

For Your Home

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Improving Family Resources & Health

by Adrie Roberts, Family & Consumer Sciences Agent

Ideas for Dads of School Age Children

The middle years of childhood is a time during which children master new thinking, social and physical skills and develop behaviors that will strongly influence their later health and well-being. Dads, you can help contribute to the positive development of these skills in your own children by:



Playing...both active and mental/thinking game play. Be sure to be patient (not testy), encouraging (not cajoling), supportive (not humiliating), and take turns leading (not directing) and being led. Studies from around the world consistently show that when dads play with their kids in the manner just described, their children have more friends, get better grades and make new friends more easily.

Praising... compliment and express pleasure over your children's accomplishments to help them develop a strong sense of "I-can-do-it-iveness!" In the long run, they'll be more likely to succeed in all aspects of their lives.

Talking...about your job, your life as a child, how you solved a tough problem, how much you love them and their mom. We know that when children see and hear their parents, their dad in particular, engaged in meaningful give-and-take conversations, they are much more likely to develop good problem-solving skills, be able to focus on the long-term impact of decisions, and express, rather than repress, their true emotions and sense of self.

by Kirk Blair, Ohio State University

Read to Your Kids

As you plan your family's activities, plan to read to your children. You've heard that children who are read to become strong readers. But with everything else that there is to do, what could convince you to have storytime for 15 minutes a day with your children? It will make you feel closer to each other. It will reassure them, entertain them, and maybe inspire them. It will also improve their vocabulary and stimulate their creativity. But the main thing is, it will be fun.



You don't have to teach your child how to read; reading aloud to them will make them want to read—the how can come after that. Even if your child already knows how to read, listening comprehension is usually a couple of grades ahead of reading comprehension. Read books to your second grader or sixth grader that they're not quite ready for yet. Let them know that story books get even better as their skills improve.

Tips for Success

- Start young if you can, start now if you didn't.
- Pick stories with action and interest (the librarian or teacher can help, or get a book listing recommended stories such as Jim Trelease's *"Read Aloud Handbook."*)
- Keep the time brief enough to leave the child wanting more.
- Choose a regular time. Be consistent. Don't leave your child waiting for days in between reading or they will lose interest.
- Choose a comfortable, good spot, a quiet place without distractions that could spoil the mood and enchantment of a story.



by Thomas R. Lee, Ph.D., USU Extension



For Your Yard & Garden

Greetings From Your County Agents

Horticulture Newsletter
by Taun Beddes,
USU Extension Horticulturist
& Clark Israelsen,
USU Agriculture Agent

Starting Your Own Plants Indoors

by Paul Wilkey, USU Extension



1. When it's time to **THIN** young seedlings you have started indoors, snip off at soil level with small scissors instead of disturbing roots by pulling.
2. Always **HARDEN OFF** plants for 8-10 days before you place them out in the garden. Expose them to short, then gradually longer, periods outdoors. **If you're buying transplants ask if they have been hardened off. If not, make sure you do it.**
 - Begin 7 - 10 days before your transplant date.
 - Place plants in a shady spot outdoors like under a tree or your back porch. Leave them for 3 - 4 hours and gradually increase the time spent outside 1 - 2 hours per day.
 - Bring plants back indoors each night.
 - After 2 - 3 days, move the plants from their shady spot into morning sun; return them to the shade in the afternoon.
 - After 7 days, the plants should be able to handle sun all day and stay out at night, if temperatures stay around 50 degrees. Make sure the soil doesn't dry and bake the plants if the weather is warm.
 - After 7 - 10 days your plants are ready to transplant. Try to do so on a cloudy day and be sure to water well after planting.

3. If possible **TRANSPLANT** on a cloudy-rainy day or at least in late afternoon or evening. This will give them a gentler start (avoid bright, sunny days).



4. **WATER**, but don't overwater, transplants. Let the top half-inch of soil dry between watering for the first 10-14 days. After this time establish a permanent and proper watering schedule. Sprinklers are not recommended for vegetable gardens. **DEEP SOAK IRRIGATION** is always best when possible (8-12").

5. Pay close attention to **WEATHER** reports, watch for insect or animal damage. Protect your plants by covering or spraying, depending on what your particular problem is.

6. Keep your new garden free of **WEEDS**. They will rob your garden of valuable nutrients and water. **WEEDING IS AN EXCELLENT FAMILY PROJECT.** (Consider a pre-emergent herbicide after the plants are all up.)

7. **COMMON SENSE** will be your greatest asset for a successful garden.

How to Water Your Trees

Trees don't have the same water requirements as turf; they need to be watered less often. To water trees properly, irrigate deeply (3 feet deep for trees 3 years and older, and 18 inches for trees under 3 years) once a week.



Sandy loam soil is ideal for most trees; it allows trees to get oxygen down to the roots.

Adrian Hinton, USU Extension, Utah County

Container Vegetable Gardening

Adequate sunshine, water and fertilizer plus a well-drained growing medium are essential for successful container gardens.



Containers

Almost any type of container can be used if it provides good drainage through holes in the bottom or around the sides near the bottom. If adding holes, drill four or more ¼ inch holes evenly spaced around the container bottom. To further help drainage, put about ½ inch of coarse gravel, small stones or pieces of a broken clay pot in the bottom. These items are not a substitute for drainage holes.

Most vegetables require containers that hold at least 6 to 8 inches of potting mix. Root crops, such as carrots and tomatoes and other larger plants require deeper containers.

Crop Selection

Most vegetables that grow in a backyard garden will do well as container-grown plants. Those with compact growth habits will do best.

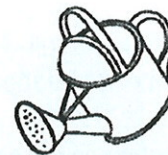
Summer Care of Container Gardens

Nearly all vegetables grow and produce best when grown in full sunlight. Plants that bear fruit, such as cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers require the most sun. Leafy vegetables (lettuce, cabbage, greens, spinach and parsley) tolerate more shade than root crops (radishes, beets and onions). Containers should be placed where they will receive at least 6 hours of sunlight per day.



Watering

Plants grown in containers require frequent watering because they dry out quickly from sun and wind. Some plants require daily watering. Apply enough water to reach the bottom of the container and allow the excess to drain through the drainage holes. Never allow the soil to dry out completely between waterings; this may cause the plants to drop their fruits and flowers. However, overwatering also will slowly kill plants because the roots will not receive enough oxygen. Avoid wetting the leaves, especially if watering late in the day. Wet leaves encourage the development of plant diseases.



Fertilization

Container grown plants require fertilization more frequently than field-grown vegetables because they have less soil from which to obtain nutrients. A soluble fertilizer (15-30-15 or 20-20-20) applied once every week or two is recommended. This can be applied while watering.

Tomato Tips

When growing standard-size tomato varieties, use a stake or cage to keep the vines upright. Plants should be pruned to produce management one- or two-stem plants. Tomato cages should be made of at least 4-inch mesh so the fruit can be harvested easily. Cages should be at least 24 inches in diameter.



Iowa State University Extension

"We can complain because rose bushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses."— *Abraham Lincoln*

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Have your kids join 4-H!
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Created by Trish Cutler

INSIDE THIS ISSUE	
Ideas for Dads of School Age Children.	1
Read to Your Kids.	1
Starting Your Own Plants Indoors.	2
Don't Kill Your Landscape With Kindness.	2
Container Vegetable Gardening.	3
Are You Eligible for Earned Income Credit?	4

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Are You Eligible for Earned Income Credit?

You or someone you know may be eligible for one or more government credits. Share this information with someone you know who recently got divorced, had a baby in 2008 or for whatever reason cut their work hours. You each may qualify for the Earned Income Credit (EIC) and/or the Child Tax Credit (CTC).

What is the Earned Income Credit?

The EIC is a special tax benefit for working people who earn low or moderate incomes. Its purpose is to reduce the tax burden on these workers and to supplement wages.

Workers who qualify for the EIC and file a federal tax return can get back some or all of the federal income tax that was taken out of their pay during the year. They may also get extra cash back from the IRS. Even workers whose earnings are too small to have paid taxes can get the EIC.

If your household income is below \$42,000 per year, you may qualify for an Earned Income Tax Credit of up to \$4,800 even if you don't owe any taxes!

Things you can do with a large tax refund:

Many people think this money should be spent on something special or frivolous. Below are four "not so frivolous" suggestions for your refund:

1. Pay off high interest credit cards.
2. Create an emergency fund.
3. Save for retirement.
4. Adjust your withholding so your refund is less.



VITA - Income Tax Volunteers Aid

Use VITA volunteers to prepare your taxes for free if you qualify for EITC! The data of the most recent IRS statistics indicates that 70 percent of claims of EITC were done by commercial tax preparers. Less than 2% of qualifying EITC individuals utilized VITA, which is a free service.

To find out more
IN ANY COUNTY IN UTAH
Dial 211
or visit
utahtaxhelp.org
FREE financial checkup is available