

Parents can prepare children for independence

To parents, nine year olds may seem like little children. Actually, though, they're half out the door to adulthood.

Parents have only about 18 years to prepare their children for adult life. University of Delaware extension home economist Mary Alice Morris suggests some ways to make the most of that opportunity.

First, parents should help their children feel good about themselves. Attention and affection encourage learning. Avoid comparing one child to another, especially a brother or sister, Morris said. Each is different, with different needs and strengths.

"Try to keep competition down, and don't talk about how much better you were when you were a child," Morris says. Youngsters who feel good about themselves will have the confidence they'll need to make important decisions later on.

Every day children are learning how to make decisions, but they'll have many questions along the way. Keep the lines of communication open, Morris says. Listen to what they say or don't say. Be understanding, but set limits. Parents should enforce the rules consistently and fairly, so children will develop a firm idea of acceptable behavior.

Parents should guide children by helping them think through problems. Ask questions like: What do you think? Why? How will that solve your problem? What other choices do you have? Such questions will give them experience in making decisions, and the confidence that their ideas make sense.

Whenever possible, Morris says, children should be encouraged to find their own solutions to problems. Even adults learn more from experience than from lectures. This takes patience and a willingness to expect mistakes rather than perfection. Mistakes are part of learning.

Handling money is an important part of adulthood, and children also need practice in this area, Morris says. That's why it's a good idea to give them an allowance to manage. If "money sense" is a long time coming, remember that children learn at different rates. Their abilities improve with age and experience. The best thing parents can do is to praise every successful effort, and avoid saying "I told you so" when children fail.

Most important parents should

A beautifully decorated cake, more than any other dessert, spells celebration. The food focal point of birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, showers and graduations, cakes are relished by celebrants of all ages.

Cakes honor many occasions and are as versatile - sponge, chiffon, layer sheet, angel, pound, fruit-cake and more. All types, however,

be honest with their children, Morris emphasizes. For example, if parents don't feel their children should have designer jeans or video games, they should indicate the real reason. "We can't afford that," is a perfectly legitimate explanation - but only if it's true.

Finally, it's important for parents to remember that a child is much more likely to do as they do, rather than as they say.

Tips for successful cakes

have this in common. each requires exact measuring, batter preparation, pan size and baking temperature for perfect texture, flavor and appearance. Making attractive, delicious cakes need not be difficult, particularly if you use cake mixes. Just follow these tips to success.

Be sure you have all necessary ingredients on hand before beginning to bake. Cake batters represent carefully devised formulas, which can be disturbed by substitutions and additions.

Select the exact pan size required in the recipe and prepare it according to directions (greased or ungreased, waxed paper-lined or unlined, dusted with flour or not).

Pan dimensions and preparation are directly related to amount and type of batter. They are specified to help insure just the right shape, size and texture. Bright, shiny metal pans or those with nonstick finish are preferred for even browning and tenderness. Pans with nonstick finish should be prepared in the same manner as traditional pans.

If the recipe calls for dry ingredients to be added alternately with liquids, always begin and end with the dry. Follow directions explicitly for beating times and speeds - fine texture depends on it.

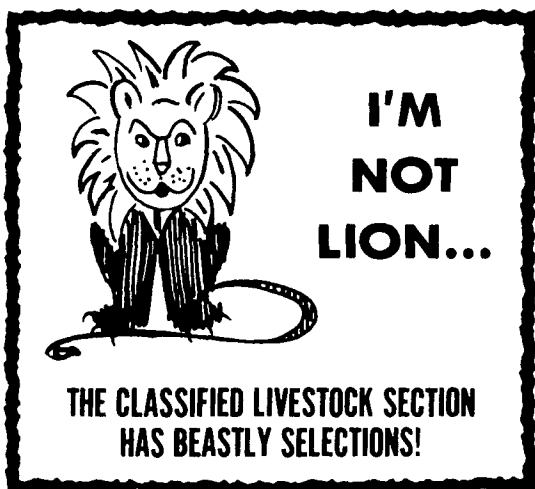
Adjust oven racks if necessary so tops of pans can be placed as

close to the oven's center as possible for maximum heat circulation. If you need to use two shelves to keep pans from touching, stagger pan placement so one is not directly over another. After baking minimum time, check for doneness, following recipe instructions. Remember, doneness tests vary with the different types of cakes. If cakes are done much sooner or later than recipes indicate, it is advisable to check oven accuracy with an oven thermometer.

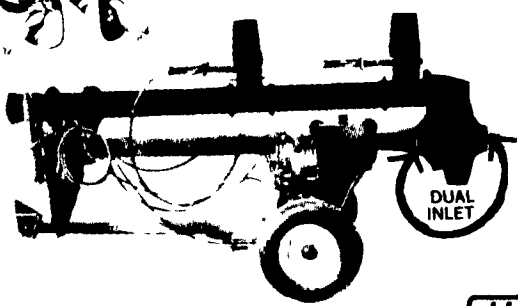
After cooling, cut cakes by moving a long, thin, sharp knife back and forth in a sawing motion. Select a serrated knife for sponge-type cakes.

Cake mixes, more stream-lined and versatile than ever for the busy, creative cooks of the 1980s, take the worry and tedium out of the exacting, more difficult preparation steps required for delicate batters like chiffon and angel food. And family favorites, like Snackin' Cake, can be transformed in a few simple steps into an elegant cream torte, a quick bread, coffee cake, bars, muffins, cookies and pudding desserts.

A booklet of convenient dessert recipe cards featuring many of these variations is available free. Send your name, address and zip code to "More Than a Cake," Box 5402, Dept. 879, Minneapolis MN 55460. Offer expires September 30, 1984.



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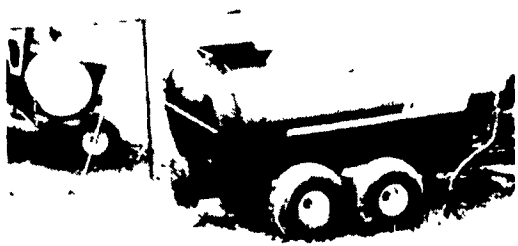


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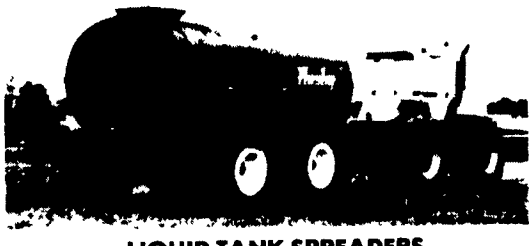


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