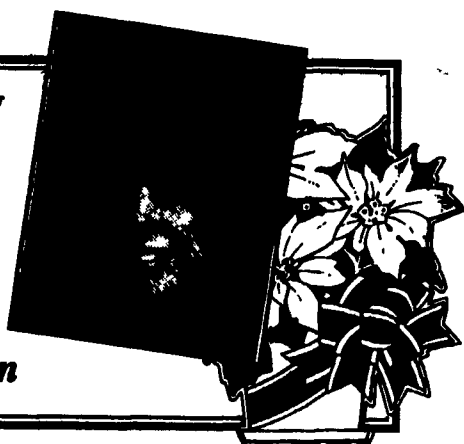


**Family Living
Focus**

by
Lancaster Co.
Extension Agent

Debbie Naumann



Ben Franklin in his profound wisdom, warned us years ago against the dangers of squandering our valuable time. Today, many of you may be laughing as you ponder the idea of having even the slightest bit of time left to squander!

There can be no dispute of the fact that we all have 24 hours a day and 168 hours each week to do with what we choose. It is within this time frame that we have the opportunity to plan the many activities of our life — eating, sleeping, working, enjoying family and friends. Unfortunately for many of us caught up in today's fast-paced lifestyles, family fun time seems to be getting cut shorter and shorter.

If finding time for family fun is becoming increasingly difficult for you, it's time to start assessing where you are in life and where you want to be — time to set priorities and find a balance of activities that fits your own values and needs — time to find the TIME for family fun!

The first step begins when you take a good look at the activities that fill your daily hours. An exercise as simple as charting on paper how you spent your last 24 hours may help reveal to you the time that you devoted to various activities. Did you find your day filled with work responsibilities, household chores, committee meetings and activities done for others? Was

cleaning out the toaster — these activities do not give me great joy! Instead I am learning to allow myself the pleasure of taking my shoes off, sitting down for a leisurely dinner with my husband, and playing with my six-month-old daughter who seems to be growing right before my eyes. Are similar "urgent" yet unimportant activities causing you to miss out on the things that really matter most?

Family meetings can provide all family members with the opportunity to plan for family fun activities. Families can use this regularly scheduled meeting time to plan for family fun and recreation, to recognize good things happening in the family, and to encourage listening among family members. "Dates" can be arranged for family members to go out for dinner together, to attend a sporting event, or to enjoy a family picnic. Family members can write lists of those activities that they would like to do as a family, and a "family calendar" may be developed and placed in a visible location for all family members to see. Such meetings can help all family members to recognize the importance of family fun time, to be a part of the family fun planning process, and to look forward to future activities together.

There is a wonderful quote by an author named Alice Skelsey that has really helped me to recognize the difference between those activities that matter most and those that will not make a big difference in my life. She writes, "As you per-

there time devoted to rest and relaxation, exercise, personal hobbies and family fun time? If you discover that many of your days are filled with activities that aren't personally satisfying or enjoyable, it's time to reevaluate your priorities and to set new goals for making the most of your time.

What are those things that really matter to you and other members of your family? Make a "Joy List" of all of those activities that your family members enjoy doing together. Your list may include activities such as taking a walk in the neighborhood, playing board games, watching movies and eating popcorn, camping, or sharing stories before bedtime. It may even include everyday tasks such as washing the car together, cooking dinner, or cleaning. By identifying those activities that truly give your family joy, you can begin to make them priority in your daily schedules.

Maybe there are some activities that fill your daily hours that you can omit in place of more enjoyable family activities. For example, I often find myself spending the entire first hour that I arrive home from work engaging in tasks that I really hate. On some evenings I will find myself washing the dirty dinner dishes, emptying the trash, opening the bills that just arrived in the mail, putting a load of laundry in the washer, and even

farm the tightrope artistry of time management, you learn to let go...the least essential while holding form to the important - recognizing that the important often masquerades in the simplest dress." I learned the true meaning of this quote the other day as I was performing the seemingly ordinary

task of changing my daughter's diaper. As she beamed up at me with a smile so wide and a look so trustful and endearing, I knew that we had stumbled upon one of those truly special family moments - an ordinary task had turned into a moment to cherish.

Dietary Guidelines Different For Kids

Grain foods, low in fat and high in carbohydrates, are an essential part of your children's diets. In fact, they need 6-11 servings daily to provide the long-term energy they need to get through the day. But how do you get children to eat food that's good for them?

It's simple: the key to coaxing children into eating right is to make it fun. Put a different spin on cereals, pasta, breads and crackers and your kids will eat them up. Here are just a few ideas to get you started. Soon even your pickiest eaters will become grain food junkies:

- **Pasta with a twist:** Put some pizzazz in your pasta by trying new shapes, colors and flavors. Serve with a tangy, low-fat tomato-based sauce for a hot and healthful dish.

- **Crunch and munch yogurt:** Sprinkle fruit-flavored yogurt with a cereal topping for a sweet and crunchy treat for breakfast or dessert.

- **Hansel and Gretel trail mix:**

Add your favorite dry cereal to a ready-made trail mix. Not only will you save money, but you also cut down on fat and calories.

- **Cracker stacks:** Set out some low-fat spreads and let your kids build triple-decker cracker-stacks for a nutritious after-school snack.

- **Ship-shape sandwiches:** Spark younger children's attention by using cookie cutters to make fun-shaped sandwiches. Keep plenty of low-fat fillings on hand and let them make their own creations. Sneak in additional nutrients by giving them cut up vegetables to use as decorations.

- **Pick up on Pita:** Instead of serving high-fat chips, slice pita bread into wedges and serve with a healthful dip such as salsa. Toast the pita first and you have a chip-like snack your kids will love.



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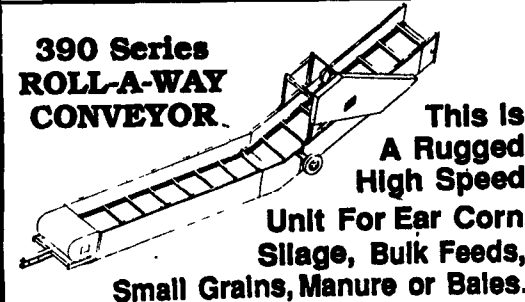
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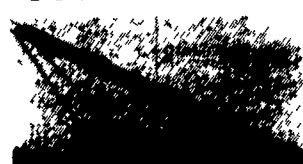
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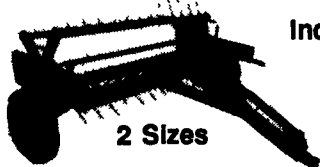
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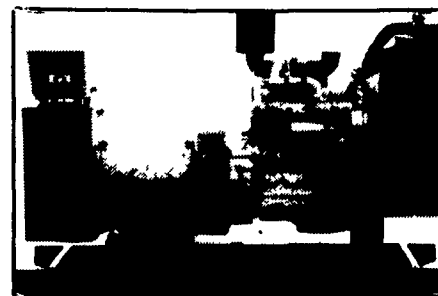
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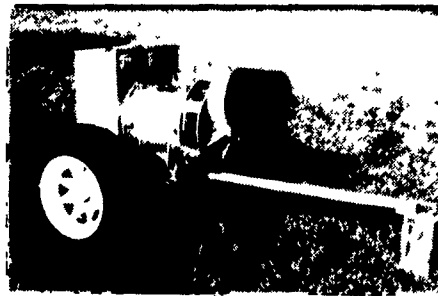
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