

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES

Pre-School Pages



A newsletter for parents of pre-schoolers
packed with food, facts & fun
from your local county extension office

**Cooperative
Extension Service**
Todd County
PO Box 97
Elkton, KY
270-265-5659
Fax: 270-265-3534
www.ca.uky.edu/ces

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Let's Communicate

Talking and Listening

It's important to talk with your child not just to him. That means commenting on what he is doing, listening, and asking questions. If your child is



excited about a lady bug in the garden, it's a great idea to ask your child where he thinks that it came from, if he has ever seen a bug like that before, and let him tell you about his ideas.

Focus on his interests and encourage him to talk with you – even if you can only spare a few minutes. In talking with your child, you show you care about his thoughts, experiences, and needs, and that you want to learn more about them.

Parents can be so busy that they find themselves only talking to their children. They give directions, such as “do this, don't do that”; tell the child “not now,” and give the child information such as “The cat is black”. They don't take the time to notice their child's interests and encourage the child to carry on a real conversation.

It's important to have these conversations in which each of you talks and listens to the other. Asking questions like, “What do you want to do with that box?” or “What did you and Grandma do today?” will help start a conversation. By talking with your child, you can increase his confidence and his language skills. He will try hard to learn to talk and listen well. You may even learn something new about your little one!

Let's Play

Have Fun with Your Child by Playing the Guessing Game

Here's how you play:

- Sit in a familiar room with your child, look around the room and pick out something you can describe in two ways: what it looks like and what it does.
- After giving these two descriptions, ask your child to guess what you are thinking of. For example, I can see something that is red and rolls along the floor, or I can see something that is white and you drink from it, or I see something that has 4 legs and you sit on it.
- Remember to let your child have a turn at asking you to guess, too.



Let's Cook

Cooking with children can be great fun! Not only does it teach them valuable life skills, but it gives them the opportunity to increase their vocabulary, work on fine motor skills and opens up the lines of communication to build family bonds.



Tasks for two-to three year-olds:

- Stir with a spoon.
- Shake ingredients in a plastic container with a tight cover.
- Use a butter knife to spread cream cheese, jelly or peanut butter.
- Mash boiled fruits and vegetables after they have cooled.
- Combine ingredients in a large bowl and mix.

Tasks for three to four year-olds (as well as those listed above):

- Make no-cook recipes such as sandwiches and salads.
- Practice using whisks, spatulas, strainers, colanders, wooden spoons, cookie cutters, and rolling pins.
- Use plastic measuring spoons and cups marked to the proper amounts.
- Cut soft fruits and boiled vegetables with plastic knives.
- Combine dry and wet ingredients using forks, whisks, spoons or rotary beaters.
- Pour liquids into containers with large openings such as colanders, blenders, or wide-mouth bowls.
- Use non-electric food grinders, choppers, and juicers.

Let's be Safe

Preschool-age children do not have the chewing skills necessary to break down many foods so to reduce the possibility of a child choking, follow these suggestions:

- Sit with children while they are eating
- Insist that children remain seated while eating
- Set a calm eating atmosphere

Prepare certain foods with care:

1. Chop nuts and seeds finely.
2. Slice grapes lengthwise.
3. Shred hard raw vegetables.
4. Remove inner skin from oranges.
5. Remove pits from all fruits.
6. Spread peanut butter thinly.
7. Never give popcorn or hard candies to children under four.

Source: Families, Food and Fitness Community of Practice

Edible Snowman

1 box round crackers
1 container low fat cream cheese
Tiny slices of carrots, apples
Box of raisins



Each child gets 3 round crackers, approximately 2 tablespoons of cream cheese, and a small pile of the sliced fruit, veggies and raisins. Place the crackers on a paper plate. Allow child to spread cream cheese on the crackers and decorate with veggies, apples and raisins.

Sincerely,

County Extension Agent for
Family & Consumer Sciences

