Why this Change?

The digital television transition is happening in part to provide additional air waves to firefighters, police, and rescue workers so they can better communicate during emergencies. And digital television generally provides better picture clarity and more channels for viewers.

\$4- Coupons will be available for Converters

Starting January 1, 2008 each household in American can request up to two coupons from the government to use toward the purchase of certain converters. Each coupon is worth \$40. Coupons will expire 90 days after they are issued.

Beginning in 2008, you can request these coupons. Requests cannot be taken until then, so mark your calendar. **Call 1-888-DTV-2009 or 1-888-338-3009 or visit www.dtv.gov later in the year to find out how to apply for your coupons.**

What are My Options?

- ❖ Keep your TV and buy a converter. In 2008 a government coupon will be available to reduce the price of certain converters by \$40
- ❖ Buy a digital television. Check with your retailer, if you are buying a new television to make sure that it has a built-in digital tuner.
- ❖ Hook up your television to cable, satellite or other pay television service.
- ❖ Buy a converter with enhanced features, such as one with a DVD recorder. Converters with enhanced features are not eligible for the coupon program.

The best way to prepare is to become informed. **Visit www.dtv.gov for DTV tip sheet, shoppers guide, fact sheet, FAQs and more.**



Good Knives Are Indispensable

Just as a cutting board is an essential tool, a good knife also is a vital part of food preparation. Make sure the knife is easy to clean, fits your hand and has a good quality blade. In addition, know how to properly use the right knife for the right cutting job.



Since most stainless steel blades are rust-resistant, it's important to clean and wipe them dry after each use. There is a difference between rust-resistant and rust-proof. High-carbon stainless steel is rust-resistant, but harder to sharpen. Non-stainless high carbon blades rust more easily but are easier to sharpen. Take care when cleaning sharp knives. Those with synthetic handles can be put in the dishwasher, but the cutting edge can be damaged and dulled if it bumps against other things during the wash cycle. Make sure the blade does not touch other cutlery, pots or pans in the dishwasher. The best choice when cleaning knives is to wash them by hand. Knives should be dried immediately after washing and stored. For greatest efficiency, knives should be stored at the first place of use. Some good cutlery comes in a specially designed tray that fits into any drawer, stand on the cabinet, or may be hung on the wall. When no tray has been provided, a place in the drawer should be partitioned with hardwood and fitted with grooves for each knife. A magnet may be hung on the wall near the place of use for storing the knives rather than putting them in a drawer, if desired.

Always remember, a cheap dull knife may prove to be the most expensive and hazardous knife you own. For more on purchasing and sharpening knives, contact the Blaine County Extension Office for "Putting an Edge on Knives" OCES Fact Sheet ASI-9411.

Sharpen Your Sense of Smell & Tastes

Did you know that our sense of smell and taste naturally declines as we age? Often the change is so gradual you barely notice it. That wouldn't be a problem, except that it can affect your health—studies find people with impaired ability to smell and taste tend to follow less healthful diets. It also puts you in danger. Your sense of smell serves as an early warning system for things like rotten food and gas leaks.

Here's how to sustain smell and taste so that every bite (and sniff) tells you what you need to know:

- 1. Serve food that looks like itself.** Forget fancy presentations. If you're serving fish, keep it looking like fish. Your sense of taste is stronger if your brain can connect what you're eating with how it looks.
- 2. Put on your seat belt.** A common cause of loss of smell (which then directly affects taste) is automobile

accidents, even low-speed crashes. Any impact can shift the brain within your skull, tearing delicate nerve fibers that connect your nose to your brain.

3. Go for a brisk, 10-minute walk or run. Our sense of smell is higher after exercise. Researchers suspect it might be related to additional moisture in the nose.

4. Drink a glass of water every hour or so. Dry mouth—whether due to medication or simply dehydration—can adversely affect your sense of taste.

5. Avoid very hot foods and fluids. They can damage your taste buds.

6. Stub out that cigarette and make it your last. Nothing screws up the smell receptors in your nose and the taste receptors on your tongue like cigarettes. Long-term smoking can even permanently damage the olfactory (a.k.a., sniffing) nerves in the back of your nose.

7. Eat only when you are hungry. Our sense of smell (and thus taste) is strongest when we're hungriest.

8. Make a list of any medicines you're taking and ask your doctor about their effect on smell and taste. Hundreds of medications affect taste and smell, including statins, antidepressants, high blood pressure medications, and chemotherapy drugs like methotrexate, also used to treat rheumatoid arthritis. If you meds are on the list, talk to your doctor about possible alternatives or lower doses. Don't however, stop taking your medication or cut your dosage on your own.

9. Humidify your air in the winter. Our sense of smell is strongest in the summer and spring, most likely because of the higher moisture content in the air.

10. Eat in a restaurant or with other people. This is called the "herd response". Studies have found that eating in the presence of other people makes food taste better than eating alone.

11. Stay away from the diaper pail and other stinky smells. Prolonged exposure to bad smells (like the sewer plant up the road) tends to wipe out your ability to smell. So, if you must be exposed to such odors on a prolonged basis, wear a mask over your nose and mouth that filters out some of the bad smells.

12. Add spices to your food. Even if your sense of smell and taste has plummeted, you should still retain full function in your "irritant" nerve, which is the nerve that makes you cry when you cut an onion, or makes your eyes water when you taste peppermint or smell ammonia. So use spices like hot chili powder to spice up your food.

13. Blow your nose and clean it out with saline spray. A simple thing, but it can help, because a blocked nose means blocked nerve receptors.

14. Chew thoroughly and slowly. This releases more flavor and extends the time that the food lingers in your mouth so it spends more time in contact with your taste buds.