

The Communicator

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January 2004

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University of Idaho
Extension

School of Family & Consumer Sciences

Family Science

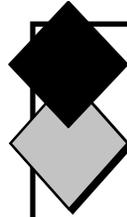
We often find ourselves trying to explain who we are and what we do. The National Council on Family Relations Task Force convened in 1988 to explore the field of family science stated that it is a field of study where “the primary goals are the discovery, verification and application of knowledge” about families. Although family science has its roots in many related disciplines including anthropology, communication, law, political science, psychology, sociology, and family and consumer science, it has evolved into its own field of study.

I want to make all of you aware of a new publication offered through NCFR. It is titled *Family Science: Professional Development and Career Opportunities*. Although it was written with students and young professionals in mind, I think it will be of great value to all of us in FCS roles.

Family professionals specialize in a large number of areas that are as diverse as the families they serve. Our extension specialists have expertise in some of those areas: parenting, economics, food safety, and nutrition education. NCFR indicates that family professionals share one core area of interest and academic training: family systems.

Family science is grounded in family systems thinking, which recognizes the interrelationship between family members and their environment. Family scientists consider societal issues including economics, education, work-family issues, parenting, sexuality, gender, and more within the context of the family. They believe that societal problems can be more effectively addressed from a perspective that considers the individual and family as part of larger systems. Knowledge about healthy family functioning can be applied to prevent or minimize many of these problems.

Regardless of our areas of specialization, we all recognize this interrelationship. I'm not sure that we always articulate this to audiences we serve. This statement is also a reminder of the comprehensive approach we need to find solutions to problems. I hope this statement from NCFR will assist you in the goal to inform the public regarding the programs we deliver through UI Extension. Please visit the website: www.ncfr.org for additional information.



Director
January 2004



Nancy Wanamaker
Director
Family and Consumer Sciences
University of Idaho
Moscow, ID 83843-3188
nancyw@uidaho.edu

Poster Sessions

Speaking of venues to let folks know what you do, two excellent opportunities await your submission of proposals. The **2004 Legislative Poster Session** is scheduled for **January 26th**. Proposals will be accepted for this session as well as for **UI Extension Annual Conference, “Sharpening the Tools in Your Tool Box”** to be held **April 19-22, 2004**. You may apply to be accepted at one or both poster presentations. Submission dates and the person to send your submission(s) to are different for both poster sessions.

Legislative Session: Proposals *must* be submitted by Wednesday, January 7, 2004. **Proposals *must* be submitted by email as an attached file to the following email address: joeyp@uidaho.edu**. Non-email submissions cannot be accepted. There is an expectation that an Impact Statement be provided for all accepted posters.

Annual Conference: Proposals *must* be submitted by Wednesday, March 31, 2004. **Proposals *must* be submitted by email as an attached file to the following email address: sjohnson@uidaho.edu**. Non-email submissions cannot be accepted. There is an expectation that an Impact Statement be provided for all accepted posters.

If applying for both: Proposals *must* be submitted to meet the Wednesday, January 7, 2004 deadline. Proposals *must* be submitted as an attached file to joey@uidaho.edu and sjohnson@uidaho.edu.



Questions and comments should be directed to:
Legislative Session:

Joey Peutz
UI Extension
(208) 459-6003
joey@uidaho.edu

Marsha Hawkins
UI Extension
(208) 324-7578
mhawkins@uidaho.edu

Annual Conference:

Shelly Johnson
UI Extension
(208) 446-1688
sjohnson@uidaho.edu

Jim Church
UI Extension
(208) 983-2667
jchurch@uidaho.edu

Shane Jackson
Ag Communications
(208) 885-8936
shanej@uidaho.edu

Fellowship Reminder

As you make plans for 2004, please consider applying for the Haberly and Hepworth Fellowships to assist you with professional and programmatic development activities. The March 1st deadline seems to sneak up on specialists and educators each year. Plan now to have a proposal to submit. Applications are limited to two pages and will be screened by the Faculty Development Committee. Team applications are acceptable.

As you develop plans for your topic teamwork or other special projects in 2004, don't forget about this valuable resource. We are so fortunate to have these generous endowments.

2004 Cook's Tour Correction

We have had a change in the dates for our 2004 Cook's Tour to Provence, France. In order for David Iverson to be able to guide our 10-day tour, dates have been changed to May 22-May 31. Brochures will go out the last week of the year with detailed information about the tour. If you need extras, please contact our FCS administrative assistant, Lynette Brown lbrown@uidaho.edu.

The price will include round trip from Boise, Spokane, Seattle or Portland to Paris, nine nights lodging, and tours of Avignon, Les Beaux and Arles. The cooking, eating, and adventuring tour includes five "hands on" cooking lessons taught by a local expert in Provencal Cuisine. Meals include breakfast daily, six lunches, and seven dinners inclusive of local wines. We will have an English-speaking guide throughout our stay. All transportation, tours, transfers, taxes, and tips are included in the \$3,350 price per person. The tour is limited to 20 persons. A deposit of \$500 per person is required to make a reservation. Reservation deadline is March 5, 2004. Complete payment is due by March 15, 2004. You may also visit the website for additional information: www.acookstour.com.



Is This Food Still Safe to Eat?

From time to time *The Communicator* reprints items from Alice Henneman's (Extension Educator University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension) excellent *Food Reflections* newsletter. The following answers to some typical food safety questions, "Is this food still safe to eat?" were reported in the September 2003 issue of *Food Reflections*.

Question 1: Is it safe to refreeze raw meat and poultry that has thawed?

Answer: The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) advises, "Meat and poultry defrosted in the refrigerator may be refrozen before or after cooking. If thawed by other methods, cook before refreezing (Basics for Handling Food Safely, at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/facts_basics.pdf)." Do not thaw meat at room temperature, such as on the kitchen counter. Meat/poultry that is refrozen might suffer some quality loss as moisture may be lost during thawing. Safety will depend on whether the raw product was handled properly before it was frozen, refrozen shortly after it was thawed, cooked to a safe temperature when it is eaten and handled safely if there are any leftovers.

Question 2: Is there any way I can tell from the egg carton how old the eggs are? Are there some guidelines for how long eggs are safe to eat?

Answer: According to USDA, "Many eggs reach stores only a few days after the hen lays them. Egg cartons with the USDA grade shield on them, indicating they came from a USDA-inspected plant, must display the 'pack date' (the day that the eggs were washed, graded, and placed in the carton). The number is a three-digit code that represents the consecutive day of the year (the 'Julian Date') starting with January 1 as 001 and ending with December 31 as 365 (<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/shelleggs.htm>)." You can access a "Julian Date Converter" to calculate the day/month pack date from the Julian Date via this USDA link, <http://www.ams.usda.gov/poultry/consumer/InterpretPackDate.htm>. (A chart of how days correspond to Julian Dates is available at www.usda.gov/procurement/toolkit/calendar.pdf.)

Food Safety

January 2004

Sandra M. McCurdy
Extension Food Safety Specialist
Family and Consumer Sciences
University of Idaho
Moscow, ID 83843-3188
smccurdy@uidaho.edu



Though not required, egg cartons also may contain a "sell by" date beyond which they should not be sold. In USDA-inspected plants (indicated by the USDA shield on the package), this date can't exceed 30 days beyond the pack date. Always purchase eggs before their "sell by" date.

Plants not under USDA inspection are governed by the state laws where the eggs are packed and/or sold. According to the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, Idaho does not require pull or pack dates on eggs produced and sold within the state, but market forces generally result in this information being provided.



According to the American Egg Board "Refrigerated raw shell eggs will keep without significant quality loss for about 4 to 5 weeks beyond the pack date or about 3 weeks after you bring them home (<http://www.aeb.org>)."

If the eggs were right at their sell-by date when purchased, you might have only about a week of storage time before there was quality loss. Plan to use your eggs accordingly.

"If by chance you have an egg that you have removed from the carton and no longer know when it was packed or purchased, it may be difficult to determine its freshness," according to Marcia Greenblum, MS, RD, Associate Director, Education Outreach, Nutrition and Food Safety, Egg Nutrition Center. "The test of freshness that involves seeing if an egg floats in a glass of salt water is not a reliable test. In fact, this test has no relationship to the freshness of shell eggs. While eggs do take in air as they age, the size of the air cell varies from egg to egg when they are laid. Therefore, a freshly laid egg and an older egg might react very similarly," says Greenblum.

To help preserve the quality of your eggs, store them in their carton in the coldest part of the refrigerator, not open on the door. Open storage on the door increases the chance of cracks with repeated opening and closing of the door. Temperature fluctuations may decrease storage time. Run your refrigerator at 40°F or lower.

Proper cooking as well as proper storage is important for egg safety. Cook eggs thoroughly so both yolks and whites are firm, not runny. Casseroles and dishes containing eggs should be cooked to 160°F as measured by a food thermometer. Do not eat raw or undercooked eggs. For more information on egg safety, check the USDA web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/eggfacts.htm>.

Question 3: Is it safe to eat food that has "freezer burn?"

Answer: "Freezer burn," a condition in which the surface of food appears light-colored and dried out, occurs when moisture on the surface evaporates. Proper cooling, air removal, moisture-vapor-resistant packaging, a tight seal and an appropriate length of storage help prevent freezer burn. Keep your freezer at 0°F or lower. While a food with freezer burn is safe to eat, the quality is lower. You can cut away freezer burn spots either before or after cooking. If a food is heavily freezer-burned, it may be desirable to discard it for quality reasons.

Information about how to freeze food to help prevent freezer burn, is available at the following web-sites:

- Containers for Freezing, National Center for Home Food Preservation, <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/how/freeze/containers.html>
- Packaging and Labeling Foods, National Center for Home Food Preservation, http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/how/freeze/package_label.html
- Cold Storage Chart, USDA/FDA, <http://www.foodsafety.gov/~fsg/f01chart.html>

Question 4: If I reheat food that was forgotten on the counter overnight or was left out all day, will it be safe to eat?

Answer: Two hours is the maximum time perishable foods should be at room temperature. This includes the time they're on the table during your meal. Just one bacterium, doubling every 20 minutes, can grow to over 2,097,152 bacteria in 7 hours!

Perishable foods include:

- Meat, poultry, seafood, and tofu
- Dairy products
- Cooked pasta, rice, and vegetables
- Fresh, peeled and/or cut fruits and vegetables

Reheating food may not make it safe. If food is left out too long, some bacteria, such as *Staphylococcus aureus* (staph), can form a heat-resistant toxin that cooking can't destroy. One of the most common sources of staph bacteria is the human body. Even healthy people carry staph—according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's *Bad Bug Book*, staph bacteria are present in the nasal passages and throats and on the hair and skin of 50 percent or more of healthy individuals (<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~mow/chap3.html>). Staph bacteria is found in facial blemishes, cuts, and lesions. Most likely, the only way you'll know if a food contained staph bacteria is when someone gets sick.

General. When considering whether foods are safe, always remember the standard food safety advice is "When in doubt, throw it out." Follow that advice.

Source: Henneman, Alice & Jensen, Joyce, "Food Safety Q & A: Is This Food Still Safe to Eat?" *Food Reflections* newsletter, September 2003, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County, <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ftsep03.htm>.

Key words: storage, food safety.



Food Safety Resources in Spanish

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) maintains a website, *Food Safety Information for Consumers in Languages Other Than English* at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/languages.htm>. Most of the publications listed are in

Spanish, but a few are also in other languages such as Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese. From the website, you can link to the publications, some of which are available as PDF files. Some of the Spanish-language offerings that may be of particular interest are listed below. The website lists some additional resources and has links to other agencies which are sources of Spanish- and other-language food safety materials.

Cocinando para Grupos: Guía de Seguridad Alimentaria para Voluntarios	Cooking For Groups: A Volunteer's Guide to Food Safety
Cómo Mantener los Alimentos Sanos Durante una Emergencia	Keeping Food Safe During An Emergency
Enfoque Sobre la Carne Molida de Res	Focus on Ground Beef
Factores Sobre la Inocuidad de los Alimentos	Food Safety Facts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ahumado de carnes y aves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smoking Meat and Poultry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inocuidad de la carne de cerdo...desde el criadero hasta la mesa del consumidor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety of Fresh Pork...From Farm to Table
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inocuidad de los Alimentos Cocidos en la Barbacoa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barbecue Food Safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inocuidad de los Huevos y de los Productos de Huevo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Egg and Egg Product Safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intoxicacion Alimentaria: lo que Deben Saber los Consumidores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foodborne Illness: What Consumers Need to Know
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> La Coccion sin Riesgos en el Horno de Microondas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooking Safely in the Microwave Oven
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Las personas mayores necesitan ser juiciosas en materia de inocuidad alimentaria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors Need Wisdom on Food Safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principios Basicos en la Preparacion de los Alimentos Seguros 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basics for Handling Food Safely
Las intoxicaciones alimentarias aumentan en el verano, ¿por qué?	Foodborne Illness Peaks in Summer - Why?
Venta de carne a domicilio	Door-to-Door Meat Sales
La Listeriosis y el Embarazo: ¿Cuál es su Riesgo?	Listeriosis and Pregnancy: What is Your Risk?
Listeriosis y Consejos en la Seguridad de los Alimentos	Listeriosis and Food Safety Tips (Color Brochure)
Use un Termómetro para Alimentos	Use A Food Thermometer (Color Brochure)
Principios Básicos de la Preparación del Pavo: Descongelación Correcta, Noviembre 2001	Turkey Basics: Thawing
Principios Básicos de la Preparación del Pavo: Cocinar Correctamente, Noviembre 2001	Turkey Basics: Safe Cooking
Principios Básicos de la Preparación del Pavo: El Relleno, Noviembre 2001	Turkey Basics: Stuffing
Principios Básicos de la Preparación del Pavo: Manejo de las Comidas Precocinadas, Noviembre 2001	Turkey Basics: Handling Precooked Dinners
Todos podemos combatir las BACterias!	Everyone can Fight BAC!
Los Diez Patógenos de Alimentos Menos Apreciados	10 Least Wanted Foodborne Pathogens
Organismos Que Pueden Afectarlo	Organisms That Can Bug You
Combata a BAC	Fight BAC brochure

The brochure, *Cómo Héctor se enfermó (How Hector Got Sick)*, 5 pages, 1989, which some of you use regularly, is available in print only. Large quantities of this brochure are available in boxes of 400 from FSIS. You can request multiple copies by sending an email to fsis.outreach@usda.gov.

Key words: spanish publications, resources, food safety.



Research: Deli Salad Survey

Mayonnaise-based deli salads have been connected with foodborne illness outbreaks in recent years. The most common pathogens found were *Staphylococcus* and *Listeria*. The salads implicated include potato salad, various meat salads, pasta salad, cole slaw, and a vegetable salad mix. These salads have a high potential for contamination due to extensive handling during preparation. Other factors include improper holding temperature and long storage time.

A survey was conducted by the University of Nebraska and Virginia Polytechnical Institute and State University on the safety of mayonnaise based deli salads found in three Lincoln, Nebraska grocery stores. Three salad-types, potato salad, macaroni salad, and krab (surimi) salad, were purchased from each store each day and the sampling was done on three days for a total of nine salad samples of each type.

The objective was to evaluate the salads for contamination with *S. aureus* and *L. monocytogenes* and to assess temperature at time of purchase, visual appearance, pH, and deli employee practices.

The results revealed some areas of concern. The salad temperatures ranged from 37.9°F to 46.6°F (cold food should be held at 40°F or less). Seventy-four percent of the salads were held above recommended storage temperatures. In the krab salads, 89 percent had a pH above 4.6. All potato and macaroni salads were below pH 4.6. Pathogen growth is supported at pH above 4.6.

Microbial tests found *S. aureus* in 33 percent of the krab salad samples and 11 percent of the macaroni salads. *L. monocytogenes* was not found in any samples. (However, note the number of samples, totaling 27 salads, was much lower than the nearly 11,000 deli and seafood salads in the *Listeria* study

by the National Food Processors Association, in which 2 to 5 percent more positive.) The visual appearance of the salads at the time of purchase revealed a crust layer on the surface, dull colored ingredients, and watery consistency. Thus, quality was also poor. Employees did not wear plastic gloves or hairnets.

This survey shows that deli and food service operations must continue to improve their food safety practices and incorporate HACCP procedures to ensure the safety of the food they serve.

Source: "Deli Salad Survey," *Food Safety News* 6(3), June 2003, Kansas State Research and Extension, <http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/foodsafety/Newsletter/food0603.pdf>; Bornemeier, V.L. Albrecht, J.A. & Sumner, S.S., "Survey of Mayonnaise-based Salads for Microbial Safety and Quality," *Food Protection Trends*, 23(5), pages 387-392.

Key words: food safety, food service.

Foodservice Ice Handling Needs Improvement



A recent study from England suggests that the ice served by restaurants and bars often contains bacteria indicative of poor personal hygiene on the part of food handlers. In the study, 44 percent of samples from ice buckets and ice machines revealed the presence of coliform bacteria. Coliform bacteria are present in the human gut and are passed out in the feces. Although the coliforms identified were not pathogens, their presence in the ice indicates that food handlers had not properly washed hands after using the toilet and had used poor practices when handling ice.

Source: "Ice cubes 'harbour toilet bugs,'" BBC News, September 15, 2003, <http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk>, accessed September 19, 2003.

Key words: food safety, food service, hand washing.

Early Childhood Development Is a Top Concern for Cities

A new National League of Cities (NLC) survey shows that city leaders in the U.S. view early childhood development as a top priority. Some of the key findings of the survey bear out that child care and early learning opportunities stand out as critical needs in America's cities. One in four (25 percent) city officials cite child care as one of the most critical program or service needs for children and families in their community. More than one in 10 city officials rank preschool or early childhood education as the most critical need for children and families in their community.

Many cities and towns are also taking steps to promote early childhood development. The NLC survey findings show that despite the fact that early childhood programming has not traditionally been a municipal function, about four in 10 (38 percent) city officials report dedicating funds to early childhood development. Among larger cities (100,000 or more population), nearly two-thirds report allocating city resources to early childhood development.

More than one in five (20 percent) cities of all sizes, and more than four in 10 (42 percent) large cities, are directly involved in providing early childhood education services.

Municipal officials also believe that cities and towns have a clear stake in early childhood success. According to the survey of municipal officials, the reasons cited most often for investing in early childhood development are, children who enter school healthy and ready to learn tend to get better grades and have fewer behavioral problems and children who have positive early experiences are less likely to become juvenile delinquents.

DeStefano said that in response to a call to action to fellow city officials, more than 100 municipal leaders have committed to developing strategic plans to promote early childhood success in their communities.

Source: http://www.nlc.org/nlc_org/site/newsroom, October 24, 2003.

Key word: early childhood.



Family Development
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Harriet Shaklee
Extension Family Development
Specialist
University of Idaho Boise Center
800 Park Blvd, Suite 200
Boise, ID 83712
hshaklee@uidaho.edu

McREL Research Finds Out-of-School Programs Boost Achievement

A quantitative analysis of 56 studies of after-school and summer programs found these programs have a small, though statistically significant positive impact on student achievement in reading and mathematics.

The study, conducted by Aurora, Colorado-based Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, looked at 371 studies of the impact of out-of-school time (OST) strategies (i.e., after-school and summer programs) conducted since 1984 and found 56 that met high standards for rigor—in part, the use of control/comparison groups.

Using meta-analytic techniques to synthesize the results of these 56 studies, McREL researchers found overall, out-of-school time strategies had an effect size of .10 standard deviation, which converts statistically into a gain of four percentile points on a standardized achievement test.

“At first blush, this difference in effect size may seem minor,” noted McREL President and CEO Tim Waters. “But it’s important to note that these results were achieved with strategies that represent a relatively small period of exposure with students. Even more striking, these results have been achieved with students who struggle most to meet high standards for learning.”

Moreover, McREL researchers found far greater effect sizes when they further analyzed these data. For example, they found an effect size of .26 (standard deviations), or a gain of 10 percentile points, for reading scores of lower elementary (K-2) students. They also found an effect size of .44, or a gain of 17 percentile points, for high school students. Overall, the largest positive effect size (.50, a gain of 19 percentile points) occurred for reading strategies that employed one-on-one tutoring.

In summary, key findings from the study are as follows:

- OST strategies can have positive effects on the achievement of low-achieving or at-risk students in reading and mathematics.
- No difference in effectiveness can be attributed to timeframes for delivering OST programs (i.e., after or summer school).
- Students in early elementary grades are more likely than older students to benefit from OST strategies to improve reading; older students may benefit more from OST strategies to improve mathematics.
- OST strategies need not focus solely on academic activities to have positive effects on student achievement.
- OST strategies that provide one-on-one tutoring for low-achieving or at-risk students have strong positive effects on student achievement in reading.

Source: <http://www.mcrel.org/newsroom/OSTsynthesis.asp>.

Key words: research, education.

TV Does Influence Infants' Behavior

Children as young as a year old are influenced by what they see and hear on television, according to a study by a Tufts University psychologist.

Much of the time infants are awake, they watch the actions and reactions of other people—a parent smiling after tasting soup or a babysitter gasping in alarm as a glass falls and breaks, said Donna L. Mumme, assistant professor of psychology. Increasingly, infants are also engaged in observing the actions and reactions of real and animated characters on television. Mumme, one of a handful of researchers specializing in children's nonverbal

communication, is interested in how infants use emotion to gather information and make decisions.

"Children as young as 12 months are making decisions based on the emotional reactions of adults around them," she said. "It turns out they can also use emotional information they pick up from television. This means that adults might want to think twice before they speak in a harsh or surprising tone or let an infant see television programs meant for an older person."

Mumme's study, "The Infant as Onlooker: Learning from Emotional Reactions Observed in a Television Scenario," appears in the January/February issue of *Child Development*, the journal of the Society for Research in Child Development. Co-investigator is Anne Fernald of Stanford University.

Mumme and Fernald found that 12-month-olds are able to draw implications for their own actions by observing televised emotional reactions of another person toward a particular object, such as a ball.

They designed two studies for 10- and 12-month old infants to examine whether they paid attention to what an "actress" on a videotape looked at and how she reacted to an object in front of her. The actress reacted with neutral, positive, or negative responses (in terms of her tone of voice and facial expressions) toward one object, while ignoring another equally appealing one. Some of the objects used as stimuli were a red spiral letter holder, a bumpy blue ball and a yellow garden hose attachment.

The infants got to play with duplicate objects, and after watching the actress respond positively or with little emotion, the infants played happily with both objects. However, after watching the actress respond negatively to the target object, infants avoided that object and chose to play with the other one instead.

"What is remarkable is that 1-year-olds paid attention to televised stimuli and used information presented on television to guide their subsequent interactions," Mumme said. "This shows that television is not just a useful and engaging medium; it also carries messages that can influence the behaviors of very young children."

In the case of 10-month-old infants, Mumme and Fernald concluded that the younger babies were no more likely to reach for an object in response to positive signals than in response to negative signals. At this age, the infants did not use the actress' response to figure out if an object was OK or not OK. They simply did not pick up on the emotion.

Mumme is now researching whether live presentations, rather than videotaped presentations, will have an effect on 10-month-olds' emotional processing skills.

Source: Printed with permission. 2003. S. Houton & C. LeMoult, *Tufts Journal*, Tufts University.

Key words: infants, parenting.

New Study Finds Children Age Zero to Six Spend As Much Time With TV, Computers, and Video Games As Playing Outside

One in four children under two have a TV in their bedroom. Children in "heavy" TV households are less likely to read. Parents believe in educational value of TV and computers.

Even the very youngest children in America are growing up immersed in media, spending hours a day watching TV and videos, using computers and playing video games, according to a new study released today by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. Children six and under spend an average of two hours a day using screen media (1:58), about the same amount of time they spend playing outside (2:01), and well over the amount they spend reading or being read to (39 minutes).

New interactive digital media have become an integral part of children's lives. Nearly half (48 percent) of children six and under have used a computer (31 percent of 0-3 year-olds and 70 percent of 4-6 year-olds). Just under a third (30 percent) have played video games (14 percent of 0-3 year-olds and 50 percent of 4-6 year-olds). Even the youngest children—those under two—are widely exposed to electronic media. Forty-three percent of those under two watch TV every day, and 26 percent have a TV in their bedroom (the American Academy of Pediatrics "urges parents to avoid television for chil-

dren under 2 years old"). In any given day, two-thirds (68 percent) of children under two will use a screen media, for an average of just over two hours (2:05).

"It's not just teenagers who are wired up and tuned in, its babies in diapers as well," said Vicky Rideout, Vice President and Director of the Kaiser Family Foundation's Program for the Study of Entertainment Media and Health, the lead author of the study. "So much new media is being targeted at infants and toddlers, it's critical that we learn more about the impact it's having on child development."

The study, *Zero to Six: Electronic Media in the Lives of Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers*, was conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Children's Digital Media Centers. It is the first publicly released national study of media use among the very youngest children, from six months to six years old.

"These are astonishing data. Today's preschoolers are starting to use media much younger than we thought," said study co-author Ellen Wartella, Dean of the College of Communication at the University of Texas. "Where previous generations were introduced to media through print, this generation's pathway is electronic. This is a trend we must follow."

Bedroom media. A third of all 0-6 year-olds (36 percent) have a TV in their bedroom, more than one in four (27 percent) have a VCR or DVD, one in ten have a video game player, and 7 percent have a computer. Thirty percent of 0-3 year-olds have a TV in their room, and 43 percent of 4-6 year-olds do.

"When children have TVs and other media in their bedrooms, it's more difficult for parents to monitor what they're doing," noted study co-author Elizabeth Vandewater, Assistant Professor at the University of Texas at Austin. "The growing phenomenon of media in the bedroom and its impact on child development is a crucial area of future research."

Computers. In a typical day about one in four (27 percent) 4-6 year-olds uses a computer, and those who do spend an average of just over an hour at the keyboard (1:04). More than a third (39 percent) of 4-6 year-olds use a computer several times a

week or more; 37 percent in this age group can turn the computer on by themselves, and 40 percent can load a CD-ROM.

Heavy TV households. Many children are growing up in homes where the TV is an ever-present companion: two-thirds (65 percent) live in homes where the TV is left on at least half the time or more, even if no one is watching, and one-third (36 percent) live in homes where the TV is on “always” or “most of the time” (the latter group are considered “heavy” TV households).

Impact of TV on reading. According to the study, children who have a TV in their bedroom or who live in “heavy” TV households spend significantly more time watching than other children do, and less time reading or playing outside. Those with a TV in their room spend an average of 22 minutes more a day watching TV and videos than other children do. Those living in “heavy” TV households are more likely to watch every day (77 vs. 56 percent), and to watch for longer when they do watch (an average of 34 minutes more a day). They are also less likely to read every day (59 vs. 68 percent), and spend less time reading when they do read (6 minutes less a day). In fact, they are less likely than other children to be able to read at all (34 percent of children ages 4-6 from “heavy” TV households can read, compared to 56 percent of other children that age).

“These findings definitely raise a red flag about the impact of TV on children’s reading,” said Vicky Rideout of the Kaiser Family Foundation. “Clearly this needs to be a top priority for future research.”

Parent’s views on educational value of media. Parents of young children appear to have a largely positive view about TV and computers. They are significantly more likely to say TV “mostly helps” children’s learning (43 percent) than “mostly hurts” it (27 percent); the overwhelming majority (72 percent) say computers “mostly help” children’s learning. About half of parents consider educational TV shows (58 percent) and videos (49 percent) “very important” to children’s intellectual development. They are also far more likely to say they have seen their children imitate positive behaviors from TV like sharing or helping (78 percent) than negative ones like hitting or kicking (36 percent). However, a ma-

majority of parents (59 percent) say their 4-6 year-old boys imitate aggressive behavior from TV (vs. 35 percent for girls the same age).

Media rules. The vast majority of parents say they have rules about TV, including 90 percent with rules about what their kids watch and 69 percent with rules about how much they can watch. The study indicates the rules may have an effect: children with time-related rules spend an average of almost a half-hour less per day watching TV than other children do (1:00 vs. 1:29).

“When it comes to the impact of media on children, quality is as important as quantity,” said study co-author Elizabeth Vandewater. “It looks like parents are getting the message that content matters,” she added. “Parents should take heart, because this study shows that sticking to your guns regarding your children’s media use does indeed make a difference.”

Video games. Half (50 percent) of all 4-6 year-olds have played video games, and one in four (25 percent) play several times a week or more. Differences between boys and girls have already begun to emerge at this young age: 56 percent of boys have played video games, compared to 36 percent of girls; and in a typical day, 24 percent of boys will play, compared to 8 percent of girls.

Reading. Despite the plethora of new media, reading continues to be a regular part of young children’s lives. In any given day, nearly eight in ten (79 percent) children six and under will read or be read to, and those who do spend an average of 49 minutes reading (83 percent will use screen media, for an average of 2 hours 22 minutes).

Methodology. This report is based on the results of a nationally representative, random digit dial telephone survey of 1,065 parents of children ages six months to six years old, conducted from April 11 to June 9, 2003. The survey was designed and analyzed by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Children’s Digital Media Centers, in consultation with Princeton Survey Research Associates (PSRA). The margin of error is ± 3 percent.

Source: <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/entmedia102803nr.cfm>.

Key words: early childhood, parenting.

What Diet Works to Lose Weight?

It's January and a time when people make weight loss one of their New Year's resolutions. Does one diet work better than another for weight loss?

Researcher Dr. Michael Dansinger of Tufts University in Boston found that Weight Watchers (moderate fat diet), Atkins diet (high protein, low carbohydrate), the Ornish diet (low-fat vegetarian), and the Zone diet (high protein, moderate carbohydrate) all help people lose weight and all reduce cholesterol levels.

In his study, 160 overweight participants were randomly assigned to each of the four different diets. On average, they weighed 220 pounds and needed to lose between 30 and 80 pounds. Participants were followed for 12 months. For the first two months, they were told to follow their assigned diet "to the best of their ability." They were given official diet cookbooks and assigned to small group classes for diet education. For the remaining 10 months, they were told to follow their assigned diet "to whatever extent they wanted." It should be noted that this study evaluated only the food program and not any additional lifestyle changes they may make, such as physical activity or meditation.

The drop out rate after two months was 22 percent, and after one year, 35 percent had stopped following Weight Watchers and the Zone diet and 50 percent had stopped following the Atkins and Ornish diets.

How much weight did people lose? If they were on their diet for one year, they lost approximately 10-12 pounds.

Which diet was the best at lowering LDL or bad cholesterol levels? The Ornish diet, which is a low-fat vegetarian diet lowered LDL cholesterol levels by 16.7 percent, followed by the Atkins diet at 8.6 percent, Weight Watchers at 7.7 percent, and the Zone diet at 6.7 percent.

Was the Ornish diet also the best at increasing HDL or good cholesterol levels? The Ornish diet raised HDL levels the least, only 2.2 percent. Weight Watchers raised HDL levels the most, 18.5 percent, followed closely by Atkins and the Zone diet at 15 percent.

Nutrition Education

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Martha Raidl
Extension Nutrition Education
Specialist
University of Idaho Boise Center
800 Park Blvd, Suite 200
Boise, ID 83712
mraidl@uidaho.edu



"The good news about this study is that we have demonstrated that all these diets work. That means that physicians can work with patients to select the diet that is best suited to the patient. For example, if you have a patient who likes meat, it is unlikely that he or she will comply with the Ornish diet," said Dr. Dansinger.

Even though this study found the Atkins diet to be helpful in losing weight and lowering cholesterol levels, a physician's group called the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, is asking the government to investigate possible health problems associated with following the Atkins diet.

The first problem that occurred was development of an almost entirely blocked artery (90 percent blockage) in an individual who followed this diet for 2½ years. It is theorized that long-term consumption of a high fat diet could worsen heart disease not only by increasing cholesterol levels but also by inflaming the arteries. The individual who followed this diet initially had a blood cholesterol level of 148 and it increased to 230 over time. Cholesterol levels over 200 are considered unhealthy.

The second health problem that occurred was the death of a 16-year-old due to a heart arrhythmia. This could have occurred as a result of her extremely low calcium and low potassium levels. Both calcium and potassium play a major role in regulating heartbeat. On the high protein, high fat diet, the body, theoretically, breaks down fat cells for en-

ergy. As a result, people urinate excessively as a way of eliminating these breakdown products of fat, and large amounts of calcium and potassium are also excreted. "Anyone who has even been on this diet can tell you they spent the first few days in the bathroom, urinating," said Dr. Paul Robinson, director of adolescent medicine. This case study was reported in the September 2002 issue of the *Southern Medical Journal*.

When contacted about these issues, Atkins Nutritionals, Inc., stated that their diet is safe.

Source: AHA 2003 Scientific Sessions: Abstract 3535, presented November 12, 2003; www.pcrm.org/news/health031120.html; <http://www.sma.org/smj/index.cfm>.

Key words: diet, weight loss.

Idaho's Health Status

Have you ever wondered how Idaho compares to other states in health status? The United Health Foundation, in partnership with the American Public Health Association and the Partnership for Prevention has produced *America's Health: State Health Rankings 2003 Edition*. This report is a comprehensive, state-by-state analysis of health status in the U.S. It is based on data from the U.S. Departments of Health, Commerce, Education and Labor, as well as the National Safety Council and the National Association of State Budget officers.

Here are some facts about Idaho:

- Over all, it ranks 17th this year in health status, in 2002, it was 20th.
- On the plus side, it is in the top 10 states for the following five measures: (a) It has a very low prevalence of smoking, (b) a low rate of cancer deaths, (c) a low incidence of infectious disease, (d) a low violent crime rate, and (e) a strong high school graduation rate.
- On the negative side: Idaho has a high rate of uninsured population, a high rate of motor vehicle deaths, moderate access to adequate prenatal care, and a high occupational fatalities rate.

To find out more about Idaho's health status, go to the following website.

Source: www.unitedhealthfoundation.org.

Key word: health.

Mindless Versus Mindful Eating

Who do you think does more "mindless eating" adults or youth? If you said youth, you are correct. A study reported in the November 2003 issue of the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* based on survey results of 615 children, ages 8 to 17, and their parents found that:

- More than 50 percent of children and teens eat non-stop, especially when they are playing video or computer games or doing homework.
- Kids often ate throughout the day: after school, after dinner, and off and on during the rest of the day.
- Parents have no idea how much their kids are eating. They significantly underestimate how much their kids are snacking. They are unaware of some of the foods being purchased in school snack bars and vending machines, convenience stores and fast-food restaurants.

Are kids today eating more? According to Baby Popkin, a nutrition professor at the School of Public Health at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, they are eating 150-200 more calories a day now compared to 10-15 years ago.

What are they eating? It appears that they are eating items high in sugar, fat, and salt, such as soda, chips, cookies, and candy. Instead of being treats, these items have become staples in their diet. It appears that some children have been brought up consuming frozen convenience foods, fast foods, and takeout meals. And these salty-greasy-sweet foods are what they are used to and what satisfies them.

Parents need to become involved and plan for healthy meals and snacks. However, keep some of their regular favorite foods around to satisfy them, otherwise they may end up overeating on other foods.

Source: *JADA*, November 2003.

Key words: snack, child nutrition.

Achieving Success with New Year's Resolutions

Determined that this year you'll keep those New Year's Resolutions? Here are a few tips to get you started!

Don't Try Everything at Once! There's a temptation, with the New Year, to make a list of everything you've ever wanted to change. Don't fall for it! You'll have better luck fulfilling one or two goals than you will with a list of fifteen. You can always add new resolutions to your list later. Take one thing at a time.

Word it Carefully. Let's say your resolution is to save more in the coming year. Word this carefully. Try not to think of it as "This year I am going to save." That's a stress-inducer waiting to happen. It forces you into thinking of the resolution as something you must do, not something you want to do. Try to make it sound a little gentler: "This year I'm going to explore different ways of saving." It also suggests more of a plan—you'll fulfill the resolution by experimenting with savings techniques. The first resolution sounds as if you're going to force yourself to save by sheer willpower.

Make a Plan. Once you know what your resolution is, try to break it down. Nobody accomplishes anything of significance by trying to do it all at once. This doesn't have to be a complicated plan; just brainstorm enough to give you a place to start.

For saving, you might brainstorm plans like this:

- Ask your bank or credit union to automatically transfer funds each month from your checking to your savings account. Even as little as \$10 or \$15 a month helps. After all, that's \$120 or \$180 a year.
- Put all your loose change into a jar. Then deposit the jar's contents into a savings account. For many people, that could add up to well over \$100 a year.
- Low- and moderate-income workers qualify, each year, for an Earned Income Tax Credit that can put over \$1,000, and often more than \$2,000, in your pocket. IRS Publication 596 explains how to apply, or you can contact your local taxpayer assistance center for in-person

Family Economics

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Marilyn Bischoff
Extension Family Economics
Specialist
University of Idaho Boise Center
800 Park Blvd, Suite 200
Boise, ID 83712
mbischof@uidaho.edu



help. Then be sure to save at least half of this windfall.

- Participate in a local Investment Development Account (IDA) program. In return for attending financial education sessions and agreeing to save for a home, education, or business, you typically receive \$2 for every \$1 you save through an IDA program. So, \$25 that you save each month ends up as \$900 at the end of a year.
- If your employer matches retirement savings contributions, be sure to take advantage of that. Some employers match up to 100 percent of your contributions. While we encourage letting this money build up until retirement, it can be withdrawn, or borrowed on, to cope with serious emergencies.

Write it Down. Write down your resolution and your plan of action. Stick it up on the fridge, on your mirror, wherever you know you'll see it. That way you'll have a constant reminder of the resolution. You may want to change the wording as time passes and your goal changes. You can get additional savings assistance from the America Saves Campaign, <http://www.americasaves.org>.

Source: Adapted from <http://www.how-to-keep-your-new-years-resolution.com>; American Saves, http://www.americasaves.org/back_page/american_saver4.cfm.

Key words: savings, goals, resolutions.

U.S. Retiree Income in 2030 Will Be \$45 Billion Short of Need; Adding 5% to Savings Can Protect Many Future Retirees

If current patterns continue, there will be an annual shortfall of at least \$45 billion by 2030 between the amount retired Americans need to cover basic expenses and what they have. A new study by the Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI) in collaboration with the Milbank Memorial Fund suggests that while many middle-income Americans could provide for their own future by saving 5 percent of compensation annually in addition to the retirement benefits they are already expected to receive, this remedy won't work for many in the lower income brackets.

Most at risk are low-income single women, who typically lack the resources to save enough for retirement. In most cases, they would have to save 25 percent or more of their pay annually to adequately fund basic living expenses in retirement (including nursing home or home health care costs), according to the study. As a general rule, couples and those with higher income fared best.

Despite increasing interest in mechanisms that allow retirees to turn their housing equity into income, neither annuitizing the value of their residence, nor selling it when required to provide added income, eliminates the projected shortfall in retirement income adequacy for all individuals.

The study provides analysis of how different demographic groups are likely to fare, broken down by income quartile for single men, single women, and married couples. The model provides estimates of the shortfall between the amount required for the elderly to afford basic expenditures for the remainder of their life and the income and benefits they are actually projected to have (Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, employment-based pension and retirement plans such as 401(k)s, and individual retirement accounts).

For example:

- Some future retirees could avert a personal shortfall by increasing their savings rate. In some instances, saving an additional 5 percent of compensation for the remainder of one's ca-

reer would be adequate to achieve this result. But this is a virtual impossibility for the majority of older, low-income single women, where needed additional savings would exceed 25 percent of compensation.

- Achieving a 90 percent confidence level for sufficient retirement income would require added savings of no more than 10 percent for median couples above the lowest income quartile born since 1945. Added savings of no more than 5 percent would assure a 75 percent certainty for these groups.
- The odds of having sufficient income to afford basic expenditures throughout retirement with an additional savings of 5 percent of compensation are significantly higher for those in the youngest cohorts. This ranges from a low of approximately 30 percent for those in the lowest income quartiles that are on the verge of retirement to more than 85 percent.

While the published data are not specific enough to provide guidance for individual personal retirement planning, it does provide a projection of potential demand on public and private resources.

The national aggregate projected shortfall presupposes no change in current savings behavior and could be reduced if those who are able to increase their savings do so. But the shortfall in retirement income adequacy could not be entirely eliminated because many people simply won't earn enough to make such savings possible. The shortfall is currently in the \$28–\$35 billion range, depending on whether housing equity is liquidated. For the decade ending 2030, the aggregate shortfall would reach at least \$400 billion—a figure of significance to many financially stressed state budgets.

What can Extension do to ease this shortfall? Many individuals can “find” money to save if they improve their financial management. The new University of Idaho *Dollar Decision* video and curriculum provides tools for extension educators to teach ways to save and make ends meet.

Source: November EBRI Issue Brief, “Can America Afford Tomorrow’s Retirees: Results From the EBRI-ERF Retirement Security Projection Model,” *EBRI News*, Washington, DC, <http://www.ebri.org>.

Key words: retirement, savings.

Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003

On December 4, 2003, President Bush signed into law the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003, ensuring that all citizens are treated fairly when they apply for a mortgage or other form of credit. The legislation will provide consumers, companies, consumer reporting agencies, and regulators with important new tools that expand access to credit and other financial services for all Americans, enhance the accuracy of consumers' financial information, and help fight identity theft. These reforms make permanent the uniform national standards of our credit markets, and institute new, strong consumer protections. The Act:

- Makes permanent national standards that ensures lenders make decisions on loans based on full and fair credit histories, and not on discriminatory stereotypes. The uniform national standards establish clear rules on what credit agencies are entitled to include in individual credit reports, improving the quality of credit information, and protecting consumers against identity theft.
- Gives every consumer the right to their credit report free of charge every year. Consumers will be able to review a free report every year for unauthorized activity, including activity that might be the result of identity theft.
- Helps prevent identity theft before it occurs by requiring merchants to leave all but the last five digits of a credit card number off store receipts. This law will make sure that slips of paper that most people throw away do not contain their credit card number, a key to their financial identities.
- Creates a national system of fraud detection to make identity thieves more likely to be caught. Previously, victims would have to make phone calls to all of their credit card companies and three major credit rating agencies to alert them to the crime. Now consumers will only need to make one call to receive advice, set off a nationwide fraud alert, and protect their credit standing.
- Establishes a nationwide system of fraud alerts for consumers to place on their credit files. Credit reporting agencies that receive such

alerts from customers will now be obliged to follow procedures to ensure that any future requests are by the true consumer, not an identity thief posing as the consumer. The law also will enable active duty military personnel to place special alerts on their files when they are deployed overseas.

- Requires regulators to devise a list of red flag indicators of identity theft, drawn from the patterns and practices of identity thieves. Regulators will be required to evaluate the use of these red flag indicators in their compliance examinations of financial institutions, and impose fines where disregard of red flags has resulted in losses to customers.
- Requires lenders and credit agencies to take action before a victim even knows a crime has occurred. With oversight by bank regulators, the credit agencies will draw up a set of guidelines to identify patterns common to identity theft, and develop methods to stop identity theft before it can cause major damage.

This legislation gives consumers tools to fight identity theft and continued access to the most credit markets. With a free credit report and powerful new tools to fight fraud, consumers have the ability to better protect themselves and their families.

Source: December 4, 2003, White House press release <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/12/20031204-3.html>.

Key words: credit, identity theft.

Alan Greenspan Discusses Financial Literacy

Forty years ago, a simple understanding of how to maintain a checking and savings account at local banks and savings institutions may have been sufficient. Now, consumers must be able to differentiate between a wide range of financial products and services, and providers of those products and services. These advances mean consumers must be familiar with the role that computers play in the conduct of every traditional financial transaction from withdrawing funds to borrowing.

Family Economics Resources

Children and teenagers should begin learning basic financial skills as early as possible. Indeed, improving basic financial education in elementary and secondary schools can help prevent students from making poor decisions later. In particular, it has been my experience that competency in mathematics—both in numerical manipulation and in understanding the conceptual foundations—enhances a person's ability to handle the more ambiguous and qualitative relationships that dominate our day-to-day financial decisionmaking. For example, through an understanding of compounding interest, one can appreciate the cumulative benefit of routine saving. Similarly, learning how to conduct research in a library or on the Internet enhances decisionmaking. Focusing on improving fundamental mathematical and problem-solving skills can develop knowledgeable consumers who can take full advantage of the sophisticated financial services offered in an ever-changing marketplace.

The Federal Reserve has a keen interest in measuring the effectiveness of financial education programs. Studies evaluating such programs were presented at the Federal Reserve System's 2003 Community Affairs Research Conference. In addition, the Federal Reserve and the Department of Defense are collaborating on a study of the efficacy of personal financial management education provided to members of the military services and their families. This research will provide insights into what financial education interventions prove most effective with specific audiences and will provide valuable guidance for teachers, employers, and other financial education providers and funders.

Let us remember that education is the primary means for creating new economic and financial opportunity for everyone. If we are able to boost our investment in people, ideas, and processes, just as we do in machines and technology, consumers and the economy can readily adapt to change, providing ever-rising standards of living for all Americans.

Source: Excerpted from Chairman Alan Greenspan's September 26 remarks to the 33rd Annual Legislative Conference of the Congressional Black Caucus. Full text available at <http://www.federalreserve.gov/boarddocs/speeches/2003/20030926/default.htm>.

Key word: financial literacy.

Pathways to Getting Ahead

The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and the Asset Development Institute at Brandeis University have developed a publication designed to help young adults thinking about the importance of asset building in their personal lives and about how larger policy decisions impact the choices they make. The three sections of "Pathways to Getting Ahead" (40 pages) are entitled: Knowledge and skills: Where the path begins; Jobs plus: A path to more than a paycheck; and Savings and investments: Advancing along the path. Available in PDF at <http://www.centeronhunger.org/pdf/pathways.pdf>.

Consumer Information Catalog

The Fall 2003 edition of the Consumer Information Catalog (produced quarterly) is now available. You can view or order the catalog (free), and sign up to receive copies of the catalog each quarter as they come out at <http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov>.

Health Insurance Association of America

The Health Insurance Association of America (HIAA) has prepared a series of guides on various types of insurance to help consumers make decisions about health insurance, managed care, long-term care, disability, and a special guide for business owners. "Guide to Health Insurance," "Guide to Disability Income Insurance," "Guide to Managed Care," "Guide to Health Insurance," and "Guide to Long-Term Care Insurance" and other titles are available at <http://www.hiaa.org/consumer/guides.cfm>. Mary Ellen Rider (Nebraska CES), Marlene Stum (Minnesota CES), and Paul McNamara (Illinois CES) reviewed the health insurance and long-term care insurance brochures.

2004 Calendar

American Council on Consumer Interests 50th Anniversary Conference, March 29-April 3, 2004, Washington, DC. <http://consumerinterests.org>.

University of Idaho Extension Annual Conference, April 19-23, 2004, Doubletree Riverside Hotel, Boise.

Second 21st Century Families Conf., April 20-22, 2004, Little Rock, AR. <http://www.arfamilies.org/21century>.

American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, June 26-29, 2004, San Diego, CA. http://www.aafcs.org/meetings/index.html#95th_ac.

Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education Conf., November 17-20, 2004, Denver, CO.