

BACK HOME



By Michelle S. Rodgers

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"Family Enrichment"

"Is there something wrong with your marriage?", my husband was asked when he explained that we were going to a "Marriage Enrichment" weekend. "We're hoping to make a good marriage better," was his response.

Having recently returned from that weekend event I feel enriched personally and in my marriage. In retrospect, I recognize that ideas I grasped not only related to marriage but to families and family life. And yes, we can probably make a good family life better. There doesn't have to be anything wrong to inspire us to improve our family situation.

Take for example communication, an important part of a healthy marriage. A Penn State University study reveals that communication is also a key to strong families. It has been determined that 80% of our working hours are spent communicating, and 45% of that time is spent listening. Sixty-five percent of your time is spent listening if you are a student.

After attending seminars, reading books and practicing with listening tapes, I felt confident when asked to do a communication exercise with my husband at Marriage Enrichment. "Look at him when you speak," encouraged the coach (advisor) from the sidelines. Not once, but often I was reminded to maintain eye contact.

Eye contact - amazingly I realized I had almost forgotten the special hazel sparkle of my husband's eyes. Eye contact benefits both the listener and the speaker. It indicates that the message is important and that the listener cares about what the sender is saying. Eye contact may mean looking up between mouthfuls at the dinner table to seek the eyes of the one who is speaking or stooping to a lower level to meet the eyes of a child.

Another communication skill for strengthening families is appreciation. Your husband fixes the leaky faucet and the children play together without quarreling all evening. We appreciate these things but often fail to put it into words. We're much more likely to mention the coats that never got hung up or the unfinished homework.

Enriching our families means letting each other know we are appreciated and focusing on the positive things of each family member. "I'm delighted when you do the dishes," or "I'm pleased that you did your chores," are examples of expressing appreciation.

Communication and appreciation are two ways we can strengthen our families. "Celebrate Your Family" available through the Extension Service, is a program of eighteen family activities designed to enrich your family.

Why not try a "Family Enrichment" in your household?!

Grab the Teachable Moment

NEWARK, Del. — When it comes to teaching children, parents sometimes have an advantage over professional educators. The parents are apt to be on hand for more of the child's crucial "teachable moments" — those opportune times when the child is most ready, willing, and able to learn. Many prime teachable moments occur long before the child starts school.

Teachable moments can be found whenever parents and children are together, says Delaware Extension Family Living Agent Debbie Walker. Parents who are on the ball can find teachable moments in the most common situations, such as a visit to the grocery store or even the family dinner table. To a toddler, a supermarket is a treasure trove of colors, sizes, shapes, letters, and numbers to learn. And the dinner table is a great place to learn about good eating habits, tastes, textures, and abstract concepts like large and small, empty and full.

Mealtime is also a good time to teach sharing and helping skills. Some children enjoy helping prepare the meal and seeing that everything is in order. Routines such as washing hands and setting and clearing the table can help to encourage a child's sense of being a contributing member of the family. Setting the table can also

become a counting game.

What turns an everyday situation into a teachable moment where learning takes place? First of all, the parent must be ready to jump in with the mini-lesson at the moment the child seems curious and eager to learn. And second, the lesson must be appropriate to the child's age and level of development.

Frustration results when parents try to teach a lesson the child is not mature enough to master. Take toilet training, for example. To master that skill, the child must first learn to control the bladder, and then to associate the pressure feelings in the bladder with the need to go to the bathroom. While the tiniest of tykes should have the opportunity to see what a toilet is and does, and true teachable moment for toilet training does not occur until the child is old enough to have mastered the necessary muscle control.

Young children are curious explorers who look to their parents for guidance and information. It is up to the parents to guide them in their explorations, protecting them from harm and keeping up with their voracious appetites for knowledge. As important as this task is, it is one that any parent can do. It does not require a fancy education, but only the parent's loving attention.

March is National Nutrition Month

BY KIMBERLY HERR
LITITZ — March is National Nutrition Month, so what better time could there be to spruce up your family's eating habits?

"Choose foods that provide your body with a wide variety of nutrients," advised Martha Harvey Webster, of the Penn State Nutrition Information and Resource Center.

According to Ms. Webster, foods that are high in nutrients are referred to as "protective foods" or "nutrient dense foods." These foods can be found in the four basic food groups.

The first group is meat and meat substitutes. According to Ms. Webster, this group includes things such as meat, eggs, fish and nuts. The second group is dairy products, containing foods such as cottage cheese, milk and ice cream.

The third group consists of fruits and vegetables.

"Citrus fruits are particularly good because they are high in vitamin C," Ms. Webster explained.

And the fourth group is that which contains breads and cereals.

"Some dieters tend to ignore this group, but they are a rich source of a whole bunch of nutrients," Ms. Webster said.

In keeping with the effort to improve your nutrition knowledge, Ms. Webster volunteered these tips.

"Eat a variety of food and watch portion size to maintain desired body weight," she said. "Be a little creative with food."

She recommended trying foods that contain less sugar, less fat and less salt. "Just see how they taste," she advised.

In addition to trying new foods, there are also ways to prepare

family favorites in a way that can provide a nutritional edge. For example, try stir-frying or steaming vegetables, which according to Penn State Extension Service, preserve those natural nutrients in the vegetables.

It is also important to remember that nutritional foods can be served when your hunger calls for a snack or when hungry young students want a snack after school.

Following are some ideas for snacks for both children and adults. They are provided by the University of Maryland Extension Service.

—Blend one small or medium carrot with 1 cup unsweetened pineapple juice for a carrot-pineapple drink. Add two or three ice cubes at high speed.

—Make a parfait of cottage cheese, yogurt or ice-milk combined with fruit and sprinkled with chopped nuts, wheat germ or crisp cereal.

—Toast raisin bread and spread with peanut butter or spread cream cheese on a date-nut roll.

—Freeze unsweetened applesauce in small paper cups.

—Sprinkle a tomato half with bread crumbs and grated cheddar cheese and broil.

Try some of the following recipes during March and celebrate your family's right to nutritious meals.

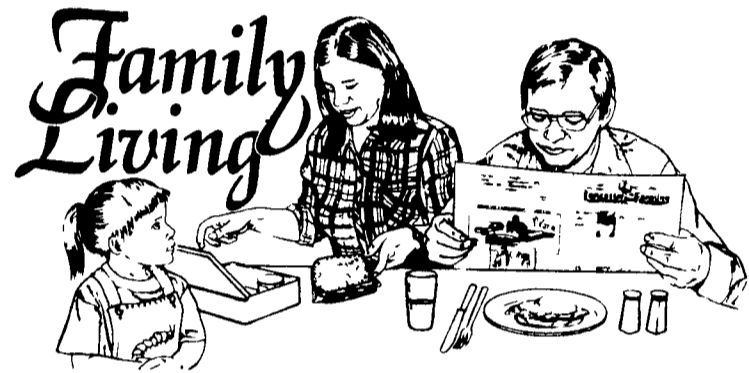
Peanut Butter Vegetable Sandwich
1/2 cup smooth peanut butter
1/4 cup shredded cabbage
1/4 cup chopped celery
1/4 cup chopped raisins
8 slices of bread

Mix all ingredients except bread. Spread one-fourth of mixture on each of 4 bread slices. Top with remaining bread. Calories per sandwich are 365 with white bread, 350 with whole wheat.

Chili Macaroni
1/2 pound regular ground beef
1/4 cup chopped onion
1/4 cup chopped celery
16-oz. can tomatoes
2 cups dry kidney beans, cooked, unsalted and drained
1 cup elbow macaroni
1 1/2 cups water
2 to 3 teaspoons chili powder
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1/4 teaspoon salt

Cook beef, onion and celery until beef is well browned. Drain. Break up large pieces of tomatoes. Add with remaining ingredients to

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FOODS NUTRITION PUZZLE

Words that are connected with Foods Nutrition can be found among these letters. The words are sometimes read forward, at other times backwards, up, down or diagonally. Draw a circle around the word and check it off at the bottom of the page. Some of the words overlap.

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| 1. nutritious | 15. cereal | 29. season | 43. hospitality |
| 2. nutrients | 16. fruits | 30. sale | 44. breakfast |
| 3. snacks | 17. vegetables | 31. labels | 45. basic four |
| 4. protein | 18. minerals | 32. staples | 46. measurements |
| 5. meat | 19. calcium | 33. substitution | 47. regulators |
| 6. eggs | 20. phosphorus | 34. evaporation | 48. health |
| 7. fish | 21. iron | 35. storage | 49. habits |
| 8. milk | 22. vitamins | 36. fortified | 50. fluids |
| 9. digestion | 23. tissues | 37. ingredients | 51. weight |
| 10. carbohydrates | 24. mealtime | 38. variety | 52. suppliers |
| 11. fats | 25. likes | 39. oils | 53. vitality |
| 12. energy | 26. budget | 40. food value | 54. preparation |
| 13. calorie | 27. buying | 41. color | 55. flavor |
| 14. bread | 28. refrigeration | 42. recipes | 56. homogenization |