

Health, Not Weight, Most Important

Today, weight and health concerns encourage weight loss and thinness because chronic diseases associated with overweight are seen as a drain on limited health care resources. Because an overweight adolescent has a greater chance of being an overweight adult, parents may be tempted to focus on their child's weight. The focus should be on health not size.

- De-emphasize physical appearance. Parents of infants and young children focus on growth and size as a sign of health. In later years, such emphasis can have a negative impact on children. Healthy people can have a variety of size and shapes—helping children to learn to accept their size and shape is important.
- Focus on the positive. Encourage children to think about what they do like about themselves, rather than what they don't.
- Try not to make food an issue. Offer a variety of foods without calling attention to any of them. For example,

don't deprive an overweight child of dessert while others are eating dessert. If a child feels deprived, he or she may be more likely to sneak food or binge later.

- Don't push the "Clean Plate Club." Encouraging children to eat when they are not hungry can contribute to weight and health concerns.
- Bone up on basic cooking skills and encourage everyone in the family to join in. Children usually enjoy learning to cook foods they like. Let children help with the grocery shopping to teach them about food. In addition to eating better, they also can learn math and science. As a result, the whole family may develop more healthful eating habits.
- Encourage physical activity, either as an individual or a family. Exercise is beneficial because it burns calories and reduces stress level and anxiety. It also often improves outlook and self-esteem.
- Set a good example—focus on health not weight.

Barbara Lohse Knous

Readership Survey

The Young Families Newsletter is brought to you by K-State Research and Extension in order to provide families with children quick information on a variety of topics. We hope that the newsletters are helpful to you. In order to know if we should continue producing them, please take a few minutes to answer the following questions?

1. How do you receive the newsletters?

- In the mail
 I pick it up at my county Extension Office
 From my child's school
 From another agency,
 please list: _____

3. Are the articles in-depth enough?

- Yes
 No
 Comments:

2. How many times have you received the newsletter?

- 1-2
 3-4
 5-6
 7 or more

4. Are the articles appropriate for your family?

- Yes
 No
 Comments:

(Continued on back)

PARENTS CORNER

What a Difference a Hero Makes

Children are more likely to grow up healthy when parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior. Only 27 percent of children surveyed by Search Institute have this asset in their lives.

Three ways to be an adult role model for your child:

1. Treat your child with love and respect.
2. Model appropriate behavior during difficult times.
3. Spend time together—often! Be involved in your child's life on a daily basis. Talk to your child about who he or she admires or looks up to and why.

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Ideas for Parents, Newsletter #18,
submitted by Elaine Johannes*

**"Without heroes,
we are all plain people
and don't know how far
we can go."**

Bernard Malamud, novelist

Communicate Effectively

How often do you really pay attention to what others are saying? Communication is important in every aspect of life, and especially in the area of time management. Try to improve communication with family members, work colleagues, and others. Take time to listen. It will help you eliminate misunderstandings and jumping to conclusions.

If you are giving directions, be precise and complete so the other person understands what to do. It may be helpful to write down the details. If you are receiving directions, listen closely the first time to decrease the need for repeat instructions and confusion. Effective communication saves time and helps to increase productivity.

Megan Mayo and Katey Walker

VOLUME 6-NUMBER 10—This newsletter is a cooperative effort between the State, Area and County divisions of K-State Research and Extension. Prepared by Extension Family and Consumer Sciences, College of Human Ecology, KSU. All articles are submitted or reviewed by State Extension Specialists and edited by Margaret E. Phillips, Ext. Spec., FACS, SC, 620-663-5491. These materials may be freely reproduced for educational purposes. All other rights reserved. In each case, give credit to the author(s), Young Families, Kansas State University, Vol. 6-No. 10.

For additional information on these articles, please contact the K-State Research and Extension Office in your county or district.

Phone:

(Survey continued from front)

5. How many children do you have? _____
What are their ages? _____

6. Have you used any of the information within your family?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If yes, please give examples:

7. Would you like to continue to receive the newsletters?

_____ Yes

_____ No

8. If you would like to receive the newsletters, how would you like to receive them (check all that apply):

_____ Just as I am now

_____ Over the Internet

_____ In Spanish

_____ Another language,

please list: _____

Please return this form by March 31, 2002, to either your county K-State Research and Extension office or to whomever distributes the newsletter to you. Thank you for your cooperation.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service