

# Young Families

Vol. 9, 3rd Quarter

A family-focused newsletter with young children in mind

## The Impact of Unspoken Rules

Parents may teach children specific rules like saying “please and thank you.” Other communication rules may never be discussed but determine how family members behave toward each other. Families develop these patterns of communicating with each other over time, sometimes without even thinking about it. They help everyone know what to expect from each other. Certain family communication rules can be helpful and satisfying to everyone; other rules can be upsetting to certain family members. Rules may need to change over time as a family grows and develops. Here is an example of an unspoken rule that needed to be changed:

*Aloyce was very bitter about her divorce from Tim. She ignored or yelled at the children whenever his name came up. When one of the children started crying after Tim’s name was mentioned. Aloyce realized that she had created an unspoken family rule – no one was to talk about Tim. She could see how it was affecting the children. The children’s reactions helped her remember that she lost a husband, but Tim would always be their father. She knew that the children should not fear her anger when they talked about their father.*

Charlotte Shoup Olsen  
colsen@oznet.ksu.edu

## Peanuts – Friend or Foe?

For decades, the peanut butter sandwich has been a symbol of childhood – one food on which both kids and parents could agree. However, increasing numbers of food allergies in infants and children have brought the peanut under close examination.

It is now recognized that waiting to introduce peanut foods into a child’s diet is helpful in preventing allergies. Many schools and child-care centers are now “peanut-free” zones where foods containing peanuts are not allowed. To help prevent allergies in infants and very young children, the American Academy of Pediatrics announced in 2003 that women at high risk for developing allergies should avoid eating peanuts and peanut foods (including peanut butter) during pregnancy. The AAP stated that the “peanut is not an essential food,” and avoiding it during pregnancy may decrease the baby’s risk of developing a peanut allergy.

If you have specific questions about food allergies or sensitivities your family may have, contact your health care provider for advice.

Source:

Zeiger, R.S. (2003). *Food allergen avoidance in the prevention of food allergy in infants and children. Pediatrics 111, 1662-1671.*

Sandy Procter  
procter@humec.ksu.edu

## Protect Children from Dehydration

Children can easily become dehydrated when water loss is greater than water intake. Outside activities taking place in the heat and humidity increase the risk of dehydration. It is important to keep the body from becoming dehydrated. When the amount of water in the body decreases, blood volume also decreases. Dehydration reduces the absorption of oxygen and nutrients into cells. It also decreases the body’s ability to get rid of waste products.

Consuming foods that have a high water content such as watermelon, oranges, celery, tomatoes, green peppers, apples, and other fresh fruits and vegetables, along with water and caffeine-free beverages can help prevent dehydration. Puddings, gelatins, and popsicles (made with 100% fruit juice) also help replenish the body’s fluid loss.

Do not wait until you are thirsty to drink fluids. Usually by the time an individual feels thirsty, he or she is already dehydrated. Drink enough fluids to have pale yellow to almost colorless urine.

Tanda Kidd  
kidd@humec.ksu.edu

### Pregnant and Breastfeeding Moms and Young Children Advised to Limit Intake of Certain Fish

Women who are – or could become – pregnant, as well as breastfeeding mothers and children less than 15 years of age should avoid or limit eating certain kinds of fish. Mercury contamination may cause damage to the developing nervous system of an unborn child or a young child. For instance, it can cause children to develop more slowly, have learning problems, or brain damage.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration advises that pregnant women, women who may become pregnant, nursing mothers, and young children NOT eat any shark, swordfish, king mackerel, or tilefish because of harmful methyl

mercury levels. The advisory recommends women in this group to eat no more than 12 ounces per week of any cooked fish and no more than 6 ounces per week of albacore tuna. Children's portions should be smaller than women's. People in this group also should choose a variety of different species and eat smaller and younger fish, non-predator or pan fish, and non-fatty fish to reduce possible intake of pollutants.

Limit eating freshwater fish caught by friends and family. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, women who are pregnant or may become pregnant, and nursing mothers should not eat

more than 6 ounces per week of cooked freshwater fish, which is about 8 ounces before it is cooked, and then not eat any other fish during that week. Young children should not eat more than 2 ounces per week of cooked freshwater fish. If you eat 12 ounces of cooked, purchased fish in a week's time, do not eat fish caught by your family or friends that week.

#### Sources:

[www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish/advisory.html](http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish/advisory.html)

[www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish/30cwafish.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish/30cwafish.pdf)

[www.cfsan.fda.gov/~lrd/tpmehg2.html](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~lrd/tpmehg2.html)

Mary Meck Higgins  
[mhiggins@humec.ksu.edu](mailto:mhiggins@humec.ksu.edu)

### Plan for Back-to-School Expenses

Is “back to school” a planned seasonal expense in your family's budget? Or is it a strain on your household budget every year?

This fall, families with school-aged children will spend about \$460 on back-to-school expenses, including:

Clothes (46%; about \$212)

Shoes (19%; about \$87)

School Supplies (16%; about \$73)

Book bag

Binder

Paper

Pencils

Pens

Pencil case

Sports items

Lunch box

Electronic or computer-related equipment (19%; about \$88)

How much will you spend? Create a shopping list of the things you need to buy. Decide how much money you can afford to spend to get your children ready for school. Think of ways you can involve your children in the decision-making process to build their money skills. Tell them how much you can afford to spend and ask them to prioritize their wish list. If they insist on designer clothes, ask them to pay part or all of the extra cost.

Compare prices. You may find bargains on the Internet. Take advantage of coupons, sales, and rebates. Consider off-brands. Check out the dollar stores.

Use credit wisely. Pay with cash if possible. If you have to use credit, limit purchases to items you can pay off in 90 days.

After the back-to-school rush is over, start saving for next year.

Keep track of what you spend this year. Divide that amount by the number of pay periods you have. Then set aside that amount each pay period, so you will be ready for back to school next year.

#### Sources:

[www.nrf.com/content/press/release2003/backtoschool0703.htm](http://www.nrf.com/content/press/release2003/backtoschool0703.htm)

[www.ccsbuff.org/backtoschool.htm](http://www.ccsbuff.org/backtoschool.htm)

Esther Maddux  
[emaddux@oznet.ksu.edu](mailto:emaddux@oznet.ksu.edu)