



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension

Albany, Rensselaer and Saratoga County's
Human Ecology Programs

Living & Learning

May/June 2010

Dear Friends,

We hope you enjoy the May/June edition of Living & Learning for 2010. We have helpful articles on growing and cooking with herbs, donating to charities, and using energy-saving landscaping, among others. There are also some great recipes for you to try!

Enjoy!

~The Human Ecology Staff

Positive Parenting

Positive Ways to Manage Your Demanding Child

by Janet Poland & Judi Craig, authors of [The Demanding Child](#)

Submitted by Ellen Cooper, Albany County

Is your child impulsive, persistent, angry and too active? Is she a whirring turbine of energy? As an infant, did he squirm and fuss all day and most of the night. When she was awake, did she need constant attention? If you have answered yes to these questions, you have a demanding child. Demanding children are a challenge, but they are *normal*.

The first thing every demanding child needs is to be loved and cherished for the unique person she is. These children are healthy kids whose temperament happens to put them on one end of the behavioral spectrum—the very opposite of children who are shy, low-energy and quiet. The trick is — how to survive your little one and guide him on how to live with high energy, control impulsivity and manage anger in an acceptable way.

Teach about temperament. Let your child know that he possesses a unique array of traits that make him who he is. For example you might say to your high-energy child, “You’re the kind of boy who likes to stay busy. Little boys like you move around a lot, and it helps to have several different things for you to do.” This helps him identify the kind of individual he is, and lets him know it’s OK to have the traits he does. Remind him that being energetic, persistent, or quick-on-the-uptake are all *valuable characteristics* that have helped individuals and groups survive. As you teach him about his temperament, talk to him about other children’s temperaments also. He needs to learn how to relate to others, some of whom are sensitive, easily irritated or shy. You will do your child a favor by helping him understand other people and their differences.

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Watch your language. The words your child hears to describe himself are critical to both his self esteem and his ability to regulate his behavior. The key is to talk to him in temperament affirming ways. Instead of “Can’t you sit still? You’re too fidgety!” you might say “Your fingers need to be busy.” Instead of “You’ve got a terrible temper!” you might say “You have intense feelings. Your whole body shows how strongly you feel.”

It may be hard at times to speak of your child’s difficult temperament with a positive light, but it’s important to try. Negative phrases only label and express disapproval—and make your child less open to change. Positive phrases open the door to constructive suggestions and helpful discussions, such as “What would those busy fingers like to play with while we’re in the car?” Or “Can you think of something you can do with those feelings? How about going in your room and punching a pillow?”

Remember that demanding children receive more than their share of negative words as they go through their day. Make your child’s home the place people who love him will do their best to put a positive spin on the more difficult aspects of his personality.

Prioritize. Demanding children often have many traits that drive a parent crazy. But parents who try to get a defiant child to—behave in school—play nicely with the neighborhood kids—do his chores without being reminded—floss his teeth—do his homework—stop swearing—sit up straight, are setting him and themselves up for failure. Any youngster who is asked to do too much will inevitably fail, and worse, he’ll be aware he is falling short and he may lose the will to try. Single out the one or two most important areas to work on and don’t make too much of the trivial aspects of his behavior. “Don’t sweat the small stuff!”

Emphasize progress. Take every opportunity to point out to your child the wonderful progress she is making, no matter how small. For example: “You waited until I got off the phone before you asked your question. I know that’s not easy for you, but you did it! That was considerate of you and I appreciate that.”

* **Important**—don’t gush and overdo it. If it’s fake or undeserved your child will feel you don’t have confidence in her ability to do the job. * **Don’t put it off.** Catch your child being good. This is especially true of demanding, impulsive children, whose behavior can quickly veer from good to bad. One minute she may

be carefully setting the table and in the blink of an eye, she may rush to answer to telephone, drop the silverware, and knock over the dog’s dish. Reinforce praise right away—while you can.

Demonstrate better behavior. Instead of just telling your child what to do or not do—show her. This is especially true when she needs to learn better ways to perform physical acts. For example—show her how to hug friends more gently so they don’t feel assaulted; demonstrate how to close the door; model how to get juice in and out of the refrigerator; guide her hand while showing her how to pet the dog or cat.

Role-play. Rehearsing is another effective skill-building tool. If your child has trouble controlling her temper, practice conflict resolution through role-playing. *Example*—you take the part of the teacher who is talking to another student and does not immediately respond when your daughter interrupts with a request. Let her practice being patient and then asking for what she wants in a polite voice. c Acknowledge her efforts and use character building words to reinforce desired actions. “That was very good. You were patient and polite. Your teacher will appreciate that.” c Switch roles to give your child a taste of how her behavior affects others. If she pushes other children, or grabs toys from their hands, show her how those actions feel and how different the gentler actions seem to the person on the receiving end. Clue the teacher in on areas you are working on so s/he can reinforce at school, skills learned at home.

Keep hugging. It is vital to remain affectionate with your child as he grows. The form of this affection may change as your cuddly toddler becomes a gangly pre-teen, but the physical act of giving a hug, ruffling your child’s hair, holding hands, a pat on the back, a supporting arm around the shoulders, eloquently communicates love and care—and is an excellent way to stay connected to an older child during inevitable times of less than positive verbal communication.

Maintain your sense of humor. Humor is a great way to relieve tension and keep things in perspective and it can also be used to encourage balky children’s cooperation. *Example*—you ask your daughter several times to feed the dog and she remains glued to the TV. Instead of issuing a punishment, consider getting down on all fours, whine hungrily, and bark, until she takes action. Or, simply turn off the TV and say “Bonnie, the dog.” Humor can defuse a potentially tense situation because it allows a stubborn child to co

Nutrition News & Seasonal Spotlight

Heavenly Herbs

by Rebecca Hassinger, Rensselaer County

Let's celebrate spring and summer by planting some fragrant herbs to fill the air and add delicious notes to your dishes. Herbs are versatile and can be planted indoors or out. Read on to learn about indoor cultivation of herbs. Call your local Extension office for help on planting herbs outdoors. Even if you prefer buying them, you'll find ideas for storage and using them in recipes!

Herbs can be a way to add flavor to food without adding salt. It is a good idea for Americans to cut down on their salt intake anyway, and for some folks cutting down on salt intake is required as part of therapy for conditions like high blood pressure and kidney disease.

The Windowsill Herb Garden

An indoor herb garden makes growing and harvesting much easier! Plus, you can enjoy your herbs year round this way. The best herbs to use in a windowsill garden are those that are used fresh in cooking and adapt easily to indoor gardening, such as basil, chives, coriander, sweet marjoram, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, and thyme.

In starting your indoor garden, consider the amount of space available, sunlight or artificial light, air, temperature, and requirements of each herb. Select those that are low-growing, dwarf varieties, small bushes (like rosemary), or able to hang (like marjoram and thyme). The tall ones may require stakes. If you have a patio or balcony with enough sunlight, you may want to grow the taller herbs outdoors in pots.

An area of your home with fresh air and circulation will help keep plants healthy and decrease risk of pests. The window should have at least 5 hours of sunlight (or this can be supplemented with artificial lighting). Keep soil uniformly moist and do not allow standing water in saucers. Fertilize monthly with a commercial brand of houseplant food in a uniform mix of 5-10-5. Small herb plants can be found at your local farmers' markets. Seeds and herb garden-starter pots complete with planter, seeds, and starting soil can be found in retail stores and nurseries.

To Use Fresh Herbs

Prune plants with a sharp cutting edge to minimize damage. When harvesting bulb-type plants like chives, make sure you cut at the base of the plant to encourage new growth.

To Dry Herbs

Herbs dry in 8 – 10 days when laid on a screen or clean cloth in a warm, dry, dark, well-ventilated room.

Herbs can also be dried faster by spreading out on a cookie sheet and drying in a 180°F oven for 20 minutes to one hour, depending on variety of herb. Dry until herbs crumble easily.

Dry herbs are more concentrated than fresh. A rule of thumb is to substitute tablespoons of fresh herbs for the same number of teaspoons of dried herbs. For example, substitute two tablespoons of fresh basil for two teaspoons of dried basil.

Freezing Herbs

Chives and parsley freeze well and hold their fresh-like quality. Blanch chives for one minute before freezing.

When herbs are defrosted many will have turned an olive green or brown color but will retain their flavor.

Herbs and Where to Put 'Em

Basil: soups, egg dishes, salad dressings, fish, pork, veal, vegetables

Bay leaves: usually used whole in stews, sauces, soups

Chives: eggs, fish, chicken, veal, salads

Dill: fish, chicken, rabbit, potatoes, mustard, breads, sour cream

Oregano: Greek, Italian, and Mexican cooking

Parsley: garnish, sauces, salads

Rosemary: all meats, stuffings

Sage: stuffings, egg dishes, poultry and game, pork, onions

Thyme: veal, chicken, tomato sauce

Recipes

Citrus-Basil Vinaigrette

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 Tbsp orange juice
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- ¼ lemon, zested
- ½ tsp salt (optional)
- 1 Tbsp honey
- 1/8 cup chopped fresh basil
- 1 tsp white wine vinegar

Directions:

In a jar with a lid, mix the olive oil, orange juice, lemon juice, lemon zest, salt, honey, basil and vinegar. Seal and shake well. Chill 2 hours in the refrigerator. Strain basil before serving.

Yield: 4 servings

Nutrition Info.: 140 calories, 13.5g fat, 0g fiber, 291mg sodium

Source: Allrecipes.com



Lemon Basil Cookies

Ingredients:

- 2 ½ cups flour
- 1 ½ cups sugar
- 1 tsp cream of tartar
- 2 eggs
- ½ tsp salt (optional)
- 3 Tbsp lemon basil
- 1 cup butter

Directions:

Sift together the flour, cream of tartar, and salt. In a separate bowl, cream together the butter and sugar. Add the eggs and beat well. Add the flour mixture and mix until well blended. Stir in the lemon basil. Chill overnight. Roll into walnut size balls. Bake on greased cookie sheet at 350° F for 10 minutes.

Yield: 36 servings

Nutritional Info.: 113 calories, 5g fat, 0g fiber, 56mg sodium

Source: Adapted from <http://earthnotes.tripod.com/hrbcookies.htm>

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operate without losing face. Remember—there doesn't have to be a power struggle, a winner & loser.

Remind him that things will get easier. Each time any of us does something new or difficult, it is hard. Even adults have to control their impulses, follow rules, and get along with others. Use these times to describe to your child, the difficult task you are doing and explain how you feel about it and what makes you act the way you do. As your youngster progresses, your reminders for good behavior should include references to his own accomplishments. Example—*“Remember how I had to hold your hand when we came into this store. You wanted to grab everything you saw. You're older now and you know how to act in a store. You are a responsible and considerate little boy and when you act this way you are fun to shop with.”*

Affirm the total child. Your child has many characteristics and abilities that go beyond temperament. Be sure to celebrate those parts of her personality as well. Example—your impulsive daughter might have a talent in music or art; your persistent son might be a star soccer player or one mean baseball hitter. It's important not to limit your view of your child to behavior and to value all aspects of who she is.

[Next month: The Demanding Child and Discipline]

Source: Working Mother; March 2007 “The Demanding Child;” Janet Poland & Judi Craig

Financial Fitness

Protect Yourself Against Charity Fraud

by Maria DeLucia-Evans, Albany County

There are many reputable charities that rely on donations to provide funding for their activities. However, there are scam artists (also proficient in using telemarketing, direct mail, email or online ads) scheming to take advantage of your generosity and money.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has published a checklist of ways to protect yourself against scammers, and ensure that the monies you donate do, in fact, go to helping a legitimate charitable organization.

If you receive a call asking for a charitable donation,

take the time to ask the caller a couple questions. Get the basics—ask for the charity's name, address, and phone number. Also ask for the charity to send you written information about its programs and/or causes before you give a donation.

It's also a good idea to ask the caller how your donation will be used—if the caller is a professional fundraiser, and how much of your contribution will go to fundraising costs.

The FTC also warns to be aware of the signs of a potential scam. They outline the signs as follows:

- High pressure pitches. Reject them—it's okay to hang up.
- A thank you for a pledge you don't remember making. Be skeptical; scam artists will lie to get your money.
- Requests for cash. Avoid giving cash donations.
- Charities that offer to send a courier or overnight delivery service to collect your money.
- Charities that guarantee sweepstakes winnings in exchange for a contribution.
- Charities that spring up overnight, especially those that involve current events like natural disasters, or those that claim to be for police officers, veterans, or firefighters. They probably don't have the infrastructure to get your donations to the affected areas or people.
- Watch out for similar sounding names. Some phony charities use names that closely resemble those of respected, legitimate organizations. If you notice a small difference from the name of the charity you intend to deal with, call the organization you know to check it out.

Do not send or give cash donations. Cash can be lost or stolen. For security and tax record purposes, it's best to pay by check — made payable to the charity, not the solicitor. If you're thinking about giving online, look for indicators that the site is secure, like a lock icon on the browser's status bar or a URL that begins “https:” (the “s” stands for “secure”).

Giving a charitable donation can be a very rewarding experience that provides funding to important programs and causes. However, it's important to choose wisely when donating and ensure that the organization will make the most of your contribution, and is not looking to pocket your money.

Source: Federal Trade Commission, www.ftc.gov/charity/fraud/

Healthy Homes

Landscaping and Energy Conservation

by Tom Dolan, Albany County

Landscaping can add value and improve the appearance of your home, while reducing your energy costs. The five elements to consider when choosing landscaping materials that will maximize your energy savings are: climate, microclimate, shading, windbreaks, and water conservation.

The climate you live in plays a large role in the landscaping strategies you should consider. There are four basic climates in the United States: Temperate, Hot-Arid, Humid Arid, and Cool. New York state falls within the Temperate climate zone, which requires strategies such as maximizing sun in the winter, maximizing shade in the summer, deflecting winter winds away from the home, and directing summer winds towards the home.

The environment immediately around your home is the microclimate. The microclimate may make your home hotter, wetter, shadier, or snowier than the average home in your region. Factors such as your home's location in relation to bodies of water, mountain sides, or heavily-wooded areas would influence the type and location of trees and shrubs you should plant.

Shade can dramatically reduce air temperatures around your house. Solar energy absorbed through windows and the roof in the summertime can increase the use of air conditioning. Air temperatures beneath trees can be nine degrees cooler than surrounding air and as much as 25 degrees cooler than nearby blacktop. In order to assess the effect that shade would have on your house, you should follow where the shade would fall on your house throughout the day, based on the size and location of your trees or shrubs. In a climate such as New York, deciduous trees should be used to provide shade in the summer and allow sunlight through in the winter. Evergreen shrubs and trees can be used in this climate to block winds and to provide shade throughout the year.

Where you plant your tree can determine the type and size of the trees you need. Trees with high-spreading branches and leaves can be planted south of your house to provide maximum shade on the roof. A low tree can be planted to the west of the house in order to block out the rays of a setting sun. Slow-growing trees, may take longer to accomplish the job but they live longer, have

more stable and deeper roots, and are more resistant to drought. A six to eight foot tree can reduce annual air conditioning costs by 10%.

Trees, shrubs, and ground coverings increase shade on the ground and reduce the amount of radiant heat transferred to a house. Vines and plants growing on a trellis can produce shade on a house while allowing breezes to cool off the house in the summer and allow sun to heat the house in the winter. While shrubs can provide fast growing shade, they should not be planted too close to the house if the micro climate is wet and humid because they can trap moisture against the house.

Landscaping that provides protection against wind can prevent the effects of wind chill on your house. Dense evergreens, walls, and fences provide the best protection against winter winds. They are most effective when placed to the north and northwest of the house. For maximum protection they should be placed two to five times the mature height of the tree or shrub away from a house. Plantings close to the house can provide an insulating effect when planted approximately a foot from the house by providing dead air space.

Advanced planning and routine maintenance can reduce the amount of water needed to maintain your landscape. Select the proper plants and location for your climate and microclimate. Reduce the amount of turf that requires heavy watering. Healthy soil, the use of mulch, and maintenance of plants with pruning and weeding will help keep them healthy and reduce the amount of water needed. Water plants in the morning to provide them with more usable water and to reduce evaporation.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, energy-saving investments in landscaping, such as listed above, can be recouped in eight years.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy,
http://www.energysavers.gov/your_home/landscaping/index.cfm/mytopic=11910

Recipe Corner

Submitted by Rebecca Hassinger, Rensselaer County

Caprese Salad

Ingredients:

- 4 medium tomatoes
- ¾ cup mozzarella, diced
- ¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 Tbsp. fresh basil, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Cut tomatoes into wedges. Toss together in bowl with mozzarella, parsley, and basil. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Yield: 4 servings

Nutrition Info.: (no salt added): 88 Calories, 4g fat, 125mg sodium, 2g fiber

Source: Eating Well Magazine, www.eatingwell.com

Consumer Questions

Do you have a food, cooking, or cleaning related question? Cornell Cooperative Extension can help! Contact your local Extension office:

Albany County: 518.765.3500

Rensselaer County: 518.272.4210

Saratoga County: 518.885.8995

Featured Question: Why is it better to eat whole grains?

Answer:

Submitted by Maria DeLucia-Evans, Albany County

Definition and examples of whole grains from the Mayo Clinic:

Whole grains haven't had their bran and germ removed by milling, making them good sources of fiber — the part of plant-based foods that your body doesn't digest. Among many health benefits, high-fiber foods also tend to make you feel full longer.

Refined grains, such as white rice or white flour, have both the bran and germ removed from the grain. Although vitamins and minerals are added back into refined grains after the milling process, they still don't have as many nutrients as whole grains do, and they don't provide as much fiber naturally.

Eat whole-grain versions — rather than refined grains — as often as possible. Whole-grain versions of rice, bread, cereal, flour and pasta can be found at any grocery store. Many whole-grain foods come ready to eat. These include a variety of breads, pastas and ready-to-eat cereals.

Examples of whole grains include:

- Barley
- Brown rice
- Buckwheat
- Bulgur (cracked wheat)
- Millet
- Oatmeal
- Popcorn
- Whole-wheat bread, pasta or crackers
- Wild rice

When in doubt, check the label. Look for the word "whole" on the package, and make sure whole grains appear among the first items in the ingredient list. Try to choose items with at least 3 grams of dietary fiber per serving.

Source: The Mayo Clinic, <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/whole-grains/NU00204>

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LIVING & LEARNING MAY/JUNE 2010

5/4/10	6:00 pm	The " Making Ends Meet " workshop provides an overview of the process for developing and using a household spending plan, as well as ways to maximize personal and community resources. Workshop participants receive a free money management kit. Advanced registration is required at 765-3559.	CCE Albany County, Voorheesville, NY
5/4/10	6:30 - 8:00 pm	It's BEAN Great! Learn how to include more heart healthy beans in your diet. Food preparation and sampling are included. Children age 10 and up are welcome to attend with an adult. Must pre-register by calling Janet at 765-3500 by April 30.	CCE Albany County, Voorheesville, NY
5/14/10	2:30 - 4:00 pm	Discipline Is Not A Dirty Word —Kids driving you crazy? Are you yelling all the time about the same things? Do you want some calm and peace in your home? Do you want your kids to respect you and each other? This workshop can give you some tips on how to calm the troubled waters in your home so your home is a place where all family members feel safe and comforted. This workshop is geared for elementary school parents K-6th grade. Must pre-register by calling Donna Wickert, School Counselor, at 475-6832.	Eagle Point Elementary School, 1044 Western Ave., Albany, NY
5/18/10	12 noon	Eating and Exercising for a Healthier You —Learn how healthy eating and regular activity enable people of all ages to work, enjoy life, and feel their best. Offered in conjunction with senior meal. Must pre-register by noon on May 17. Suggested donation is \$3. To register, call 459-2857, ext 303.	Guilderland Town Hall, 5209 Western Tpk., Guilderland, NY
5/22/10	1:00 pm	"Making Ends Meet" —workshop provides an overview of the process for developing and using a household spending plan, as well as ways to maximize personal and community resources. Workshop participants receive a free money management kit. Advanced registration is required at 765-3559.	Albany Public Library North Albany Branch, 616 N. Pearl St., Albany, NY
6/8/10	6:30 - 8:00 pm	Snack Attacks: Make them Healthy —Learn how to prepare and sample healthy snacks that are not only good for your children but great for you as well. Children age 10 and up are welcome with an adult. Pre-registration is required by calling Janet at 765-3500 by June 4, 2010.	CCE Albany County, Voorheesville, NY
6/22/10	6:30 - 8:30 pm	Bringing the Garden to the Table —We will start in the garden to harvest early summer greens and whatever else is up and ready, and then move into the kitchen to prepare and cook nutritious and tasty recipes. Then we eat! Each participant will take home a copy of the recipes we use and more. We will also discuss maximizing the nutrition you get from your garden by planting more varieties of space-saving greens and other ultra-nutritious vegetables, and how best to freeze them for later. Pre-registration is required by calling Lisa at 765-3512 by June 18, 2010.	CCE Albany County, Voorheesville, NY
6/29/10	6:30- 8:30 pm	Preserving the Bounty: Strawberry Fields Forever! —Now that local strawberries are in season, learn how to enjoy them all year. We will make both freezer and cooked strawberry jam, and a delicious topping. Learn safe techniques for canning our fruit, and take a jar home to enjoy later. Pre-registration is required by calling Janet at 765-3500 by June 25, 2010.	CCE Albany County, Voorheesville, NY