



Family Ties

Confronting the Question

Part **One** in a Series . . .

It's the other inevitable question every parent dreads (besides the S-E-X one), a question that is overladen with emotional intensity: "Can we have a [fill in the blank] pet?" In the best of scenarios, the animal question is an abstract one; at its worst, most urgent, the pet has already "found" the child, and the question is accompanied by two sets of enormous pleading eyes, one pair human, one pair animal. Ouch!



Evaluating the pet issue is fraught with difficulty, and even the sagest of parents probably cannot prepackage, freeze, and microwave their response for instant use. Adopting a pet is a family decision, dependent upon multiple considerations.

A stable family, with a home and an income suitable for pet ownership, with willing, reliable caretakers, and adequate time to devote to both human and animal children is equipped to tackle the next major hurdle in the decision-making process; namely, is a pet a "good" idea in a child's development?

Research shows that as many as 90 percent of all children will come home to a pet at some time in their childhood. For children under the age of five, furry companionship is a bit more complicated than it is with their school-aged counterparts. Young children should never be left alone with any animal, as their cognition is not yet sufficient to avoid being hurt by, or causing hurt to, an animal companion. While some families may be prepared to handle these challenges, others are better served by waiting until a child is older.

Children aged six and over, dependent on the animal's temperament and their own maturational level, may enjoy a number of benefits from pet ownership:

- ≈ Pets provide an outlet for increased physical activity levels, especially important among today's more sedentary children.
- ≈ Caring for an animal helps develop a sense of responsibility and empathy.
- ≈ Pets are a source of comfort and security, serving as sympathetic, non-judgmental listeners.
- ≈ Children learn about nature and biology with greater ease and interest when they share their lives with an animal.
- ≈ A pet intensifies family bonds and helps children develop nurturing skills.
- ≈ Enjoying a pet's affections serves as a de-stressor for children (and adults alike).
- ≈ Some animals are a better fit for children and families than others. Part Two of the series, in the next edition of Family Ties, will reflect upon the advantages and disadvantages of a variety of typical house pets.



Contributed by: Bonnie Hinds
Environmental Health Programs



Sources: American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Parents Magazine

Family Fun Time and Good Health

Take time for family fitness. Plan activities your family members can do together. Everyone will be healthier and the family will have fun together. You are not only promoting good health you are creating happy childhood memories.

Certain chronic diseases previously found in adults only have been diagnosed too frequently among adolescents and youth. The common thread is that most of the young people with these conditions are overweight. Most are not eating a healthy diet and are not physically active.

Children need 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day to achieve a healthy weight and prevent a range of chronic diseases including diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, cancer and stroke.

This might seem like a lot of time, but it all adds up.

Being active and playing with your kids can be easy:

- Encourage children to join a sports team or try a new physical activity.
- Take a walk after a family meal.
- Play together: Frisbee, softball, soccer or any active game the family enjoys.
- Instead of catching a movie or watching TV, pick an activity that requires movement such as laser tag, bowling or miniature golf.
- Give children toys that encourage physical activity like balls, kites, hula hoops, Frisbee and jump ropes.
- Limit TV time and keep the TV out of your child's bedroom.
- Plant a garden. Kids love to water plants, and they'll get excited weeks later when they see their flowers bloom or vegetables grow.



Once you get your family moving, remember to fuel up for activities or sports.

Drink plenty of water before, during and after activities. Children need to drink at least six 8-ounce cups of water per day. Add another 8 ounces for every half hour of strenuous activity. For longer activities or when children don't drink enough water, diluted 100 percent fruit juice or sports drinks can increase their fluid intake.

Breakfast is an important meal for all children; consider serving whole-grain cereals or muffins made with fruit, like bananas, blueberries or raisins.

For a snack before or after physical activities, serve crackers and cheese, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, trail mix, containers of cut-up fruit and sliced vegetables with a low-fat dip.

Contributed by: Betty P. Greer, PhD, RD
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Surviving Middle School



Middle School, with lockers, changing classes, numerous teachers, and a looser structure, brings new challenges to even the most successful elementary students. Helping the kids you work with develop the following habits will help smooth the transition and make the first year in middle school a positive experience.

Organization - Can your student find his/her supplies, books, and homework? Can she/he keep their locker and binders organized? If this is a tough area for he/she, be sure to go through their stuff with them on a regular basis to help keep them together. Show him/her how to organize papers in a binder, and use dividers to separate different subjects and sections. Having several different teachers usually means several different sets of expectations. Using some kind of assignment book is critical.

Time Management - In middle school, students start getting more long term assignments than they are used to. Help your student learn how to break these bigger projects down into smaller chunks and use a time map to plan how he's/she's going to tackle them. Kids often underestimate the size of a project and procrastinate until there's not enough time left to do a good job. Help him/her learn to manage their time by making sure they do some work each day instead of leaving it all until the end.

Problem Solving – Many kids hit obstacles and then get stuck because they don't have good problem solving skills. Teach your student how to brainstorm solutions to roadblocks that get in his/her way. Does he/she keep forgetting to write down his/her homework assignments? Maybe he/she can copy down the numbers of several classmates he/she can call in a pinch. Does he/she keep losing pencils? Keep an extra package of pencils in his/her locker.

Develop trusted homework strategies - Work together to develop an effective, efficient nightly homework routine. Help your child learn to use a planner or notebook to keep track of assignments and due dates. Each night, your child should go through his or her to-dos and prioritize. What assignment is likely to take the longest? What is due tomorrow versus later in the week? At parent-teacher conferences or report card time, talk with your child's teachers about whether your at-home strategies are translating to classroom success. What suggestions do the teachers have for adjustments?

Other Tips to Help Your Student to Survive:

What happens if your student gets lost? Kids probably will get lost once or twice. After a couple of days, most kids know their way around pretty well. If your student is really worried, take him or her for a tour of the school over the summer, and see if you can map out his/her classes. Most middle schools can give you a copy of the schools floor plan.



What if I can't get my locker open? The more nervous kids are about the locker, the harder it is to open! Find out what kind of locks they use, and buy one to practice on over the summer. If you can't do that, again remind your middle school student that everyone is just learning, and the teachers don't expect kids to be locker experts on the first day. Good locker rules to live by: Make sure you NEVER give your combination to anyone, even your best friend! Also, always make sure your lock is LOCKED when you leave your locker.

What if the work is too hard? If the work is dramatically harder than what your student is used to, encourage him or her to speak to their teacher or school counselor. She/he may have been put into the wrong class. If there's a possibility of a mistake, he/she should speak up as soon as possible. This is a great opportunity to work on his/her [problem solving skills](#).

What if I don't have anyone to sit with at lunch? Even if the whole grade doesn't eat together, chances are there will be some friends in your student's lunch period. In addition, there will probably be some kids there that are new to your entire school district, and don't know ANYONE. Tell him/her that if he/she sees someone that looks lonely, he/she might consider inviting them to join him/her. Explain that they will probably be thrilled and relieved, and he/she might make a great new friend.

What if I'm bullied or harassed by older kids? Remember, your student is moving from a school where she/he was among the oldest to a school with students who are almost in high school. Fears of how she/he will get along with older kids are natural. Find out what the school's policies and procedures are for bullying and [sexual harassment](#), and make sure she/he knows them. You might also want to role play [ways of handling and responding to any bullying](#) that she/he might encounter.

Learning to shift your role from that of the controller of your child's life to a backstage supporter is not easy. Middle school is full of change for parents and students. Remember that teachers and counselors are available for guidance as you traverse this unfamiliar landscape. Most importantly, remember that your job now is to help your child grow into an independent, responsible person and student.

Contributed by: Connie Greiner
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CHECK OUT THIS WEBSITE!

Shelly Barnes, FCS Agent in Wilson County, found a resource from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The website listed below has formatted articles that we can use. All you have to do is email the person listed on the website and they will email us a copy that does not have the watermark on it. If you scroll down the pages there are several topic areas from which to choose. This would be a great resource for agents that are producing their own newsletters and the topics are interesting and timely:

<http://www.cdc.gov/media/subtopic/matte.htm>

Living Well with Chronic Conditions

Enduring life with a chronic condition?

*Ready to start **Enjoying Life?***




Chronic conditions affect an increasing number of Americans. It is estimated that 133 million people (nearly 1 in 2 adults) struggle daily with at least one chronic condition. This number is only expected to increase as the baby boomer segment of our population ages. As the rising cost of health care continues to make headlines, it is startling to grasp that chronic conditions are responsible for 3 out of every \$4 spent on health care. Clearly, this is a far-reaching public health problem.

What is a Chronic Condition?

- ◆ Defined as “an established clinical condition that is expected to last a year or longer, limits what one can do that requires ongoing clinical management.” (Partners in Care, 2007).
- ◆ Does not resolve spontaneously.
- ◆ Rarely cured completely.
- ◆ Most prevalent, costly and preventable of all health problems in Tennessee.
- ◆ Examples include: **anxiety, arthritis, asthma, chronic bronchitis, chronic pain, cancer, depression, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, obesity and stroke.**

What is Chronic Disease Self-Management?

- ◆ Today's health care system is fast-paced and often medical personnel do not have adequate time to help patients manage the day to day symptoms of chronic health conditions. Because of this, patients themselves become a critical component to their disease management.
- ◆ Self-Management involves identifying daily obstacles that are presented by having a chronic condition and how these impede personal “quality of life.” By learning to set goals and “manage” these obstacles, individuals feel more in-control of their life and less a prisoner of their condition.
- ◆ Research shows that people with chronic conditions who have **confidence in their ability to manage their health (self-efficacy)** have better outcomes than those who do not feel empowered.

UT Extension is offering a chronic disease self-management program called:  **Living Well with Chronic Conditions**. The principles learned in LWWCC can be a turning point between **enduring** life with a chronic condition and **enjoying** life. If you or someone you love is living with a chronic condition and you would like more information about this program, please contact your local extension office or visit our web site at: <http://fcs.tennessee.edu/lwwcc>.

Contributed by: *Laura L. Jones, M.S.,*

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Fraud and Financial Abuse—Don't Be a Victim



Dumpster divers, email and phone scam artists, as well as unethical door-to-door repair service people are all looking to make a buck (or more) off of you. Don't let them make you their next victim.

October is Fraud and Financial Abuse Awareness Month. UT Extension is a partner with the Tennessee Vulnerable Adults Coalition (TVAC), a coalition urging you to protect yourself and your loved ones against these crimes. A few tips to help protect your identity and your finances:

- Do not give out your personal information over the phone, email or Internet, unless you initiated the conversation and trust the party at the other end.
- Protect your Social Security number, credit and debit card numbers, passwords and other personal identification. Never carry your Social Security card in your wallet.
- Know what is in your wallet in case it is stolen or misplaced.
- Carry only what you really need with you.
- Keep your financial trash clean by shredding documents with personal and account information in them.
- Check out companies with the Better Business Bureau who come door-to-door or solicit business over the phone.
- Check bank account and credit card statements closely.
- Register your phone numbers with the Do Not Call registries.
- Report any fraudulent activity to law enforcement and other appropriate agencies as soon as you become suspicious

If you do become a victim of identity theft, contact each of the three credit reporting agencies and place a fraud alert on your reports. The three major credit reporting agencies are

TransUnion	800.680.7289
Equifax	800.525.6285
Experian	888.397.3742

Close accounts that you know have been tampered with or opened without your permission. You should also file a police report and a report with the Federal Trade Commission at www.ftc.gov/idtheft, or call 877.438.4338.

For additional resources on fraud and financial abuse and contact information for agencies to assist you, Visit the TVAC website at www.tvaonline.org.

Contributed by: Ann Berry, PhD, MBA
Family Economics Specialist

Parents Can Keep a Watchful Eye on Kids via New Web Technology

As kids become tech savvy at younger and younger ages, the non-profit Consumer Action News notes that new web applications are also giving parents more control over how their kids use (or don't use) technology. New programs can prevent designated phones from delivering or receiving texts or email in a moving vehicle and lock functions on a smartphone to keep kids off during the school day. Here's a quick summary of some of the programs and functions available:



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Drive Safe (Phone Guard) – The application allows authorized phone administrators (parents) to lock the screen of a mobile phone once the speed of a vehicle reaches a threshold determined by the parent. When the car is stopped for more than five seconds, texting and other screen functions resume. Bonus features alert parents when the cell phone is traveling faster than a set maximum speed and delivers Google Map links to show the location of the cell phone and the speed it's traveling.

App Lock (Creative Core) – App Lock allows parents to simply password-protect any apps they prefer their children not use including text messaging, email or pictures.

eBlaster (SpectorSoft) – Sends recorded activity from a child's phone to a parent's email, including both sides of text message conversations (even if they are deleted from the phone), logs of all voice calls, records of all web sites visited and copies of all photos taken using the phone. This program tracks the phone's approximate location based on the nearest cell phone tower.

iHound Mobile – Tracks family members using GPS on the mobile phone. Parents can also configure the program for "geo-fencing"—a feature that ensures young people are where the parents expect them to be. For example, if the app detects that the child is not in school during the appropriate hours, the parent is alerted. This app also contains a feature allowing users to locate lost or stolen mobile phones and lock or erase personal information on a lost or stolen phone.



(Note that the above references to commercial products are intended for the purposes of information only and in no way constitute an endorsement of the product.)

Contributed by: Dena Wise, PhD
Professor/Family Economics Specialist

Back to School—Back to Learning

We use all of our senses to learn, but most of us have one sense or way that we learn that is stronger than the others. Sometimes our primary way of learning and the way we are being taught are not good matches. This can create a problem for children in school when their primary way of learning is not included in the classroom setting. Most teachers and schools recognize the need to provide children with multiple ways to learn information, but parents can help. First you need to know your child's primary learning style.

Visual Learners learn through seeing. They often think about things in pictures in their minds. They use lots of descriptive words to describe what they see. They often like movies and museums, charts and graphs. They like to arrange things, and they usually do well with spelling and algebra but may have problems with reading.

Auditory learners learn through listening. They may think by talking to themselves (sometimes out loud). They often do well in activities that require talking such as debates, plays, and discussions. They often learn facts best when they are made into a poem or a song. They may learn material better if they read it out loud, record notes from class onto a tape to play back, or listen to books on tape.

Kinesthetic learners learn through moving, doing, and touching. They may have a hard time sitting still and need frequent breaks and changes in activities. They often like dancing and sports. They enjoy using their hands (often are very drawn to textures such as smooth or rough). They learn best when they are doing something such as an experiment. They may be very sensitive to feelings in themselves and others.

After you have determined your child's primary learning style (some may use a pretty equal mixture of two or all three styles), use the chart below to see how you can help your child with school subjects.

	Visual	Auditory	Kinesthetic
Spelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a word search puzzle of the spelling list • Play Hangman with spelling words • Make flash cards of the spelling words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a tape of your child saying and spelling the words and listen • Make up a rhyme or song that spells out the words • Have a spelling bee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use alphabet blocks or Scrabble tiles to spell words • Have the child write the words in dirt, sand, or snow using his finger or a stick • Scramble the spelling words and have your child unscramble them.
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover the math page so that only one problem is visible at a time • Use buttons or other objects to work out problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a song of the multiplication tables or say them in rhythm (rap style) • Say simple math problems while you are riding together in the car 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let the child add up the cost of the groceries using a calculator as you shop • Make cookies or bread and have the child half or double the recipe
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have your child draw pictures of a story you have read to him • Write the names of objects around the house on index cards and tape to those objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read books to your child while she follows along • Make tapes of you or a grandparent reading a favorite book and play while the child follows along. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide or make books that allow the child to feel, touch, or do things on each page • Write the beginning of a story and have your child write the ending or act out stories you have read

Contributed by: Denise J. Brandon, PhD, CFLE
 Professor/Family Relations Specialist

Peaches Pair Perfectly with Pork



Whether grilled on the tailgate or served at the Sunday potluck, pork tenderloin is a versatile and delicious choice at most any gathering. And, with little to no waste from fat or bones, this lean cut of meat is not only pleasing on the platter but also easy on the pocket. Nutritionally speaking, pork is the “other white meat” nutrient dense and packed with essential B vitamins such as B12, B6, niacin,

thiamin and riboflavin.

Grill it, roast it, sauté or braise it...just don't overcook it. Pork tenderloin has a mild flavor, so it's best when prepared with an added spice rub, marinade, stuffing or flavorful sauce.

With its sweet tart juicy flavor, peaches pair perfectly with pork. Try your tenderloin with a peach chutney recipe from *So Easy to Preserve*, an excellent way to preserve summer's bounty to enjoy this fall. Or perhaps a peach salsa to go along with a tailgate theme is more to your liking:

Peach Salsa

2 ripe, firm yellow peaches
½ red onion, finely diced
1/3 cup chopped fresh cilantro
1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and finely diced
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper



Preheat grill over medium-high heat. Oil grill surface. Cut each peach in half and remove the pits. Place the peaches cut side down on the grill and cook about 3 minutes until the peaches soften slightly and grill marks are formed. Allow to cool for about 5 minutes, then chop.

In a medium bowl, toss to combine the peaches with the remaining ingredients. Serve with grilled pork tenderloin. Yield 4 servings.

Contributed by: Beverly Shelby
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