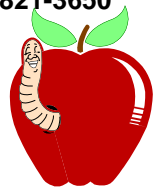


Pre-School Pages

A newsletter for parents of preschoolers packed with food, facts, and fun
From your local county extension office



December 2008

Life Savers

Grandparents, Aunts & Uncles- Childproof Your Home for the Holidays

Holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas are right around the corner. Many families with young children will be traveling to visit grandparents or aunts and uncles. If you are a grandparent or aunt or uncle, is your house safe for young children? Here are some ideas to help you childproof your home:

1. Think about the chemicals that children could reach, like cleaning products under the kitchen sink. Move them to a safer location or buy some inexpensive child safety latches to use on doors.
2. Keep pot handles turned toward the back of the stove, out of the reach of children. Kitchen appliances, knives, and other harmful items should be moved out of reach of young hands. The same is true in the bathroom.
3. Get some inexpensive outlet covers to keep little fingers out of electrical outlets.
4. If toddlers or crawling babies are visiting, and you have steps they can fall down, borrow or buy a safety gate and block the steps.
5. Make sure window blinds do not have looped cords that children can hang themselves on, or move them out of reach. Look for tippy shelves or furniture that children might try to climb and tip over.
6. Check floors and low tables for small objects like coins, marbles, paper clips, etc. that young children might put in their mouths and choke on.
7. You might want to lock some doors to keep children out. You can also buy simple door knob covers that children cannot turn but adults can.
8. If you have balconies or low screened windows that children can fall through, block access to them or keep them closed.
9. If you have sharp-edged furniture that toddlers can fall against, guard the edges or remove the furniture during the visit.

10. If you are supervising young children while their parents are out of the house, or are taking the children shopping, just remember that children can move and get into trouble a lot faster than you think. Keep an eye on them at all times.

The holidays are a great time for family get-togethers with multiple generations. Take action to keep the youngest members of the family from getting hurt and turning a happy time into a tragedy.

Source: Mark Purschwitz, Extension Specialist for Safety and Health, University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture.

Dollars & Sense

Using Found Materials for Gift Wrapping



Have each of your gifts be truly special by adding your own personal creative touch. Many people collect a stash of gift wrap items so they're prepared to wrap a gift for any occasion. They keep it on a particular shelf or in a designated closet or container so they know where to find it. Usually tape, name tags, stickers, gift bags, ribbons, bows, and paper are all kept together, ready to use at a moment's notice. All of these supplies can add many dollar's to your gifts, however, so explore potential gift-wrapping materials that you may already have at home.

You'll not only save money but help the environment, too, by recycling and reusing whenever possible. Do you have an extra piece of pretty fabric left over from a sewing project? How about using twine instead of ribbon to top off a gift package containing bulbs or gardening

tools? That antique cigar box you have in a desk drawer could be just right for a small collectible. Consider using road maps for a travel gift and top with a small lighted magnifying glass tied into the bow. Or add some artificial flowers from a flower arrangement or some pine cones that you gathered from the outdoors. These are just a few of many possibilities created by recycling everyday objects around the house. The only limitation to your gift wrapping is your imagination.

References: Adler, Linda. Gift Wrapping/Trends Presentations. 2007. Summerlin, Linda. Let's Wrap! Spectacular Gift Wrapping Made Easy. Absolute Press, Encino, CA. 2004.

Source: Linda Adler, Extension Specialist for Home Furnishings, University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture.

Play Time

Chilly Weather Family Play Ideas



As cool weather comes around once again, parents and grandparents may wonder how to keep youngsters busy and happy. Frequent active outdoor play is still important. However, the warmth of indoors is enticing. Think for a moment about making best use of your children's indoor play time. What are their interests? What are they able to do developmentally? For most of us, money to purchase expensive play things is scarce. So, what activities can you share that are free or very inexpensive? *The Power of Play*, points out that children learn best during play they choose themselves. They love to imitate what adults do. He also suggests that your undivided attention is the most precious gift you can give your children, better by far than costly toys.

Elkind says that basic household and natural materials gives kids the chance to learn while creating things with their imaginations and their hands, at their own speed. Here are a few suggestions:

1. If your passion is sewing, perhaps you have colorful fabric scraps, left-over sparkly rick-rack and other trims, a child-friendly needle and thread, children's safety scissors, and non-toxic glue. You and your child might make a doll's dress, a

- Halloween costume, or a dress-up outfit for a story you made up or read together.
2. If your hobby is woodworking, you may likely have wood scraps of various sizes, a light weight hammer, nails, a saw, sand paper, wood glue, and a measuring tape. Wood feels warm to the touch. Its grain is beautiful to see. Together, with your careful supervision, you might make building blocks, a pen for toy animals, or something that you name as you build it.
3. Does your child enjoy the feel of flour and sugar on his fingers, the fragrant smell of cinnamon and ginger, the smooth gurgle of vegetable oil, and the slimy joy of breaking an egg into a bowl? Does your child's face light up as he creates one smooth mixture by stirring the different ingredients? Then, cooking may be a wonderful way to play.

Exciting learning is occurring while you and your child are having fun playing with common household items. Concepts such as classification, ordering, sequencing, eye-hand coordination, fractions, and problem-solving are growing. Skill-building, cooperation, and language learning are also happening. Best of all, you are sharing love.

Reference: Elkind, D. (2007). The Power of Play. Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press/Perseus Books Group.

Source: Carole Gnatuk, Extension Child Development Specialist, University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture.

Let's Eat

Peppermint Pie Delight

- 2 Oreo pie crusts
- ½ gallon peppermint ice cream (slightly thawed)
- 16 oz. Cool Whip
- Peppermint candy crushed (if desired)



Mix ice cream with Cool Whip. Pour into pie crust and smooth. If desired, sprinkle crushed peppermint candy on top of pie. Freeze overnight.

**Recipe taken from *Holiday Cooking* – Livingston Co. 4-H Clubs.
Recipe provided by Paxton Faulkner.**

Sincerely,

County Extension Agent for
Family & Consumer Sciences.

