



Family and Consumer Sciences

# Strengthening Oklahoma Families

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## Cost-Effective Ways to Protect Your Home

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### Happy Fall



In 2012, there were more than 2.1 million burglaries reported in the United States. That averages out to one burglary every 15 seconds.

“The goal in home security is to make it so the casual burglar will be thwarted,” said Gina Peek, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension housing and consumer specialist. “While it’s impossible to make your home completely secure, there are many low-tech, low-cost and low-effort measures homeowners can take to help ensure their safety.”

One of the best ways to get started on beefing up your home security is to call the police. Many municipal police departments offer complementary home inspections in which an officer will go through your home and recommend simple and cost-effective ways to tighten security.

It is important to make home security a habit. This goes for every member of the household. Get in the routine of using door and window locks. Once you arrive home, close and secure your garage door. This prevents would-be burglars from seeing what types of things you keep stored in the garage. Be sure to lock all vehicles parked in the driveway as well.

“If your home has sliding glass doors, consider placing a wooden dowel cut to size in the track of the door,” she said. “This is a very inexpensive fix to an area that may be more vulnerable than others

in your home.”

Teach your children to never open the door to strangers. Older children who may be home alone should be instructed not to answer the door.

“It’s a good idea to make your home look like someone is there, even when you are gone,” Peek said. “Install timers on lights and televisions. The key is to make a would-be burglar pass on your home because it looks like someone is there.”

Outdoor lighting is a great deterrent for burglars, especially the kind with infrared motion sensors. These should be installed near each entry point of your home, as well as near access points to your yard. Be sure to quickly replace burned-out bulbs.

Some homeowners will hide a house key under the mat, inside the mailbox or under a rock. Unfortunately, would-be crooks also know where these hiding spots are. Instead of hiding a key, leave a spare key with a trusted neighbor.

Another quick and inexpensive idea is to post “Beware of Dog” signs, even if you do not have a dog. Post the signs in visible spots such as at the front of the house or on a gate to the backyard.

“Your home is your biggest financial investment and the place where you want your family to feel safe and secure. Following these steps will help ensure your family’s security without breaking the bank,” Peek said.

# Ways to Cut Costs on Back-to-School Shopping

Source: National Endowment for Financial Education



**Congratulations!** You've survived the summer. But can your wallet afford the high costs of back-to-school season? A 2013 survey by the National Retail Federation found that families with school-age children planned to spend an average of \$634.78 on back-to-school expenses, with around \$200 on each child.

As the seasons change, so do your children's sizes, activities, and school supplies. But, by using a few simple tips and tricks, you can get your children what they need—and maybe even what they want—without breaking the bank.

**Take Inventory:** Before you hit the stores this fall, take stock of what you have. You might be surprised how many No. 2 pencils and unused notebooks you discover, or how many unworn clothes you unearth from the deepest realms of your children's closets.

**Host a Back-to-School Swap:** It's safe to say you aren't the only parent who dreads school-spending splurges. Gather a group of parents and host a back-to-school swap. From lightly used sports equipment to outgrown clothing, you can make a dent in your list and spend time with good friends!

**Shop Late:** Avoid the August rush—and August prices—by skipping the

crowded mall and waiting for sales to arrive in late September. You'll get the same clothes at a fraction of the price. Before you hit the stores this fall, take stock of what you have. You might be surprised how many No. 2 pencils and unused notebooks you discover, or how many unworn clothes you unearth from the deepest realms of your children's closets.

**Host a Back-to-School Swap:** It's safe to say you aren't the only parent who dreads school-spending splurges. Gather a group of parents and host a back-to-school swap. From lightly used sports equipment to outgrown clothing, you can make a dent in your list and spend time with good friends!

**Price Match:** Many large stores offer price-match guarantees. Bring an ad or your smartphone with you to prove a competitor's price, and rejoice in getting the best deal in town! Just remember to do your homework ahead of time. Get online and read up on store policies to make sure you're bargain hunting at participating retailers.

**Follow Your Favorite Stores:** Find your favorite stores on Facebook and Twitter, or sign up for email Listservs, and get instant access to exclusive discounts, coupons, and sales.

**Save with Savvy Teacher Gifts:**

You want to show teacher appreciation, but back-to-school gifts can get expensive. This year, try something a little closer to home. Freshly baked treats or a handmade gift are meaningful and memorable alternatives to costly, store-bought baubles. Plus, free sites such as Pinterest have loads of "pinspiration" for you.

**Stay Smart with After-School Treats:** Instead of grabbing fast food in the name of speed, try prepping a healthier, cheaper option the night before. Snacks such as carrot sticks, crackers, and fresh berries are easy on your budget and more nutritious for your kids.

**Don't Forget About the Dollar Store:** Think outside the name-brand box. Because your children are growing and changing every day, dollar stores can be a great place to find inexpensive clothing, school supplies, and even snacks!

## A Home Food Safety Myth-Buster

Source: Partnership for Food Safety Education

**MYTH:** It's OK to wash bagged greens if I want to. There's no harm."

**FACT:** Your intuition says giving bagged greens labeled "ready-to-eat," "washed," or "triple washed" an extra rinse couldn't possibly hurt. However, rinsing of ready-to-eat greens will not enhance safety, but could increase the potential for cross-contamination. Pathogens that may be on your hands or on kitchen surfaces could find their way onto your greens in the process of handling them. Your ready-to-eat greens have been prepared with your safety and convenience in mind—**ENJOY**.



# Pittsburg County OHCE Newsletter



## A Commitment to “Self”..... 7 Simple Ways

Everyone gets down and out from time to time—here are 7 simple ways to commit to daily ~~~

1. **Negative Words:** I will not let other people’s negative words or actions dictate my future.
2. **Hope:** Hope is now, not later.
3. **Victory:** My victory is not dependent on circumstances, I overcome all trials.
4. **Grateful:** I am grateful for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. **Life of Purpose:** I was created with a divine purpose, and I am flourishing like a palm tree in the desert.
6. **Great Expectations:** I expect joy today, I expect peace today, I will not live in defeat.
7. **Blessed:** I am blessed wherever I go, despite what the world says or my feelings.

**Character does not reach its best until it is controlled, harnessed, and disciplined.**

## The Difference Between Negativity and Wisdom

If your dream is big enough, some people will say that you aren’t being realistic. Realistic is often a code word for negativity. We all need trusted advisors to keep us balanced, but how do you tell the difference between plain old negativity and good wisdom?

1. Negativity tears down your dream. Wisdom shows you a better way.
  2. Negativity never listens and offers no hope or options, Wisdom listens and gives input.
  3. Negativity leaves you feeling awful. Wisdom leaves you empowered and hopeful.
  4. Negativity destroys. Wisdom renews.
  5. Negativity has no new ideas. Wisdom fuels imagination.
- There are people in your life who don’t believe in you and will not —no matter what you do. Find those who believe in you in a balanced and wise way, and surround yourself by their presence. You’ll be glad you did.



**Believe you can and you’re half way there.**

**—Theodore Roosevelt**



## Pumpkin Bread

1 cup oil  
2 1/2 cups sugar  
1 can pumpkin  
1 tsp cinnamon

2 cups self rising flour  
3 eggs  
2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice

**Directions:** Cream oil and sugar together. Beat in eggs one at a time. Mix up well and pour into two greased loaf pans and bake at 325 degree or about 60 minutes—check with toothpick—if it comes out clean its ready. You can add 3/4 cups chopped pecans, or walnuts if you like.

**Nutrition Facts:** Total fat 117.9g, Saturated Fat 16.7g, Cholesterol 317.2mg, Dietary Fiber 4.2g, Protein 21.9g.

## Orange Creamsicle Salad.

1 (3 1/4 oz. pkg. tapioca pudding  
1 (3 1/4 oz.) pkg. instant vanilla pudding  
1 (3oz) pkg. orange flavored gelatin  
2 1/4 cups water  
1 (8 oz.) container whipped topping  
2 (10 oz.) cans mandarin oranges, drained

**Directions:** Combine pudding mixes, gelatin and water, stirring well. Cook over medium heat while stirring constantly until mixture comes to a boil. Cool. Stir in whip topping and oranges and chill well. **NOTE:** Even though this recipe is cooked, the vanilla pudding mix is instant. This is not a mistake.

**Nutrition Facts:** Calories from fat 67, Total Fat 7.4g, Saturated Fat 6.2g, cholesterol 0.0. mg, Total Carbohydrate 47.7g, Dietary Fiber 1.3g, Protein 1.7g.



## Upcoming Dates

- Oct 4** 18th Annual Old Town Wild West Festival
- Oct 11** Mak'N'Tak—\$10 pre-register by October 3, 2014—918.423.4120—Flyer enclosed
- Oct 25** Make A Difference Day  
3rd & Chadick—7:30 a.m.
- Oct 25** 4-H Banquet 6 p.m.—EXPO
- Oct 25** Trick or Treat on Choctaw Ave  
McAlester—5:30 to 8 p.m.
- Nov 15** Diabetes Walk—Mike Deak  
Field McAlester-Check in at 9 a.m.



*LaDell Emmons*

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**NOTE:** We have "free" pumpkin recipe booklets. Please call our office 918.423.4120 for a free copy.