

Families Matter

Handling Daily Family Life!

It's only January, and the family calendar for 2020 is already starting to fill up! **But it doesn't have to be this way!** Consider implementing a new resolution, albeit a month late!

Call it the "Slow Down the Family" Resolution.

In our fast paced parenting culture, where children's time is often spent in lessons, organized sports, and other structured activities, it can be challenging to do less and trust that our kids will do just fine. But even the doctors are urging us to slow down. Recent research is available on the subject of overscheduled kids.

Unstructured play time gives children space to create, reflect, problem solve, and become more resilient human beings.

So how, exactly, do we free up time? Here's some tips to get you started:

Re-think the family calendar - Look at all the activities, rank your priorities, and invite the kids to help decide what is most valued, and what can be let go.

Adopt a "One-Structured-Activity-at-A-Time Per Child" Policy - This helps children prioritize and decide which sport or lesson means the most to them.

"Schedule" your free time - Ensure that free time happens by writing it into your calendar. Declare Family Hang-Out Days! Own your family time.

Go outside - Natural spontaneous play and creativity will blossom! Enjoy some back-to-basics like puddle jumping and making mud pies.

MINDFUL BREATHING

Mindful breathing for at least 15 minutes a day for at least a week is very beneficial!

Make this a practice for your and your kids.

Focus on your breathing.
Get comfy.
Close your Eyes.
Set a time.
Keep practicing!

Source: Taken from an article by Lucy Rector Flippu, *Education.com*

Oklahoma State University

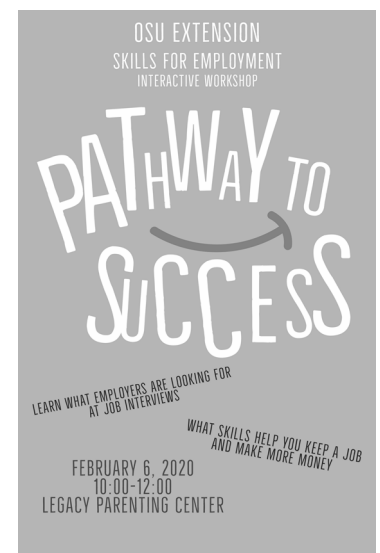
Volume 16, Issue 4

February 2020

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POTTAWATOMIE COUNTY
EXTENSION



Teaching Kindness

- ♥ Caring is something we do with words and actions.
- ♥ Kindness is using words that do not hurt people's feelings.
- ♥ When we are kind to others, they will be kind to you.
- ♥ Showing kindness is saying "please" and "thank you".
- ♥ Help friends and family with things they need done.
- ♥ Caring is doing kind and thoughtful deeds for people in need.
- ♥ Caring often means putting other people's needs before your own.
- ♥ USE Valentine's Day as a great way to talk to your kids about caring!

Hot School Lunch Coming Your Way!

Sometimes you just want to pack a hot lunch for the Kiddos! Keeping the food warm does not only make the food taste better, but keeps it safe from harmful bacteria forming in the food. Follow these easy steps to keep food safe and above 140F in an insulated food jar.

Quick Tip: To preheat your thermos simply fill it with boiling water while you are heating the food. Pour out the water and pour in the heated food. Seal and keep upright in the lunch box. By pre-heating the thermos the food stays in a safe temperature zone longer.

Simple Rules to help keep the Peace!

1. Stop when someone says "Stop." If two children are wrestling and one says "Stop" then the other must do so.
2. Knock before you enter someone's bedroom.
3. Ask before you use something that belongs to someone else.
4. You are responsible for what your body does—accident or not.

Respect people's needs for space

Tips for using Digital Media Wisely

1. Focus on media containing a strong learning component to teach similar skills they are learning in school or pre-school readiness. They should be learning through the play not just being entertained.
2. Set a time limit and content restriction on any device used by your child.
3. Look for games where two people are needed for play. This encourages interaction with the game and another "real" person.
4. Focus on interactive apps and games, not passive screen watching.
5. Remember to monitor how long your child is in front of any screen—computer, smart phone, TV, etc. For young children, it should be less than 2 hours a day for kids under 5.

Source: NAEYC and Fundamentally Children

Kiwi Lollipops

Use a paring knife to remove the skin from 3-4 ripe, but firm kiwis. Slice into 1/2- to 3/4-inch-thick rounds. Insert a lollipop stick into each kiwi slice and push about halfway up. Melt 1/3 cup white chocolate chips in a glass bowl for 30-45 seconds in the microwave. Stir until smooth. Dip the top of each kiwi slice into the melted chocolate, using a spoon to help adhere and smooth the chocolate as needed. Place onto a parchment-lined tray or plate and add sprinkles. Place in the fridge for 5 minutes to set.

Tip: These can be prepared and held in the refrigerator up to 4 hours.



Source: Parents.com

Tip to Relieve Winter Chapped Hands

Dry, cold winter air strips all of our skin of nourishing oils, especially the face, lips and hands. It might sound counter-intuitive to suggest you strip away layers of skin at this dry time of year. But it's a great hand-protector to do so regularly; because those dry, cracked areas of your skin are actually dead....and once they're gone, fresh, nourished skin can show itself.

Source: Healthy Living

Make a Home-made Exfoliate

Mix a small handful of kosher salt with a few glugs of olive or grape seed oil = moisture and exfoliation in one shot!

National Dental Month

The
"Do The Daily 4"
message



1. Brushing our teeth 2x a day
2. Daily flossing
3. Rinsing w mouthwash daily
4. Chewing sugar-free gum

Listen to your Heart

Find an old stethoscope and let your children use it to listen to their hearts. Encourage them to describe the sound the heart makes as it beats. Let them listen to one another's hearts after doing jumping jacks. What differences can they hear in the heartbeats?

Talk about how we can keep our heart healthy.



Combo Snacks For the Win!

In a study from Cornell University, kids who were served a combo snack of cheese and vegetables were satisfied after eating fewer calories than those who munched on potato chips. That's probably because protein-rich cheese and water-and fiber-rich veggies are both naturally filling foods.

Try one, or all, of these tricks with virtually any veg:

- Add salt – A sprinkle of salt can help tame a vegetable's bitterness. Don't be afraid to season produce. We hear a lot about the need to reduce sodium in our diets, but the vast majority of the sodium Americans consume is in processed foods, not fresh foods with a little salt on top.
- Add lemon or lime juice – A squeeze of acid, like citrus, on a vegetable can help brighten its flavor and make it seem less bitter. Plus, the Vitamin C in citrus can help make the vitamins in vegetables more available to the body.
- Add some fat – A drizzle of butter or olive oil makes pretty much anything taste better and vegetables are no exception. Like Vitamin C, fat can help unlock some of the nutrients in vegetables.
- Add a touch of sugar – A thin drizzle of honey or even a little maple syrup in a glaze can help the vegetables go down much easier.
- Add some cheese – Who can resist veggies topped with a little grated Parmesan cheese? (Not me.)
- Serve with pasta – Almost any of these veggies can be served with pasta, such as penne. Top with a little olive oil and cheese for a healthy, delicious dinner. A bit of bacon or sausage in the mix is also delicious.

Source: Parents Family Feed

The Families Matter E-newsletter is one way the Pottawatomie County Cooperative Extension Service, Family & Consumer Science programs provides educational resources in our community.

Families Matter E-news
Is published by the following:

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POTTAWATOMIE COUNTY
EXTENSION

Old-Fashioned Valentines

Give your main squeeze an old-fashioned valentine that shows off your crafty side.

Here's how: Set up a card-making station with colored paper heart cards and baskets of supplies—patterned tape, decorative-edge scissors, stamps and ink pads, markers, glitter glue, colored pens, stickers, ribbons, sequins and buttons.

Source: Family Circle, February 2017



No-CANDY Valentine Ideas

Sticker Page—with a tag that says “Thanks for sticking with me Valentine”

Bubbles —At discount stores you can find small “gift” containers of bubbles. Attached tag: “You Blow me Away!”

Balloon— attach a deflated balloon to small piece of card stock with the saying “You make my heart POP!”

Drinking Straw— At discount stores find fun drinking straws. Attached tag: “You are Ex-STRAW Special!”

Playdough— Get individual playdough “mini” containers. Attached tag: “Doh you want to be my Valentine”

Source: iheartnaptime.net—50 non-candy valentine ideas.

Valentine's Day Pizza

1 refrigerator biscuit per person
1 Tablespoons pizza sauce/biscuit
Assorted vegetables, cut small (olives, mushrooms, peppers, onion, etc)
2 Tablespoons shredded cheese.

Shape each biscuit into a heart shape. Spoon on pizza sauce. Add vegetables and top with cheese. Place on a cookie sheet and bake at 350 degrees until biscuit is cooked through.

Shepard Pie Nutrition:

12 Servings: 220 Calories, 5g total fat, 2.5g saturated fat, 70mg cholesterol, 180mg sodium, 19g carbohydrates, 3g fiber, 3g sugars, 24g protein

Quick Fix Recipes -Sheppard's Pie

Mashed Potatoes (or about 4 cups of leftover mashed potatoes)

2 pounds potatoes peeled, chopped, & boiled
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons 2% milk
¼ teaspoon salt

Beef Mixture

2 pounds lean ground beef
1 ½ cups frozen peas
1 cup carrots chopped
½ cup onion chopped
1 tablespoons dried or fresh rosemary
1 tablespoon thyme
¼ cup Worcestershire sauce
2 tablespoons minced garlic

Heat the oven to 350 degrees. Mash the potatoes with the butter, milk, and salt. You can also use leftover mashed potatoes.

Brown the ground beef in a large skillet over medium to medium high heat.

When the beef is mostly browned, add in peas, carrots, onion, rosemary, thyme, Worcestershire sauce, and garlic. Stir and combine until beef is completely browned.

In a 9 by 13-inch pan, make a layer of the beef mixture and then make a layer of the potatoes.

Bake in the oven for 35 to 40 minutes and broil on high for 5 minutes to brown the potatoes on top.