



# Families Matter

## Family Gardening for Great Taste and Learning

Gardening offers family fun. In a garden, you can be active, relax, and spend time together. Growing vegetables or herbs teaches children that plants, like people, need food and water to grow and stay healthy. Caring for plants helps develop responsibility. It also builds self-esteem when kids see what they can grow. A garden can teach your child about foods. Kids usually taste what they grow!

- **Find** a sunny place.
  - **Make** the soil ready in the container or in the garden.
  - **Plant** seeds or small plants in the soil.
  - **Water** plants when they are thirsty.
  - **Measure** plants as they grow and vegetables form. Talk about it.
  - **Pull** the weeds.
  - **Pick** vegetables or herbs when they are ready.
  - **Wash** the food.
  - **Make** something to eat with your family. Use the food you pick.
  - **Eat** and enjoy it!
- What a child would need:**
- Containers for container gardens: milk or juice cartons, empty and clean bleach bottle, dishpan, plastic bucket, bushel basket.
  - Garden plot: a 2 foot plot is big enough. Preparing the soil may be difficult for young children.
  - Child-size tools: watering can, hose, small shovel, old spoon or fork, small rake, digging stick, hoe and spade, sticks to label plants.
  - Seeds or seedlings (young plants).
  - Water from your hose or watering can.
  - Soil for container gardens.
  - Fertilizer: compost, manure, chemical types.

### Gardening teaches valuable lessons to kids of all ages:

Responsibility  
“Yes, you have to water the seedlings every day”

Patience  
“The strawberries will taste much better when they turn red”

Humility  
“We just can’t win against a drought!”

Respect for Mother Nature  
“Who knew last night’s frost would take out the tomato plants?”



Source: University of Kentucky Extension Service

## Oklahoma State University

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**Make Family Mealtime a Priority!**  
Kids who eat a meal with their families learn  
and get along better with peers better

**Simple Tips:**

Shop your Pantry and Freezer  
Have Theme Dinners  
Do Simple Sides  
Plan Leftovers  
Utilize the Web and Friends!

**Shop your Pantry and Freezer First:** Before you head off to the store. Look to see what items you have on hand and what ingredients you might need to turn those into meals.

**Theme Nights:** Dinners come together faster when you don't have to think about the parts. Themes like; Mexican, pasta, etc. help you come up with a main dish and quick sides to help round out your meal plan. Or, themes can be Soup on Wednesdays, or grilling on Fridays.

**Simple Sides:** Make sure you keep your side dishes simple. Utilize quick cooking methods for vegetables like microwave steaming, or throw in a pan and bake it items. A good guide is two vegetables or a fruit and vegetable.

**Plan Leftovers:** Make more of certain items to use as leftovers or "planned overs" later in the week.

**Green Food!**

March and St. Patrick's Day is a great time to introduce green food to young kids.

Talk about how green food, is good for you.

At least 3 days a week we need to eat green leafy vegetables.

Green grapes, green peas, bell peppers are great finger foods.

## Dip Baby Dip!



**What's healthy to dip with?**

**Fresh Fruit Wedges & Slices**

Apples Pears Peaches Oranges  
Grapes Berries Pineapple Mango

**Veggie Slices & Sticks**

Carrots Celery Cucumber Tomatoes  
Zucchini Asparagus Broccoli  
Green Beans Bell Peppers Sweet Peas

**Whole Grain Crackers**

Pretzels

Baked Pita Chips

Mini Rice Cakes

Unsalted Tortilla Chips

## Fruit Dip Deluxe!!

- 1 1/2 cups nonfat vanilla Greek yogurt
- 1 cup reduced fat creamy peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Mix all ingredients in a bowl. Refrigerate 30 minutes or longer. Eat within 3-4 days.

(10) 1/4 cup servings: 180 calories, 10g Fat, 1.5g Saturated Fat, 0mg Cholesterol, 170mg Sodium, 2g Fiber, 10g Protein

## Don't Double Dip!

**-Dip Etiquette-**

Wash your hands before anything!!

Add a spoon to the dip!  
This will remind people not to dip, instead serve dip on a plate.

Make individual snack cups.  
Try serving dip ahead of time in small cups, place your veggies or fruit inside the cup! Super easy and no sharing!



It's ok to flip! Let's say your dipped with a carrot...it's ok to flip the carrot to the other end and re-dip!

# Get Your Kids Ready for Storm Season

In October—National Fire Safety Month, we spend a lot of time talking to kids about fire prevention, making a fire exit plan and checking our smoke detectors.

March and April are great months to begin this same activity to help kids get ready and be prepared for storm season.

## Make sure your child knows the following:

- Where is the safe place they should go when they hear a tornado warning.
- If they are home alone what number do they call before and after they enter the safe place.
- Where their GO Bag is!

It is even better if they practice going into the safe place on a non-stormy day. For example: they need to go into the cellar, closet, bathroom or safe room with their helmet on and ER bag in tow! This helps them get used to the surrounding when they are not stressed.

## Build a Kid Kit or GO Bag!

Being prepared for a storm can help make it less scary. Help your kids build a storm kit of their own.

Include a flashlight, bike helmet, juice box and crackers, a small toy or stuffed animal, crayons and paper, and books for them to take along if they need to take shelter.

This will help them feel more in control and less likely to feel as scared.

TEXT during a storm—don't call. Many times lines are tied up with high call volume but texts will go through.



**FEMA.gov**  
**redcross.org**



For great  
resources for  
you and your family!

## Commercial Break Shuffle:

Kids sit a lot at school, while doing homework and then in front of the TV or holding a tablet/phone! Make commercial time exercise time!

Each time a commercial or pop-up ad comes on, get up and move—run in place, do jumping jacks, walk or march, do sit ups, etc.

Each commercial break has about 3-5 minutes worth of moving! OR make them stand up while playing a game or watching videos.

## The Power of 10 for Wealth

- Save an extra \$10 a week. That's \$1 a day plus pocket change.
- Pay yourself first by saving 10% of your gross income each paycheck.
- Look for ways to cut expenses by \$10 per month.
- Set financial goals for 10 years in the future.

Source: [navigatinglife@uaex.edu](mailto:navigatinglife@uaex.edu)



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## March Activities

**Red Light Green Light:** Use a piece of red and green paper to play red light, green light. Hold up the green paper to signal "go" and red to signal "stop" this is a great active indoor game.

**Shamrock Sponge:** Cut a small sponge or wash cloth into the shape of a shamrock and place it on a plate. Let your child sprinkle some seeds on the sponge or cloth and set the plate in the sunlight. Show your child how to add a little water to the plate and keep it damp. Soon your shamrock will be covered with green!

**Wind Experiments:** Use a feather, a balloon and fan to show your child about wind. Choose a couple of heavy objects and ask your child which one will blow around in the wind. Talk to your child about how powerful the wind can be and what to do if there is a tornado. It is important to talk about emergency situations before it happens.

**Bag Kites:** This is an easy fun activity for those windy days of March. Give each child a small paper bag. Let them decorate with crayons and markers. Punch a hole on the top side of the bag near the opening and tie a piece of yarn through the hole. (you may wish to reinforce the hole with tape) Show your child how the kites will fill with air and fly up and down when they run.

## Quick Fix Recipes

### Margarita Chicken

(4) 4 ounces boneless chicken breasts

1 tablespoon lime zest  
1/2 cup lime juice  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
5 cloves garlic minced  
1/4 cup cilantro chopped  
2 teaspoons cumin  
1 teaspoon kosher salt  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper  
1/4 cup olive oil

1. Slice chicken breasts into strips.
2. Prepare marinade by zesting 1 lime zest, juicing limes and lemon, mincing garlic, chopping cilantro and measuring cumin, kosher salt, black pepper, and olive oil.

3. Place a resealable plastic bag inside of a sturdy bowl. Fold over the top to avoid a messy seal and open the inside of the bag to create a bowl like shape.
4. Add chicken and marinade ingredients to the resealable bag.
5. Seal the plastic bag and marinate the chicken in the refrigerator for 3 to 12 hours. The more time you allow for the chicken to marinate, the more flavorful it will be.
6. Choose a cooking method—grill, oven or slow cooker.

4 servings: 250 calories, 13g Fat, 2g Saturated Fat, 85mg Cholesterol, 540mg Sodium, 5g Carbohydrates, 0g Fiber, 27g Protein

Margarita Chicken:  
Choose a Cooking Method  
that works for you!

**Grill**—Preheat grill to medium-high heat. Place chicken on grill and discard the marinade to avoid cross-contamination. Grill for 3-5 minutes on each side or until the chicken reaches a minimum internal temperature of 165°F.

**Oven** – Preheat oven to 350°F. Place chicken in an oven safe dish with half of the marinade. Bake for 45-60 minutes or until the chicken reaches an internal temperature of 165°F. Be sure to discard remaining marinade to avoid cross-contamination.

**Slow Cooker** – Place chicken and marinade in a crockpot. Add 1 cup of water. Cook on low for 6-7 hours. Or cook on high for 4 hours. Make sure the chicken reaches an internal temperature of 165°F.