



## Family Fun and Family Connections Newsletters

Dear 4-H Adventures Leader,

The experiences children have in 4-H Adventures help them to develop:

- A positive self-concept
- Life skills that enhance self-understanding, social interaction, decision-making, and physical development
- Knowledge in sciences, literature, and the arts through the experiential learning process
- Positive attitudes about learning
- Ongoing relationships with caring adults and older youth who serve as positive role models
- Family and community relationships
- An understanding of and appreciation for social and cultural diversity

In support of these goals, we are pleased to offer you two series of newsletters titled *Family Fun* and *Family Connections*. Both sets complement the six learning areas in the *Off to Adventure* curriculum.

Each *Family Fun* newsletter provides an overview of a learning area, suggests enjoyable family activities, and recommends exemplary children's literature and Web sites related to the topic. The *Family Connections* newsletters provide research-based ideas for promoting positive family relationships.

Download, copy, and distribute the newsletters to the families participating in your 4-H Adventures club. Although it is possible to distribute each series separately, the newsletters were designed to complement one another (see "Content Overview" on the next page).

We hope you will use these materials to encourage children and their families to learn and to have fun together!

## Content Overview

### Community

- Family Fun with Community
- Family Connections: Sharing Family Stories with Children

### Nature

- Family Fun with Nature
- Family Connections: The Power of Listening

### Science and Technology

- Family Fun with Science and Technology
- Family Connections: Family Problem Solving

### Animals

- Family Fun with Animals
- Family Connections: Showing Love and Appreciation

### Expressive Arts

- Family Fun with Expressive Arts
- Family Connections: Encouraging Your Child's Self Expression

### Foods and Nutrition

- Family Fun with Foods and Nutrition
- Family Connections: Teaching Life Skills

### 4-H Adventures Family Fun

- Certificate of Participation



© 2003 Oregon State University. This publication may be photocopied or reprinted in its entirety for noncommercial purposes.

Produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties. Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials—*without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, disability, or disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status*. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Published May 2003.



## Family Fun with Community

### Dear Family,

When children enter grade school, their world broadens. They move beyond their backyards and neighborhoods into the larger community. This is a perfect time for children to begin to learn how they can make their communities better places for themselves and for others.

Being good citizens means going beyond our own interests and showing concern for the needs of others. Parents can help their children become good citizens by encouraging them to do the following things:

- Cooperate with others
- Be good neighbors
- Obey rules and laws
- Respect people
- Care about others
- Respect the principles of democracy

### Family activities

- Talk with your child about someone you think is a good citizen. Explain why you think she or he is a good citizen.
- Share a rule from school or a law in your community that you feel is important, and tell why you feel that way. Ask your child to share his or her thoughts about important rules at school.



- Help your child help someone in need. For example, you and your child could rake leaves for an elderly neighbor.
- Visit community organizations, such as the police and fire departments, to teach your child about public service.
- Volunteer with your child to collect food for a local Food Bank.
- During a family talk, have each family member tell what it means to be a good neighbor. Discuss ways that your family could become even better neighbors.
- Watch a movie (be sure it is appropriate for your child's age) about the civil rights movement or about other groups who have worked to fight injustice.
- Involve your child when you vote and explain the importance of voting.

## Children's books about community

Kids benefit from reading aloud together with parents, even after they have become good readers. Here are a few suggestions for books that you can find in your library or local bookstore.

*Baseball Saved Us* by Ken Mochizuki (1993). A Japanese-American boy learns the importance of family, community, and teamwork during the time of internment camps in the 1940s.

*Come a Tide* by George Ella Lyon (1990). A charming and funny tale of a community in Harlan County, Kentucky, working together to cope with a flood.

*Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* by Doreen Rappaport (2001). This book is an elegant pictorial biography of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life. Using Dr. King's own words, the author creates an effective, age-appropriate portrayal of one of the world's greatest civil rights leaders.

*A New Coat for Anna* by Harriet Ziefert (1986). In war-ravaged Europe, Anna and her mother meet all of the people and animals needed to make Anna's new coat. This story is an optimistic view of people coming together during difficult times. It ends with a Christmas celebration.

## Related Web sites

Character Counts!

<http://www.charactercounts.org>

The Museum at Warm Springs

<http://www.warmsprings.com/community/ent/museum.htm>

## References

Some of the ideas in this newsletter were adapted from:

*Focus on Character*, University of Illinois Extension.

*Lori A. McGraw, former 4-H program coordinator, 4-H Youth Development Education; and Rachel Ozretich, former program coordinator, Family and Community Development, Oregon State University.*



© 2003 Oregon State University. This publication may be photocopied or reprinted in its entirety for noncommercial purposes.

Produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties. Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials—without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, disability, or disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Published May 2003.



## Family Connections Sharing Family Stories with Children

**T**he early grade-school years are a good time for parents, other relatives, and family friends to tell children about interesting experiences from the past. During this stage of life, children are very interested in learning more about their families. Children often love to hear these family stories over and over again!

Listening to family stories helps children begin to learn about the communities in which their relatives have lived, and the different ways in which the community might have shaped their lives. For example, a story about Grandfather's childhood job to pick up and deliver laundry according to the mill town's lunch-hour and six-o'clock whistles shows the role the mill played in his life.

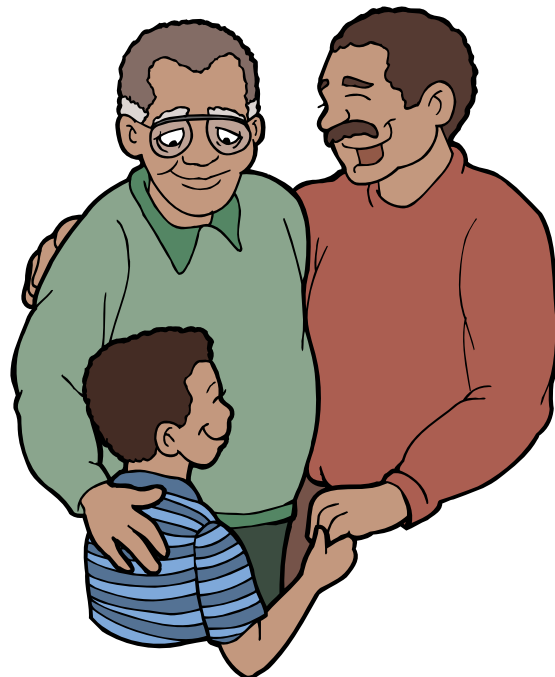
### Family stories help children build meaningful ties

These ties strengthen families and build emotional health in children. Family stories help children build a sense of family identity by giving them a rich weaving of family history. Through this family history, children gain a sense of belonging. Also, telling family stories is great fun—for parents and

children alike! Children often will adopt a family story or two that they like to share with their relatives whenever they can.

### Family stories often offer important lessons about life

For example, knowing how shy her mother was in grade school might help a child treat a shy classmate with kindness. Hearing about how a grandparent always told the absolute truth might help a child value honesty.



To get started, try pulling out some old photos that remind you of family stories. Spend some time reviewing in your mind family events you would like to share with your child. Ask other family members what they can remember about past events that interest you.

Almost anytime is a good time to share family stories, but telling them at family mealtimes and holidays can be especially

rewarding. Not all family stories are right for children, of course. However, it is amazing how many of our experiences can be shared as stories, building family strengths and teaching important life lessons.

*Rachel Ozretich, former program coordinator, Family and Community Development; and Lori A. McGraw, former 4-H program coordinator, 4-H Youth Development Education, Oregon State University.*



© 2003 Oregon State University. This publication may be photocopied or reprinted in its entirety for noncommercial purposes.

Produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties. Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials *without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, disability, or disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status*. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Published May 2003.



## Family Fun with Nature

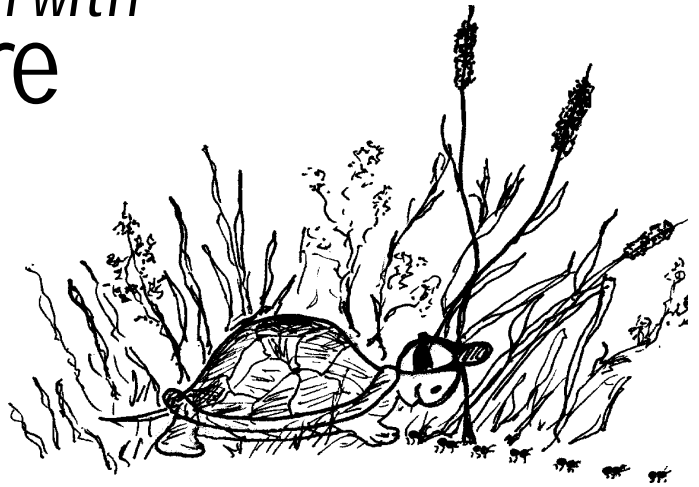
### Dear Family,

There are many chances for children to discover how the natural world works, if we look for them. Learning about our dependence on nature and natural resources is a first step in understanding how to be good stewards of the land. Though children might spend less time outdoors than in times past, parents still can teach them valuable lessons about the natural world around us.

Children can learn to care about the natural world. Caring doesn't happen automatically. Instead, children learn to care by practicing acts of caring. Through experiences in nature and acts of caring, children can learn valuable lessons about managing natural resources well.

Parents can encourage their children to become good stewards of the land by helping them learn some of the following ideas.

- Every type of animal, plant, and other living thing has a role to play in nature.
- Saving energy is important.
- Kids can help provide food and shelter for living things.
- Growing their own plants can be rewarding.
- Families can help protect the natural world by reducing, reusing, and recycling the materials they use in everyday life.



### Family activities

- Take walks through your neighborhood to discover the wildlife that lives there.
- Visit the ocean, mountains, and high desert scenic areas with your child. Teach her or him how to be in these places safely.
- Take your child to an aquarium, zoo, museum, or other place that teaches about our natural world.
- Give your child the responsibility of keeping the bird feeder filled throughout the winter. Read books about different kinds of birds.
- Help your child make a bird or bat house.
- Encourage your child to plant and care for a small vegetable garden. Help him or her to prepare the harvest for a meal.
- With your child, create and use a plan to reduce the amount of your family's garbage.
- Have your children help you return bottles and soda cans to the grocery store. Let them keep the refund money to reward their efforts.

## Children's books about nature

Kids benefit from reading aloud together with parents, even after they have become good readers. Here are a few suggestions for books that you can find in your library or local bookstore.

*The Gardener* by Sarah Stewart (1997).

During the Great Depression, a young girl makes her urban world brighter through gardening.

*Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen (1987). A father and his young daughter take a midnight walk to search for an owl in the light of a full moon.

*Time of Wonder* by Robert McCloskey (1977).

Two sisters discover the natural world and its rhythms during a summer in Penobscot Bay, Maine.

*Where the River Begins* by Thomas Locker

(1984). Two young boys and their grandfather explore a river from its source to where it meets the sea.

## Related Web sites

National Wildlife Federation

<http://www.nwf.org>

National Gardening Association, Kids Page

<http://www.kidsgardening.com>

Oregon Coast Aquarium

<http://www.aquarium.org/home.htm>

The High Desert Museum

<http://www.highdesert.org>

## References

Some of the ideas in this newsletter were adapted from:

*Focus on Character*, University of Illinois Extension.

*Mud, Muck and Other Wonderful Things*, National 4-H Council.

*Lori A. McGraw, former 4-H program coordinator, 4-H Youth Development Education; and Rachel Ozretich, former program coordinator, Family and Community Development, Oregon State University.*



© 2003 Oregon State University. This publication may be photocopied or reprinted in its entirety for noncommercial purposes.

Produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties. Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials—without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, disability, or disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Published May 2003.





## Family Connections

# The Power of Listening

**W**hen you and your child explore the natural world, take time to listen carefully, not only to the sounds of nature, but also to your child. Being a good listener is one of the most powerful ways to nurture children and build strong family relationships.

A child who feels she or he can talk with a parent about anything will feel there is a close adult to rely on during hard times. If you build good listening habits early in your child's life, you can help keep the lines of communication open through the more difficult adolescent years.

### Types of listening skills

One of the most important skills for parents is called *extended listening*. This simply means to listen *without interrupting* for an *extended period* of time, responding only with a few "I'm listening" cues.

"I'm listening" cues include sitting down and making eye contact, and saying things such as:

- "Oh?"
- "Uh-huh."
- "I see."
- "You did?"
- "M-mm."

You also can use "tell me more" messages to let your child know you are interested. Try saying:

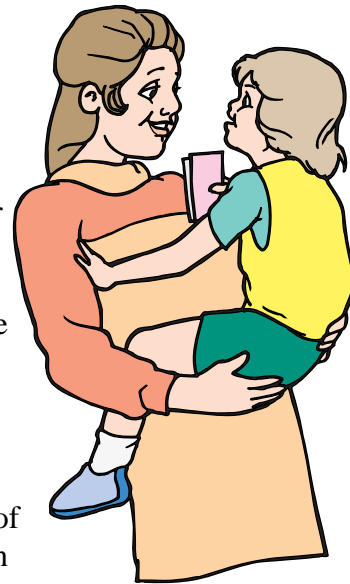
"Tell me more."

"What happened then?"

"How did you feel about that?"

Keeping silent and listening without interrupting can be the hardest part of extended listening. It can help to promise yourself that you will find a good time later to bring up the subject again and share your point of view.

It is more important to keep the lines of communication open over the long run than to try to "fix things" in the short run.



## Schedule times without radio, music, or TV

A long, quiet time makes it easier for children to think and talk. Sometimes the best communication happens when you and your child are doing something physical, such as cooking, driving, or playing basketball. There also might be special times of the day when your child feels like talking. Take advantage of these special moments.

It is also important that we keep our children's secrets if we want them to continue

to confide in us. The secret of a first crush is just as important to an eight-year-old as it is to an adolescent.

Being a good listener is one of the most powerful skills parents can develop for nurturing children and building strong family relationships—and it is very rewarding, too!

*Rachel Ozretich, former program coordinator, Family and Community Development; and Lori A. McGraw, former 4-H program coordinator, 4-H Youth Development Education, Oregon State University.*



© 2003 Oregon State University. This publication may be photocopied or reprinted in its entirety for noncommercial purposes.

Produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties. Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials *without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, disability, or disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status*. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Published May 2003.



# Family Fun with Science and Technology

## Dear Family,

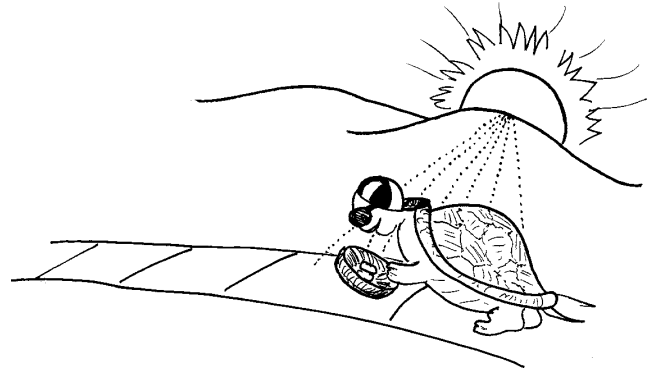
Children are serious scientists! They are keen observers and are interested in the workings of the world around them. Parents can encourage their children's natural curiosity by asking them to think about *why*, *how*, *where*, *how much*, and *what would happen if* questions. Parents also can help their children learn by setting up fun science projects for them.

4-H promotes a "learn by doing" model that helps children explore, reflect on, and apply knowledge. Parents can use this process to teach science. Here are the basics:

- **Explore (Do).** Children explore and learn when they are involved in a hands-on activity.
- **Reflect.** Children reflect on an activity when they think about and then discuss the activity.
- **Apply.** To complete the learning process, children must apply what they learn to their everyday lives.

## Family activities

- Visit a science and technology museum, particularly one that has hands-on activities for children.



- Have the whole family watch a science program geared towards children. Discuss the television show afterwards.
- Using ideas from books listed on the back of this page, set up hands-on science projects in your home. Follow the "learn by doing" model to help your child think about and apply what she or he has learned to daily life.
- Help your child learn about the wide variety of careers in science and engineering.
- Arrange a field trip to a laboratory in your community. For example, your child's 4-H Adventures club could visit a high school science lab or one in a hospital.
- Take your child on a ride on a train or boat to explore different kinds of transportation. Teach him or her about forms of transportation that are rarely used today; for example, a covered wagon.
- Discuss machines used in your home. Don't forget vacuum cleaners, washing

machines, and stoves. Ask your child to think about what life would be like without these machines.

## Children's books about science and technology

Kids benefit from reading aloud together with parents, even after they have become good readers. Here are a few suggestions for books that you can find in your library or local bookstore.

*The Dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins* by Barbara Kerley (2001). This book depicts the life of a little-known Victorian-era artist, Waterhouse Hawkins, whose dreams of dinosaurs propelled him to be the first person to sketch, mold, and make life-size models of dinosaurs from fossils.

*The Glorious Flight* by Alice and Martin Provensen (1983). This lovely picture book is about Louis Bleirot's flight across the English Channel. Bleirot used his personal fortune to prove to the world that the sea was no longer a barrier for the airplane.

*The Way Things Work* by David Macaulay (1988). This book offers a complete and simple view of how things work. The

author covers topics on the mechanics of movement, harnessing the elements, working with waves, electricity, and automation. Though this is not a story-book, both children and parents will appreciate the concepts it illustrates.

*365 Simple Science Experiments with Everyday Materials* by Richard Churchill et al. (1997). These 365 extraordinary experiments with ordinary objects will entertain the whole family! Well illustrated and easy to use, this guide gives lots of hands-on ideas for children to learn science concepts. The book is written for children ages 9–12; younger children will need help.

## Related Web sites

National Air and Space Museum  
<http://www.nasm.edu>

Oregon Museum of Science and Industry  
<http://www.oms.edu>

Gilbert House Children's Museum  
<http://acgilbert.org/about.htm>

*Lori A. McGraw, former 4-H program coordinator, 4-H Youth Development Education; and Rachel Ozretich, former program coordinator, Family and Community Development, Oregon State University.*



© 2003 Oregon State University. This publication may be photocopied or reprinted in its entirety for noncommercial purposes.

Produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties. Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials—without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, disability, or disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Published May 2003.



## Family Connections

# Family Problem Solving

One of the most common tasks scientists do in their work is to solve problems. They must look at the problem from different angles, gather data, and think about possible solutions. Finally, they decide on one solution and give it a try. Families can use this way to solve common problems that affect family members.

Research shows that families solving problems together create positive parent-child relationships and child behaviors. Children who take part in family problem solving also gain practice in skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Following are the basic steps for family problem solving.

### 1. Sit down together.

Gather everyone together at a convenient time and in a comfortable place. Turn off TV sets, telephones, radios, or other distractions.

### 2. Define the problem.

It is often best to state the problem in the form of a simple question. For example, you could state the problem like this: "How can we get everyone ready to leave the house on time in the morning?"

*It is very important not to criticize or blame anyone during this process!* The rules should be "No criticizing" and "No put-downs."



### 3. List possible solutions

Ask each family member to think of possible solutions for the problem. It is important to respect all suggestions, and to encourage creative and even wild ideas. This helps everyone think more creatively. Have someone write down all of the suggestions. Wait to discuss or judge the solutions until everyone's ideas have been jotted down and you have a long list.

### 4. Decide on a solution

Discuss each idea respectfully, and imagine what might happen if the family used it. Cross out those that one or more family members cannot accept. Once everyone agrees on a solution (or a combination of two or more solutions) to try, make a plan. Plan exactly how, when, and who will do what.

## 5. Try it and check on it

Check in with *all* family members after a week or two to see how the plan is working. Make adjustments if you need to, or repeat the problem-solving process from the beginning.

A really tough problem might take several sessions to solve. But, a good outcome is well worth the effort, especially when the

■ problem-solving process itself builds  
■ children's social skills and understanding and  
■ strengthens the family bond.

■ *Rachel Ozretich, former program coordinator, Family  
■ and Community Development; and Lori A. McGraw,  
■ former 4-H program coordinator, 4-H Youth Develop-  
■ ment Education, Oregon State University.*



© 2003 Oregon State University. This publication may be photocopied or reprinted in its entirety for noncommercial purposes.

Produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties. Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials *without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, disability, or disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status*. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Published May 2003.



## Family Fun with Animals

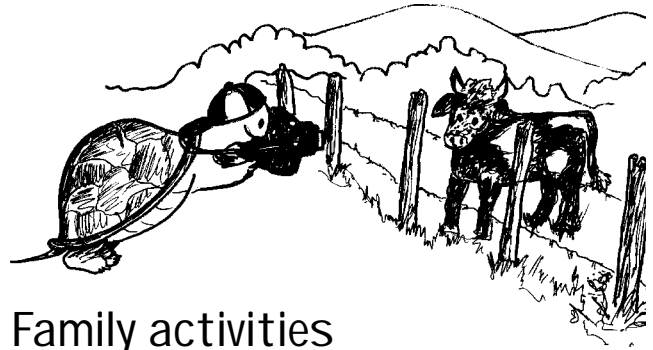
Dear Family,

Many children are fascinated with animals. A scene from the story *Charlotte's Web* describes a child's love for her pig: "Fern loved Wilbur more than anything. She loved to stroke him, to feed him, to put him to bed. Every morning, as soon as she got up, she warmed his milk, tied his bib, and held the bottle for him."

Children enjoy learning about animals, and they also gain new life skills through their experiences with animals. Caring for animals can help children develop a sense of responsibility and understanding for other living beings. Caring for and playing with animals can help children learn to learn, relate to others, make decisions, and understand themselves and others.

It is important that children know animals and the part they play in our lives. From animals we get food, clothing, medicine, and other products important to our daily lives. Animals also can be our companions.

Animals need food, water, and shelter, like we do. They often depend on us to take care of their needs. People of all ages can learn about our important relationship with animals.



### Family activities

- Visit a zoo, farm, pet store, or feed store.
- Visit the Humane Society.
- Talk about ways that your child can help care for a family pet. For example, a child can help keep a pet's water dish full. Remember: it is normal for children to need reminders to complete their tasks.
- Talk about different types of foods people eat that come from animals. Encourage your child to write down everything he or she eats for 2 days. Then, ask your child to tell which foods are partly or entirely from animals.
- Visit a grocery store and do an Animal Product Scavenger Hunt. Encourage your child to find as many animal products as she or he can. Write down how much each product costs.
- Have your child make a scrapbook of different pets and/or farm animals. For each animal, include the kind of food and shelter the animal needs.
- Visit a local veterinary clinic to see how veterinarians take care of animals.

## Children's books about animals

Kids benefit from reading aloud together with parents even after they have become good readers. Here are a few suggestions for books that you can find in your library or local bookstore.

*The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses* by Paul Goble (1978). A Native American girl is given the opportunity to live in a beautiful land among the wild horses she loves.

*Lassie Come Home* by Rosemary Wells (1995). This is a well-illustrated version of the time-honored tale of love between a boy and his dog.

*Ox-Cart Man* by Donald Hall (1979). This story is a beautiful description of farm and family life in historical New England.

*The Tomten* by Astrid Lindgren (1997). During a cold, snowy winter's night, the Tomten, a small spirit and guardian of farms, provides care and encouragement to sleeping animals and children.

## Related Web sites

Oregon Ag in the Classroom  
<http://aitc.oregonstate.edu>

Oregon Zoo  
<http://www.oregonzoo.org>

4-H Virtual Farm  
[www.ext.Vt.edu/resources/4h/virtualfarm/](http://www.ext.Vt.edu/resources/4h/virtualfarm/)

Kids Korner  
[www.mda.state.mi.us/kids](http://www.mda.state.mi.us/kids)

## References

Some of the ideas in this newsletter were adapted from:

*Exploring Farm Animals*, 4-H Cooperative Curriculum System.

Lori A. McGraw, former 4-H program coordinator, 4-H Youth Development Education; and Rachel Ozretich, former program coordinator, Family and Community Development, Oregon State University.



© 2003 Oregon State University. This publication may be photocopied or reprinted in its entirety for noncommercial purposes.

Produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties. Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials—without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, disability, or disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Published May 2003.





## Family Connections Showing Love and Appreciation

**P**ets need lots of loving care. They thrive when they feel loved and appreciated. Of course, it is even more important for our children to feel loved and appreciated. Sometimes our children don't feel our affection, even though we love them very much. Messages of love and appreciation don't always get through to them.

### Tell children they are loved

Some parents find this hard to do. Sometimes it is easier to write it out in a short note than it is to say it out loud.

Sometimes children need to hear that they are loved even when we are angry with them. For example, you could say, "I don't like what you did, but I still love you very much. I will always love you."

### Messages of love and appreciation

One way to send messages of love and appreciation is through acts of nurturing. Children who receive little nurturing find it hard to believe they are loved. It is through nurturing that parents prove that their messages of love are true. Nurturing puts love into action.



When children are very young, many parents find it easy to nurture them by feeding, hugging, playing and wrestling with them. As children get older and spend less time in their parents' laps, there are many other, less obvious ways in which parents can nurture children. We often get very busy and don't realize how much our children continue to need to be nurtured every day, even as teenagers.

## What are some ways that parents nurture children?

- Spend unhurried time with them.
- Read with them.
- Play games—indoors or outside.
- Talk together and be a good listener.
- Adopt and share at least one of their interests.
- Help with homework.
- Go on outings together.
- Give them genuine compliments.
- Apologize to them when appropriate.
- Respect their individuality.
- Pay attention to them in other ways.

It can be helpful for parents to remember what was nurturing for them when they were young, and see if their children share those interests. For example, one child might share a parent's passion for fishing, while another child might prefer listening to music. It can be challenging to find the most rewarding ways to nurture children as they change and grow, but it is well worth the effort.

*Rachel Ozretich, former program coordinator, Family and Community Development; and Lori A. McGraw, former 4-H program coordinator, 4-H Youth Development Education, Oregon State University.*



© 2003 Oregon State University. This publication may be photocopied or reprinted in its entirety for noncommercial purposes.

Produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties. Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials *without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, disability, or disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status*. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Published May 2003.



## Family Fun with Expressive Arts

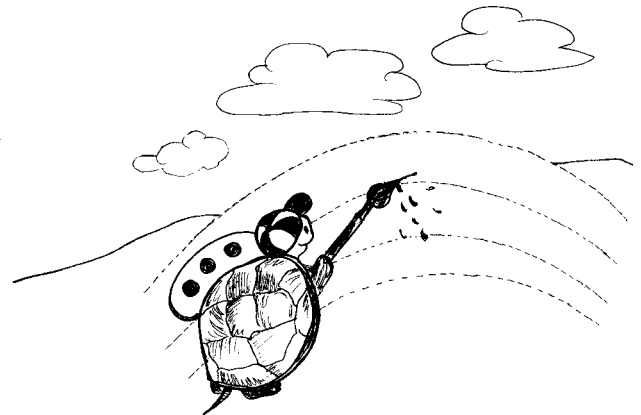
### Dear Family,

The arts are a wonderful way for parents to help their children learn about themselves and develop their creativity and imagination. The best support is to allow children to express themselves with many kinds of materials in an atmosphere that is free from judgment.

Before doing any activity, think about your children's skills, abilities, and interests. Ask yourself the following questions when you plan an arts and crafts activity:

- What can my child do easily?
- What challenges or activities excite her or him?
- What challenges or activities are too hard for him or her to attempt?
- What would discourage my child?

It's important to remember that each child has art preferences that stay constant throughout her or his life. For example, some children always draw people, while others only draw objects. Also, children tend to prefer different types of media. Some children choose pencils, markers, or paint. Others like cutting and pasting, modeling in clay, or building with blocks. Allow children to create art in ways that please them. It's a wonderful way to encourage their artistic development.



### Family activities

- Give your child different kinds of art supplies, especially those that she or he prefers.
- Take part in a parent-child pottery class.
- Visit an art museum.
- Read books about the lives of famous artists.
- Expose your child to a variety of art forms, such as music, theatre, paintings, sculpting, pottery, or weaving.
- Encourage your child to do art for the joy of doing so. Remind yourself not to judge the quality of what they make.
- Invite your child to take part in arts and crafts activities that you do yourself.
- Display your child's artwork prominently in your home.

## Children's books about creativity and expressive arts

Kids benefit from reading aloud together with parents, even after they have become good readers. Here are a few suggestions for books that you can find in your library or local bookstore.

*Annie and the Old One* by Miska Miles (1971). A granddaughter learns about the seasons of life through her grandmother and the Navajo tradition of weaving.

*Max Found Two Sticks* by J. Brian Pinkney (1997). A young boy creates music that is inspired by the sounds of the city around him and by the rhythms within himself.

*Sector 7* by David Wiesner (1999). In a whimsical, wordless picture book, author David Wiesner shows that if you are a kid who can draw, you can help others see the world in new ways. The story takes place during a boy's field trip to the Empire State Building on a cloudy day.

*Snowflake Bentley* by Jacqueline Briggs Martin (1998). A true story of how a Vermont farm boy's fascination with snow propels him into a lifelong study of snowflakes, using the tools of science and photography.

## Related Web sites

Arts and Crafts for Children  
<http://www.kinderplanet.com/index2.htm>

National Children's Coalition, Kids'/Teens' Arts, Music, Literature Resources  
<http://child.net/musicart.htm>

Portland Art Museum  
<http://www.portlandartmuseum.org>

## References

Some of the ideas in this newsletter were adapted from:

*A Palette of Fun*, 4-H Cooperative Curriculum System.

*Lori A. McGraw, former 4-H program coordinator, 4-H Youth Development Education; and Rachel Ozretich, former program coordinator, Family and Community Development, Oregon State University.*



© 2003 Oregon State University. This publication may be photocopied or reprinted in its entirety for noncommercial purposes.

Produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties. Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials—without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, disability, or disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Published May 2003.



# Family Connections Encouraging Your Child's Self Expression

**E**xploring different art forms and processes is a wonderful way for children to enjoy themselves and express themselves. Art offers children different ways to express emotions and their creative ideas.

Artistic expression flourishes when children don't have to worry about what other people think of the quality of what they make, and they just can focus on pleasing themselves. That's why it's so important for parents to show appreciation for children's artwork in ways that don't judge it. This might mean noticing small details about the work, or asking the child how he or she made it, or how she or he feels about it.

## Self expression is important

The importance of self-expression has been shown in research. We know, for example, that children are born with unique abilities and personalities or *temperaments*. Some children are quiet, some noisy, some shy, some confident. Some children are more intense, sensitive, distractable, active, or emotional. These personality traits can stay the same or change as children grow and develop over time.

Parents can support their child's temperament or individuality by making allowances for it at home, and asking others to do the same. For example, a child who has a fear of

loud noises deserves a warning before a fire drill. A child whose body is very active needs regular outdoor or large muscle exercise. When they accept their children's innate temperaments, parents give children a powerful message of love and appreciation.

## Expressing themselves freely with words and ideas

It is desirable for children to express themselves freely with words and ideas, but within the limits of good manners, of course! Exploring and experimenting with words and ideas is a critical part of children's development. When you allow your child to express

her or his feelings and ideas freely, you are sending the message, "I trust you to feel



and think for yourself, to explore and experiment with different ideas, to exercise your mind and imagination in many different ways.”



Giving your child this message creates *psychological freedom*. It is an important part of the parenting style called *authoritative parenting*. In this style of parenting, firm, age-appropriate limits on behavior are combined with nurturing and psychological freedom. Research shows that authoritative parenting helps children become strong, well-behaved, independent, and resistant to peer pressure and drug abuse.

*Rachel Ozretich, former program coordinator, Family and Community Development; and Lori A. McGraw, former 4-H program coordinator, 4-H Youth Development Education, Oregon State University.*



© 2003 Oregon State University. This publication may be photocopied or reprinted in its entirety for noncommercial purposes.

Produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties. Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials *without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, disability, or disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status*. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Published May 2003.



# Family Fun with Foods and Nutrition

## Dear Family,

The kitchen is a fascinating place for children. They love to cook, and they also are interested in how food can help their bodies and brains work better. Children feel happy when they can prepare simple foods for themselves. Even very young children can get involved by helping to set the table.

Nationally known nutrition educator, Connie Evers explains parents are the ultimate gate-keepers of their children's nutrition. The food you buy, prepare, and eat has a great influence on the attitudes and behaviors of your child. Beyond your role as a food provider and role model, however, you can do a lot to teach your child about food and nutrition.

Keep four simple ideas in mind to help you improve your child's health and nutrition:

1. Breakfast makes your child's brain work better.
2. Young bodies need to move.
3. Family meals promote good nutritional habits.
4. The Food Guide Pyramid is the foundation for healthy eating.



## Family activities

- Hang a Food Guide Pyramid on the refrigerator, and use it to involve your child in planning meals.
- Visit the grocery store, and have your child choose healthy snacks.
- Let your child help with simple tasks to prepare food.
- Take time to sit down and enjoy food together.
- Play a favorite playground or park game with your child.
- Have your child pick a favorite snack. Together, decide to which food group(s) the food belongs.
- Ask your child to name one of his or her favorite fast-food restaurants. Together, name some healthy food she or he can choose there.

## Children's books about healthy eating

Kids benefit from reading aloud together with parents, even after they have become good readers. Here are a few suggestions for books that you can find in your library or local bookstore.

*Bread and Jam for Frances* by Russell Hoban (1986). Frances is a fussy eater and will eat only bread and jam. With the help of her mother, however, Frances learns the joy of trying new foods.

*Corn is Maize: The Gift of the Indians* by Alikei (1996). Popcorn, corn on the cob, cornbread, tacos, and tortillas all come from one amazing plant. This book tells the story of how Native American farmers found and nourished a wild grass and shared their knowledge with the new settlers of America.

*Good Enough To Eat* by Lizzy Rockwell (1999). Bright, cheerful pictures focus on young children preparing and eating foods and using them to grow and stay healthy. Everyone will appreciate the clear presentation of facts about nutrients and the foods they are in.

*Magic School Bus: Inside the Human Body* by Joanna Cole (1990). Mrs. Frizzle and her class take a tour of Arnold's body while riding in the Magic School Bus!

## Food Web sites for kids and families

Fun Foods for Kids  
<http://pork4kids.com>

Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children (ages 2–6)  
<http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/KidsPyra>

Dietary Guidelines for Americans  
<http://www.usda.gov/cnpp>

## References

Some of the ideas in this newsletter were adapted from:

*How to Teach Nutrition to Kids* by Connie Liakos Evers (1998), 24 Carrot Pr.

Lori A. McGraw, former 4-H program coordinator, 4-H Youth Development Education; and Rachel Ozretich, former program coordinator, Family and Community Development, Oregon State University.



© 2003 Oregon State University. This publication may be photocopied or reprinted in its entirety for noncommercial purposes.

Produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties. Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials—without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, disability, or disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Published May 2003.





## Family Connections

# Teaching Life Skills

**L**earning the best kinds of foods to eat and how to prepare and cook them are essential life skills for boys and girls alike. There are also many other important life skills that are passed down from one generation to another within families. Children's interest in learning life skills is high during elementary school years.

Preparing food or fixing a bicycle are skills most children are ready to begin learning during this stage of their development. They also spend less time with schoolwork and friends as they are likely to do when they are older.

At first, young children might want just to watch and help out in little ways. For example, they might fetch the pliers or wash the kitchen table. As children get older, they might take pride in being able to cook a special dish or balance a checkbook or a household budget.

Grandparents or other relatives might invite children to "apprentice" with them when they have a special task to do. For example, Grandfather might have a special carpentry technique to share while building a piece of furniture, or Grandmother might want to teach a child how to prepare a special holiday food.

## Traditional and non-traditional roles

Traditional roles for boys and girls do not need to limit what they learn from their families. For example, boys can benefit from learning to mend clothes, and girls from knowing how to do household repairs.

In some cases, parents might prefer to let a child's interest guide what they spend time learning. Some children simply don't care to learn how to change the oil in the car. On the other hand, parents might decide that a certain skill is essential and require children to learn it regardless of traditional roles.



Children will benefit not only from having new skills, but also from the feelings of competence and self-worth that come with them.

- *Rachel Ozretich, former program coordinator, Family and Community Development; and Lori A. McGraw, former 4-H program coordinator, 4-H Youth Development Education, Oregon State University.*
- 
- 
- 
- 



© 2003 Oregon State University. This publication may be photocopied or reprinted in its entirety for noncommercial purposes.

Produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties. Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials *without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, disability, or disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status*. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Published May 2003.



# Family Fun Certificate of Participation

## Community

- Took part in a family activity
- Read a book about community

## Nature

- Took part in a family activity
- Read a book about nature

## Science and Technology

- Took part in a family activity
- Read a book about science and technology

## Animals

- Took part in a family activity
- Read a book about animals

## Expressive Arts

- Took part in a family activity
- Read a book about expressive arts

## Food and Nutrition

- Took part in a family activity
- Read a book about food and nutrition

\_\_\_\_\_ and  
*Child's name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Family member's name(s)*

have completed all of the *Off to Adventure* Family Fun Activities.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Leader's signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*



© 2003 Oregon State University. This publication may be photocopied or reprinted in its entirety for noncommercial purposes.

Produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties. Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials—*without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, disability, or disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status*. Oregon State University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Published May 2003.