



THE FAMILY GAZETTE

Holiday Traditions: Strengthen Family Time

For families who cherish traditions, holidays create magical moments and lifelong memories. We invite you to write down your memories to share with your family. When we share traditions, we learn new things, but we also learn about what we have in common.

Holiday Kitchen

Do you prepare special food for the holiday table? What tasty treats do you create?

Holiday Harmony

Some holidays are woven with threads of caring, inspiration, and giving. Is part of your holiday celebration giving to others?

Holiday Presents

Are presents made, given, or shared on this special day?

Honoring Family Favorites

Most of these ideas are not new, but many families count them among the traditions that strengthen family life.

- ◆ Keeping a baby book
- ◆ Celebrating a lost tooth or new tooth

- ◆ Reading a favorite bedtime story
- ◆ Getting an ice cream after a recital or special program.
- ◆ Eating popcorn while watching movies
- ◆ Feeding ducks at the pond
- ◆ Calling or visiting loved ones on birthdays and holidays
- ◆ Getting a library card
- ◆ Celebrating birthdays with cakes and presents
- ◆ Dressing up on special occasions
- ◆ Taking family pictures
- ◆ Kissing Good-night
- ◆ Getting new clothes and supplies for the first day of school following holiday vacation.

Think about some of your family favorites make a list, you'll be surprised how many you have!

Source: Pages Inc. Holiday Traditions

SU Ag Center
Family & Human Development

DECEMBER—FEBRUARY

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Conferences / Meetings:

- © **NAEYC Conference:** For more information go to www.naeyc.org or call 800-424-2460
- © LAPEN Louisiana Parenting Education Network www.lapen@lapartnership.org
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Snacking the Healthy Way!

Kids love to snack, and the good news is that snacking is important to a child's health. Most of us know that good health and proper nutrition are important. The first step in helping children learn good eating habits is for parents to practice good eating habits. Adults, especially parents, are the first role model for chil-

dren. Encourage your children to snack in a healthy way.

Why Snack Anyway?

Snacks are important in meeting nutrient requirements that are missed in everyday meals. If you or your child have a

poor appetite, snacks could help meet some of those requirements and help with growth and development. Continued pg 3



Active Listening

In order to be a good active listener, parents are encouraged to ask questions honestly and sincerely. The intent behind questioning should be to understand rather than advise, criticize, or pry. Through this process, children and teens will also understand their own thinking by fostering decision-making and planning skills. Active listening:

- improves mutual understanding
- forces people to listen without interrupting
- resolves conflicts
- builds trust between child

and parent; and

- avoids misunderstandings between child and parent

Three Rules of Active Listening:

- Ask questions honestly
- Listen without judging
- Restate what has been said



Curriculum

- look at your child when he or she is speaking
- restate what has been said
- ask questions honestly
- show respect
- look at nonverbal communication and body language

Source: Building Family Strengths

You can be sure you are using active listening effectively if you:

- do not assume you know what your child means
- check your tone of voice

Year-Round Tools to Help Families Budget

Fall is here, and students have started school. Parents have spent money on back-to-school items and may feel strapped for cash. However, some children have influenced their parents in to purchasing these items. According to the National Retail Federation, 31 percent of parents surveyed indicated that one-half of their back-to-school spending is a direct result of the child's influence. These budgeting tips may help your family:



Go through old clothing Ask child to determine which items they want.

Decide wants and needs Your child may want a new uniform shirt, but can fit their shirt from last year.

Set a budget According to the National Retail Federation, on average consumers are spending \$232 on back-to-school clothing and accessories alone.

Reward If you've set a \$200 budget

for your child and they stay under that amount, let them purchase an item they need.

Stick to the plan If you set a \$200 budget, and your child wants an item over your planned budget, do not purchase the item.

Source: The University of Kansas Cooperative and Extension Center, The University of Minnesota Cooperative Extension System, and Money Wise

GET READY, SET, GO!

Are you having trouble getting your children into their new or old routine? Do you find yourself grabbing for items or forgetting important documents? Here are a few simple helpful hits to help you stay on task:

- *Start Early- this allows for time for last minute issues that may pop up without totaling disrupting the morning schedule.
- *Get Organized- This is a great way to

teach your children structure and it will also help them in school transitioning from one structured environment to the next.

- *Have a routine— Set Goals and create small achievements throughout the week to encourage you and your children to stay focused and on task. You may not be able to reach all of your goals but you will always know where you are going.
- *Communication - Communicate changes in schedule to prevent last minute frustra-

tions. Each day ask your children how their day went and what is going on at school. This is most effective way to let your children know that their day matters just as much yours.

- *Review and prepare for the next day - This is the time where you create a check system for school clothes, completed homework, permission slips, lunch money, conferences, or any other school-related issues.

Embracing Our Grandparents

Building Connections

Many children live far away from their grandparents. If they live close by, often they don't see each other everyday. Here are a few suggestions to strengthen the family ties.

PHONE SCHEDULES

Make an appointment to call grandparents. Keep to the schedule. It's important to have consistent and predictable contact. Remember, it is difficult for young children to talk on

the phone for long periods of time so keep the conversations short and sweet.

BEDTIME STORIES

Make up stories about grandparents to include them in your daily lives. Talk about what they might have done that day. Did they go to work, go golfing, or leave for a special trip?

PHOTOGRAPHS

Place the latest pictures of grandparents in places where children are likely to see



There's no place like home, except Grandma's.

them.

Let's Go See Our Grandparents Song

(Tune of "Take Me Out to the Ball game")

Let's go see our grandparents,
Take us there for a while.
Mommy and Daddy both need a break.
We'll play games and we'll stay up real late!
Oh, we want to thank our grandparents
For all the things that they do,
So it's time..to..say you're the best
And that we love you! (<http://www.mrsjonesroom.com/themes/gparentsday.html>)

Communicating After a Disaster

Louisiana has been effected by one of the worst natural disasters, Hurricane Gustav. This disaster reminds us that there is no time like the present to talk with your child about "scary" events. Begin the conversation by discussing disasters in a general,



calm manner. Explain to the child how to respond when an emergency occurs. It is important to talk to the child using words that he or she understands. Give your child an opportunity to ask questions and talk about his or her feelings

of fear. Listen to your child and provide responses that relieves fear but let them know it is normal to be afraid. Then, end the discussion with explaining how together you can prepare

for the next hurricane. For starters, you and the child can prepare by helping to clean the debris left around your home during hurricane. Take this time to create a plan and to practice with or teach the child your home, work, and cell numbers. The plan should identify a place to

meet if some other disaster occurs. Discuss with the child who they can depend on if you are not around, e.g., a neighbor or child care worker. Additionally, parents need to let children know that it is important to remain close to them or a caregiver so that they will remain safe.

Disasters or others crisis can become teachable moments for parents to begin helping children cope with and understand emergencies.

Source: US Dept. of Health and Hospitals Services/National Institute of Health Helping Children Cope with Crisis

Snacks continued

How to Fix Healthy Snacks

Offer healthy food choices in place of soft drinks, candy, chips or sweets. Examples of healthy snack foods are fruit and fruit juices, vegetable and meat sticks, yogurt, toast or crackers, oatmeal cookies, graham crackers, and pudding. Many snacks can be just like mini-meals such as a half of sandwich, cup of soup, or even cheese and crackers. Try these two quick recipes for your next snack time.

AQUARIUM SNACK

Ingredients & supplies:

Clear Plastic Cups, Graham Cracker crumbs
Blue Jello, Gummy Fish

- Get one clear plastic cup, place 1/2 inch graham cracker crumbs on the bottom. Prepare blue jello according to package instructions and pour over the crumbs, add gummy fish and when set this makes a great snack- the kids very own aquarium.

GO FISH

1/3 cup Goldfish Crackers
10-12 Pretzel sticks or celery sticks (fishing poles)
1-2 Tablespoons Peanut Butter

Put the peanut butter and pretzels on a plate, place goldfish in a bowl or glass (paper is ok). Have the children dip a fishing pole in the peanut butter and "catch a fish with it."

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“Linking Citizens of Louisiana with Opportunities for Success”

Families Need Rules and Limits: Teaching Children How to Learn and Practice Them

The process of functioning in society later in life will be smoother for children who are reared in families where house rules are applied and limits are set. Teaching children about rules allows the whole family to be safe and encourages a community of secure and respectful children. Parents should teach and practice house rules at a young age. Children need to learn more about the rules and the consequences for breaking rules and testing the limits. Parents actually need to define the values shared in their home environment by pointing out what is acceptable and what is not. Children should be told and given consistent rules and limits as they apply to the families' values. Once children know how you feel about their lack of attention to the rules—especially when there is consistency—they are more apt to do what parents expect. When parents create rules, consider the following suggestions before posting them to a message board for children. Children's rules must:

- ◆ Be discussed with them thoroughly before posting them on the refrigerator
- ◆ Be specific and written clearly so that children can understand
- ◆ Be easy for children to follow
- ◆ Be reasonable
- ◆ Identify the limits
- ◆ Have clear consequences

Source: Adapt in part from Discipline through Guidance "Setting Limits", Ronald Pitzer, Minnesota Extension Service, University of Minnesota/ Source Kathy Oliver Extension, Ohio State University Extension "Setting Limits and Standing firm HYG-5317-98