Families Matter

Preventing the "I Can'ts"

Infants are born helpless and we are willing to help, so we become accustomed to doing things for them. But then, as children grow, how do we know if we have slipped into doing too much, doing things for them that they should be doing for themselves?

Sometimes children tell us when we have done that. Instead of saying, *Do it myself*, they say, *You do it. Do it for me. I don't know how.* Later they say, *I'm tired. I'm busy. I don't want to. That's not fun. Have my sister do it. It's not my job. I can't. Why me? My stomach hurts. I didn't hear you.* If we get these *I'm helpless* responses on a regular basis, it's time to figure out if we have been doing too much.

These questions can give us a clue about how we can change what we do in order to let our children build competence instead of helplessness.

About the child:

- Does the child know how and is capable of doing this task?
- Is the child well/getting enough sleep?
- If his stomach hurts, is the child physically ill?
- Is the hassle about the chore or the homework, or is it about the child's need for more connection with the adult?



About self:

- Do I criticize or argue about how he/she is doing something?
- Do I regularly give in?
- Am I making threats that I'm not going to carry out?
- Does another family member interfere and rescue the child?
- Do I frequently do things for this child that he should do for himself because I'm in a hurry or want it done in a certain way?
- Am I doing this because I like to feel needed?

Source: Adapted from the work of Jean Illsley Clarke. Navigating Life's Journey. UofA Extension.

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POTTAWATOMIE COUNTY EXTENSION

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Before School Chaos

Late summer is the perfect time to think about ways to eliminate the early morning scramble that seems to accompany getting kids off to school. Waiting until the fall school bell rings only adds to the anxiety, suggests The Soap and Detergent Association.

Acquire a big calendar for the kitchen—one with enough space for writing school assignments and deadlines. Making entries can be part of the coming-home–from-school ritual. Position an "in" basket so notes and papers requiring parental signatures can go straight from backpack to basket and back again. Hang a clear vinyl shoe bag (at a height the kids can reach) on the inside of the coat closet. Use it for mittens, caps and maybe even the grownups' car keys and house keys so there's no "treasure" hunt in the mornings.

Help children organize their rooms. Once school supplies are purchased and all is organized, take "after" photo of the room, desk and backpack. These serve as visual reminders. Many children, especially young ones, need visual reminders of where everything goes. Finally, when purchasing new school clothes, check the care labels to make sure they can be easily laundered. Then, if a favorite item needs a night-before washing, it won't be a family crisis.



Bedtime Battles

Here are tips to help children ease into a good night's sleep:

- Include a winding-down period in the evening routine, such as talking or reading.
- Stick to a bedtime, telling your child both a half hour and 10 minutes in advance.
- Let your child pick out her pajamas and pick which stuffed animal she would like to take to bed.
- For a feeling of security, tuck your child into bed.
- For an older child, or teenager, encourage them to establish a regular bedtime that allows them to get good sleep on a regular basis.

There may not be one sure way to raise a good sleeper, yet every parent should be encouraged to know that most children have the ability to sleep well. Trying early on to establish healthy habits is the key to good sleep habits for a lifetime.

Simple Organization Tips

Simplify. Establish a single spot in the home for library books, permission slips, school binders, glasses, keys and other must-have items, to ensure things don't get lost. Reduce the number of things kids must keep track of.

Make it easy to find things. Large spaces can attract clutter and are sometimes difficult to search through. Take advantage of small plastic tubs, sorting trays and other organization systems to help your child find, and put a way items easily.

Source: Parenting Press

After School should always include:

A nutritious snack

An active game and a quiet time

Family Time Activities

Story Starters

The first person begins the story by setting the scene and including an object they have found. The next person continues the narrative, incorporating the item they found, as smoothly and imaginatively as possible. The game goes around the circle until the last player ends the story.

Tag Team Drawing

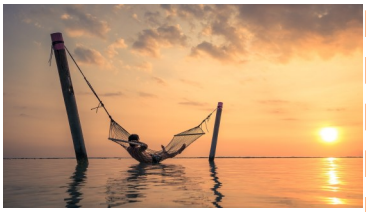
This simple game only requires a piece of white paper (per person), a box of crayons or markers and a timer. Each person will have 30 seconds to begin a drawing. When the timer rings, they must pass their paper to the person on their left and turn the paper clockwise. Reset the timer and each person begins to add to the other person's art! Repeat until the paper is full.

Relax and Restore

Relax Through Exercise Take advantage of low-impact forms of exercise you can take at your own pace. This can be anything from yoga to swimming or hiking. Getting exercise during your day can also help improve your overall sleep quality at night.

Schedule Your Sleep The average adult needs at least 7 hours of sleep at night. Research consistently shows that people who prioritize healthy sleep habits have lower levels of stress, more energy, and are more productive both on and off the clock. G o to bed at the same time every night, avoid caffeine and alcohol in the evenings, and ensure your room is properly set up for sleep.

Restore Your Eating Habits Fresh fruits and vegetables offer a variety of health benefits, and they can be incredibly refreshing in the heat of late summer! This month, challenge yourself to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into your diet in the place of less healthy snacks.



Meal Planning

Its been a long day—the family is hungry and you are tired and now its dinner time! Meal planning to the rescue! The goal is two-fold: shop efficiently to obtain food required for seven dinner meals, while minimizing expenditure, cooking, shopping and cleaning time. Here's the overview of the process:

- Scan the food ads (newspaper or online) for specials and sales. Rough out a draft menu plan: seven dinner entrees that can be made from weekly specials, side dishes and salads.
- Wander to pantry and refrigerator to check for any of last week's purchases that are languishing beneath wilting lettuce or hardening tortillas. Check for draft recipe ingredients. Review your shopping list and note needed items.
- Ready, set, shop--but shop with an open mind. That 99-cent fryer won't look like such a bargain next to a marked-down mega-pack of boneless chicken breasts at $1.29 a pound. Be ready to substitute if you find a great deal.
- Return from shopping. As you put away groceries, flesh out the menu plan. Match it up with the family's calendar, saving the oven roast for a lazy Sunday afternoon, the quick-fix pizza for soccer night.
- Post the menu plan on the refrigerator door. Refer to it during the coming week as you prepare meals.

That's it! The bare bones of menu planning. You've made a draft plan, shopped from a list, retained flexibility in the marketplace, firmed up your plan and held yourself accountable.

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POTTAWATOMIE COUNTY
EXTENSION

SLOW DOWN!!

READ TOGETHER! EAT TOGETHER!

These 2 family activities are proven to increase your child's self esteem and school performance!!

Show love effectively. Loving is the most important thing we do for our children. Notice how your child likes to be loved. Some children want to be held. Some want to talk or play or just be with us. Some want to hear the words, "I love you, Dear." Love children the way they want to be loved.

Listen with your heart. Listening is an important way to show love. Children like it when we listen to them and try to understand their feelings. When children are upset, sensitive listening proves emotional first aid. In contrast, giving advice when they are upset just makes them feel frustrated or dumb. When a child is disappointed, we can show understanding by saying, "I'm sorry that didn't work out."

Show kindness. Kindness builds relationships and brightens the world. When we say and do unkind things, we should tell our children we are sorry. If our children see us making the effort to be kind, they will look past our mistakes and learn to be kind to others.

Source: Arkansas State Extension www.arfamily.org

Busy Morning Breakfast Ideas

On-the-Go Waffle-wiches

1 tablespoon butter
8 eggs
Dash pepper
8 frozen waffles
8 cooked bacon strips
Maple syrup

In a nonstick skillet, melt butter. Whisk the eggs and pepper. Add egg mixture to skillet. When the eggs are set, cut into four wedges. Prepare waffles according to package directions. Place one waffle on a plate. Layer with an omelet wedge, two bacon strips and another waffle. Serve with syrup. **Yield:** 4 servings.

Mix & Match Ideas For Breakfast

Open Face Monte Cristo
Cheese melted on a slice of French toast topped with sliced ham.

Hawaiian Breakfast Pizza
Cheese melted on a toasted English muffin topped with pizza sauce, lean ham and pineapple.

Breakfast Pita
Melt cheese on a slice of French toast topped with shaved ham.

Wake from a Dream
Ricotta cheese and thin slices of fresh pear on a toasted bagel.

Pancake roll-up
Link turkey sausage and string cheese in a pancake.

Peanut Butter and Banana Dog
Peanut butter and banana in a toasted hot dog bun.

Courtesy 2002 American School Food Service Association: School Foodservice & Nutrition