

Living Well

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES NEWSLETTER FOR NORTHEAST COLORADO



September – October, 2020

Tips for a Successful School Year!

This year school looks different in the classroom and may even be taking place at home – or a combination of the two. Educating children is not an easy task by any means; and your local educators are here to help. Online education can be difficult, and as parents you will most likely be answering the children’s questions. Communicate with teachers for advice, tips, and resources.



Words of advice and encouragement from educators:

“Where my kids struggle most is mainly confidence from not being so sure about facts!! Mainly multiplication and division! Flash cards are great help!! With the repetition kids get better and better about remembering rather than counting on their fingers or relying on a chart!”- Middle School Math Teacher

“Follow directions from the teacher and create routine with their child and stick to it every day! This will help the kid get more into the semblance of a “school day” and help with behavioral issues and refusal to work at home!”- Elementary School Teacher

Bradford Wiles, a Kansas State University child development specialist, said it’s particularly important that school-age children spend time interacting with their peers.

“We think about what we learn early on and so often it is said that play is the work of early childhood,” Wiles said.” That’s exactly what children need: they need to be able to play and interact. It makes a huge difference in their development.”

For their part, parents can help their children adjust to hybrid or other learning by helping them understand the new routines.

“Routines are critical for everything that we do,” Wiles said. “Routines are critical for young children because it’s how they reduce anxiety, knowing what to expect. That is gigantic in a young child’s mind.”

The best thing parents and primary caregivers can do for children, regardless of a remote learning model, a homeschooling model or a hybrid model, is to establish and maintain routines. “That will help them in all the domains of learning because it gives them an idea of what to expect.” Wiles added.

Resources: <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/news/stories/2020/08/children-benefit-from-returning-to-school.html> and <https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/family-home-consumer/back-to-school-10-246/>

Where trade names are used, no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Colorado State University Extension is implied.

Joy Akey

Yuma County
joy.akey@colostate.edu
(970) 332-4151

Morgan County
(970) 542-3540

Gisele Jefferson

Washington County
gisele.jefferson@colostate.edu
(970) 345-2287

Deona Johnston

Phillips County
deona.johnston@colostate.edu
(970) 854-3616

Missie Payne

Logan County
missie.payne@colostate.edu
(970) 522-3200, Ext. 2

McKayla Stephen

Kit Carson County
mckayla.stephen@colostate.edu
(719) 346-5571

Extension Online

<https://goldenplains.extension.colostate.edu/>

<https://extension.colostate.edu/logan/>

<https://morgan.extension.colostate.edu>



GOLDEN PLAINS AREA
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Colorado State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Kit Carson, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, and Yuma Counties cooperating.

Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.

Preparing for Autumn

Kids are back in school. There are cooler temperatures and leaves changing colors. After the hot and dry summer heat, autumn temperatures will be welcomed. During the autumn season, have fun times in the leaves, prepare for Halloween and Thanksgiving, and enjoy warm days and cool nights sitting by a fire pit or fireplace. Changes in the weather, although longed for, come with challenges and a need for increased safety measures. Here are a few things to do to be safe during autumn and prepare for winter.

Prepare Your Car for Cold Weather

Pack a bag or a tote with great cold weather items to store in your car. A sweater/hoodie, pair of gloves, hat, extra socks, blanket, and maybe some hand warmers or a road flare. For longer trips, it's good to have non-perishable snacks and some water. It's also a good practice to never let the gas tank drop below a $\frac{1}{4}$ (or even better, $\frac{1}{2}$) in the winter. Now you'll be prepared in case you get stuck in a snowstorm or slide off the road in the ditch. Exposure to cold temperatures can cause serious health problems.



Test and replace batteries

Check or replace batteries in carbon monoxide and smoke detectors. Using a space heater or fireplaces can increase your risk of fires and carbon monoxide poisoning. Also, it's good to have extra batteries and candles available in your house in case of a power outage.



Check both ways

Remind kids on checking both ways before crossing a street. As the sun sets earlier and the time changes in October, it's important to remind kids to pay attention when they are outside. It's harder for drivers to see them at dusk or after dark. If your child walks home from school, or if they are planning on trick-or-treating this Halloween, attach reflective strips to their backpacks and costumes. This will help drivers see them as they are walking around town.

Prepare your garden for the next year

Remove weeds and other debris left over from this growing season. This will help reduce the amount of pests next year. Till soil in a couple directions which adds oxygen that is good for the plants. Add organic matter like humus and manure. It takes time for the nutrients from organic matter to become available for plants. Doing this in the fall gives the organic matter time it needs for soil microbes to break them down to feed the plants in the spring.

Don't forget to have fun and enjoy the beautiful colors of autumn!

Resources:

Colorado State University Extension

Fall Gardening Tasks - <https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/yard-garden/fall-gardening-tasks/>

Michigan State University

Preparing your garden this fall for next year's bounty - <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/preparing-your-garden-this-fall-for-next-years-bounty#:~:text=As%20you%20pick%20and%20preserve,them%20up%20and%20compost%20them.>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Halloween Health and Safety Tips - <https://www.cdc.gov/family/halloween/index.htm>

Autumn: Health and Safety Tips - <https://www.cdc.gov/family/autumn/autumntips.pdf>

Planning Ahead for Holiday Spending

Hello September! There are approximately 15 weekends until Christmas and 15 weeks to do all your holiday shopping, gift wrapping, baking and more. While it seems fairly distant, it won't be long before our communities are adorned with holiday decorations and music. Your checkbook may still be recovering from back to school shopping, but it's not too early to start planning for Christmas and the holiday season.

Research shows 22 percent of Americans believe their Christmas spending will leave them in debt and over 60 percent admit to buying their gifts less than a week before the holiday. By planning ahead and starting early, you can reduce the risk of going into debt this season. Here are a few tips to get your started on your joyful holidays without regrets.



1. Set your overall spending budget. If you are already struggling with debt, be careful about how much you set to spend on Christmas gifts and activities. Look at how much you spent last year. Is it reasonable to spend the same or a little more, or do you need to cut your costs this year?
2. Make a list. Write down every person you plan to buy for this season and set a budget for each. From the company office exchange to close family, don't leave anyone out. When you buy a gift, put it on the list along with the amount spent. Then adjust your overall budget accordingly.
3. Price check. One benefit to starting early is you have time to track the regular selling prices on must-have items on your list and decide what constitutes a good "sale" price. When the Black Friday ads are released, you'll be ready to choose your go-to items based on the best prices. Finding the best deals will stretch your already set spending budget.

Although you are getting a head start on the holiday planning and shopping, take time to enjoy the fall season. Enjoy each season of the year and season of your family for the simple and yet wonderful experiences they offer.

Source: Better Kansas – Ideas for Living, Growing and Succeeding, <https://blogs.k-state.edu/ksrenews/>

Evaluate Your Need for Life Insurance

Each year families experience unexpected deaths. However, following the death, the family is thrust into the financial realities of the loss. This year should motivate everyone to evaluate life insurance needs, especially if you have children at home – or just need to cover burial costs and medical expenses.

Life insurance is protection against the loss of income that would result if the insured passed away. According to Life Insurance and Market Research Association International (LIMRA), approximately 35 million households are uninsured and 50 million American have inadequate life insurance. September is national life insurance awareness month, but the time to start preparing is now. Take the first step and consider whether you need life insurance.

"The top two reasons people don't buy life insurance are: competing financial priorities or because they think they cannot afford it," (LIMRA, 2012). How do you know if you should give life insurance serious consideration or rethink whether you have enough? If one or more of the following situations apply to you or your family, you may want to evaluate your need for life insurance:

- If you have children and both parents work
- If you have children and one parent works
- If you have children and you cannot afford to pay for their final expenses
- If you are a single parent
- If you have an outstanding shared debt
- If you are married and your spouse could not support your current lifestyle without your help
- If you are married and your spouse may have to care for one or more elderly parents



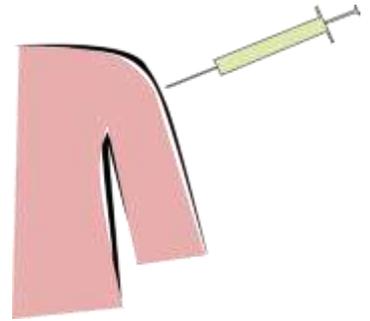
The above list is not exhaustive, but is meant to get you started thinking about family or lifestyle situations when life insurance could benefit you in providing for your loved one(s). For more information on life insurance, read "Understanding Life Insurance" (http://web.aces.uiuc.edu/vista/pdf_pubs/LIFEINS.PDF), University of Illinois Extension.

Source: <http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/jeffersonco/2013/07/30/evaluate-your-need-for-life-insurance/>

Cold and Flu Season To-Do List

1. Get your flu shot

The influenza virus is a respiratory virus that can infect the nose, throat, and lungs. Those most at risk for developing severe complications are people 65 years and older, anyone with a chronic medical condition, pregnant women, and young children. Anyone can get the flu, but most healthy and uncompromised individuals will develop mild symptoms and will recover faster. You can choose a shot or a nasal spray. The shot only contains one protein or an inactivated form of the virus. The nasal spray does contain a live virus, but it is weakened and will not cause illness.



2. Know the difference between Antibiotics and Antiviral and when to use them for the best results.

Antibiotics only work to cure bacterial infections, not viral infections like the flu or the common cold. Taking antibiotics without a bacterial infection can cause more harm. You may experience side effects from the antibiotic, and there is a chance the antibiotics can cause some bacteria to become stronger. Strengthening the bacteria from an unnecessary anti-biotic will make it harder to fight in the future.



Antiviral drugs are used to treat symptoms of the flu and other viral infections. They help reduce the severity of symptoms and assist your body in fighting against the virus to decrease the time you are sick. Antiviral drugs work better when they are started soon after symptoms have developed. For best results they need to be taken within two days after symptoms appear. If medication isn't started before day two, the best option is to manage symptoms with over the counter cold and flu medications and let the virus run its course. Anti-viral drugs can only be prescribed by a health care provider.

3. Disinfect commonly used items and wash your hands

This has been a common theme of 2020, but it is important to disinfect commonly used items often to kill off viruses and bacteria living on surfaces. Some common items are home phones, remote controls, doorknobs, sink and toilet handles, and refrigerator handles.

Resources: **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

Misconceptions about Seasonal Flu and Flu Vaccines - <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/misconceptions.htm>

How to Clean & Disinfect Schools to Help Slow the Spread of Flu <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/cleaning.htm>

What You Should Know About Flu & Antiviral Drugs - <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/treatment/whatyoushould.htm>

Save & Savor: Tips for Proper Food Storage

Are you preserving produce from your garden and fruit trees, stocking up on seasonal fruits and vegetables at the store or farmer's market, or simply adding favorite foods to cupboard shelves? Be sure foods you have grown or purchased are stored properly to preserve quality, nutritional value and flavor so you can save and savor them later. Proper storage also helps make the most of your food dollar by preventing spoilage and waste. Here are some things to keep in mind.

- Purchase and/or preserve only the kinds and amounts of food you can store properly. Food can get “lost” in the refrigerator, freezer or cupboard or the quantities may simply be too much to eat before they expire or spoil and have to be thrown out.
- Refrigerate or freeze perishable foods as soon as possible. Don't leave foods needing refrigeration out for more than two hours.
- Stock food items according to use-by and expiration dates so the oldest items get used first. Label with date purchased or prepared. Place recently purchased or preserved foods behind or below older items.
- General recommendation for canned food storage (store bought or home preserved) is up to 1 year for optimal quality.
- Frozen foods should be stored below 0°F in moisture and air-proof plastic or freezer wrap. Label and date packages.
- Dried foods are susceptible to absorbing moisture and molding if not stored properly. Home canning jars, plastic freezer containers with tight-fitting lids, plastic freezer bags or vacuum packaging are all good options for storage. Store in amounts typically used all at once. This helps avoid exposure to air and moisture each time the package is opened which can reduce quality and lead to spoilage.
- Store dried foods in a cool, dry, dark area from 4 months to 1 year depending on temperature. Fruits can typically be stored twice as long as vegetables.



Guidelines for length of storage vary depending on the type of food. For more information refer to the following resources:

- Colorado State University Extension: <https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/nutrition-food-safety-health/food-storage-for-safety-and-quality-9-310/>
- National Center for Home Food Preservation: <https://nchfp.uga.edu/>
- Food Bank: <https://foodbanksbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Food-Storage-Guidelines3.pdf>
- Virginia and Kansas State University Extension: https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/humannutrition/foodstorage-documents/Virginia348-960_pdf.pdf

Parenting, Kids, and Anxiety

Being a kid is tough. They have school to worry about, peers to interact with, home life to juggle, plus all these new emotions and situations they are learning for the first time. To throw this thing called COVID-19 in the mix, mask wearing, handwashing and more can be very overwhelming for many kiddos. Some children are more prone to anxiety than others especially in our current climate. It is important to address our children's worries and provide them with a few tools to help minimize those anxious feelings.



No parent wants to see their child suffer. It would be wonderful if we could snap our fingers and take away the triggers to anxiety for our children, but it is not that simple. As a parent it is vital to identify what your child's anxiety triggers are and address them. Their fears will not simply "go away" unless your child feels empowered and in control of what is ailing them.

Once you have identified what is bothering your child, how do you help them tackle their fears? One helpful technique is to encourage them but not give them false expectations. For example: if your child has anxiety about being teased at school because of their new braces, do not set a false reality in their mind that teasing will not occur. We all know children are little people and not everyone will be kind. Instead, acknowledge their worries and identify positive coping skills to help them handle these uncomfortable situations. If a classmate mocks them for their braces, encourage your child to focus on something they really like about themselves instead. Focus on positive thinking!

Another technique is to talk through the fear with your child. Is it really going to the park that is giving them anxious thoughts or is it something else? Be open, accepting and kind. Children are less likely to open up about what is bothering them if they do not feel like they will be heard. Also, do not dismiss their fears as irrelevant. These feelings are legitimate whether the threat is real or imagined. During a routine doctor visit it can be scary for a child to think about talking to a stranger who may give them a shot/inject pain. This is a good time to discuss with your child why it is important and necessary to do things that may scare them.

Finally, look at your own actions and how you handle stress and anxiety. Are you likely to be tense, yell, cry, etc. when life becomes difficult? We are all allowed to express ourselves freely, but as parents our little ones are always watching and taking their cues from us. Modeling healthy, positive behavior will help your child address their own fears and anxiety. Our world is in a difficult place and we are all feeling a little on edge. Encourage your child to handle tough situations with techniques that will help them become strong, healthy adults. If you are unsure of where to start, you should consult your health care provider. They can offer great advice. When your kiddo does face those fears, CELEBRATE! You are in this together!



Resources:

<https://childmind.org/article/what-to-do-and-not-do-when-children-are-anxious/>

<https://healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au/age-6-12/mental-health-conditions-in-children/anxiety/strategies-to-support-anxious-children>

<https://www.npr.org/2019/10/23/772789491/how-to-help-a-child-struggling-with-anxiety>

Program Highlights

Kit Carson County -- We just wrapped up fair and we are now finishing up state fair. Throughout the summer we have had 10 families participate in the Grow and Give program. As of September 1st we have received over 135 pounds of produce to donate! The produce can be dropped off and picked up at Prairie Family Center in Burlington during their hours of operation.

Upcoming Events!

- **Diabetes Webinar: Understanding Diabetes and Cardiovascular Medications**, Tuesday, September 22, Noon – 1:00 pm. Learn more about the links between diabetes and heart disease and common medications. Presented live by Dr. Theresa Matoushek, PharmD. Host sites include Akron, Sterling and Wray or you may register at <https://understandingmedications.eventbrite.com> to watch it virtually from your location.
- **National Diabetes Prevention Program** starting October 2020 – contact Missie Payne in Logan County missie.payne@colostate.edu
- **Zumba and STRONG30** fitness classes are being hosted online Fall 2020. Visit <https://www.zumba.com/en-US/profile/deeona-johnston/1891875> for times and possible in-person locations.
- **Virtual High School Sports Nutrition** coming in September – contact Deeona Johnston at 970-854-3616 for more information.
- **ServSafe Certification Training**, October 6, 7:45 am – 5:30 pm, Morgan County Fairgrounds, Brush, CO. Pre-registration required by contacting the Yuma County Extension Office at 970-332-4151.
- **ServSafe Food Handler Training**, November 9, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, Yuma County Fairgrounds, Yuma, CO. Pre-registration required by contacting the Yuma County Extension Office at 970-332-4151.
- **Strengthening Families Program 10-14** coming soon in Wray. This evidence-based parent, youth and family skills-building program targets youth between the ages of 10-14 years and their families. It prevents teen substance abuse and other behavior problems, strengthens parent/youth communication skills, increases academic success in youth, and prevents violence and aggressive behavior at home and school.



CSU Extension – NE Colorado FCS – In this time of no/limited personal contact, we're all using social media!

<https://www.facebook.com/CSUExtensionNortheastFCS>

<https://www.facebook.com/PhillipsCountyExtension/>

CSU Extension – Logan County: https://www.facebook.com/csuentensionlogancounty/?_tn_=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARCS5-NbtiQryVNn5X513c5--hwVu-1ZfnhynwZsPotP7AZIVStJaoCEoaVYzZjBFhCH0tHJLHaJxQuQ

CSU Extension – Morgan County: <https://www.facebook.com/extensionmorgancounty/>

<https://www.facebook.com/joy.akey>

<https://www.facebook.com/gisele.jefferson.9>