



Taking Time
by
Rebecca Escott

The Nature of Fathering.

"You really don't understand human nature unless you know why a child on a merry-go-round will wave at his parents every time around and why his parents will always wave back." Last night I saw that William D. Tammer's quote played out before my eyes in my own family.

My husband was busily mowing the lawn when he heard out 15-month-old daughter pounding on the window. As soon as he glanced up, her face lit up, and she started waving madly at him. He returned the wave and motioned in their own private sign language, "I love you." Then he turned and headed back down the yard away from her.

She stayed glued to the window. As soon as he made the next turn, she began the routine again, waving madly and waiting anxiously for his smile and wave in response. This continued until he moved out of her view. Each time she waved and longed for his attention. Each time he returned the gesture

and gave a special ggle or tease back. This very personal exchange reminded me of the incredible importance a father plays in a child's life a role that fathers fill uniquely.

Of course, some women don't like to hear that, but men, and fathers in particular, do interact with children differently than women. One area where men and women differ is that men tend to interact in a more playful, physical way. Some adults may worry that this rough play will encourage behavior that becomes violent. But extensive research and observations do not support that concern.

In fact, the research says that "play aggression" is different than "real aggression," and the participants know that. Play aggression is characterized by open palms, smiles, relaxed muscles and body position with storytelling interspersed in the play. Child development experts now support children having lots of times for tough and tumble play. Interesting, this physical rough-housing actually

improves a child's social skills. Children who have experienced this tend to have more friends, be better readers, have higher language skills, and have greater levels of creativity.

Ironically, children who were not exposed to regular rough and tumble play tended to lack the social skills to interact with friends without getting angry. Although we don't understand the entire process, experts believe that the social skills develop as children and dads read each others' cues and adjust when play becomes "too rough" or when the child is "no longer having fun." It develops in children an intuitive "know when to say when" sort of judgment.

Boys who grow up without a positive male role model often develop a "protest" or "Hypermasculine" personality trying desperately to compensate for the lack of a father.

Although women can interact with their kids in this rougher, more playful way, men come by it naturally! And the rough and tumble play is important for both sons and daughters. When it's sanctioned, girls actually welcome the chance to wrestle or play tug-of-war or be in a water balloon battle.

In addition to providing lots of rough and tumble play, dads also encourage risk-taking. They provide, for both their sons and their daughters, the first look at how a man behaves. Last Sunday, we celebrated fathers. In the months ahead, I encourage fathers to renew their commitment to their children by investing quantities of time with them (for rough and tumble

play, for conversation, for just being together). I encourage moms to recognize the wonderful nature of men and appreciate the unique needs that they meet

in children's lives.

And whoever you are, when you're watching a child on the merry-go-round, always wave back.

Wayne County To Hold Pilot Program For Kids

HONESDALE (Wayne Co.) — Penn State Cooperative Extension and the Wayne County 4-H Program announced a new summer day camp for youngsters. The pilot program will debut on Monday, July 6-10, at the Lakeside Elementary School in Honesdale. The half-day program running from 9 am to 12 noon is designed to provide youngsters with a new experience and a chance for discovery.

Five of the newest hands-on 4-H projects are being offered for 8-12 year olds. Adult volunteers, assisted by 4-H teens, will be delivering the programs to the campers in both a classroom situation and an outdoor arena.

• "Catch the bug" will introduce youngsters to the world of insects. Campers will not only collect and learn to identify insects, but they will also be making their own equipment used to collect insects. This project will help youth develop pride in their work as they create a collection to be exhibited at the Wayne County Fair.

• In "At Your Disposal," campers will learn what garbage is and what to do with it. They will create their own mini-landfill, as they learn the importance of recycling, composting and efficient garbage disposal, along with learning to craft recyclables from trash to treasures.

• "Rub Elbows with Your

Ancestors" is designed to introduce youngsters to the local heritage of Honesdale. They will learn the historical significance of the railroad from a local viewpoint and take the famous "Walking Tour" of Honesdale. Also, campers will explore the different facets of life by studying tombstones and will create their own unique tombstone by rubbing to display at the fair.

• For the scientist in the family who has wondered how a rocket works, the project "Rocketry" project is the one to pick. In this project campers will explore the world of aviation when they build and customize their own rocket, and ultimately launch their spacecraft.

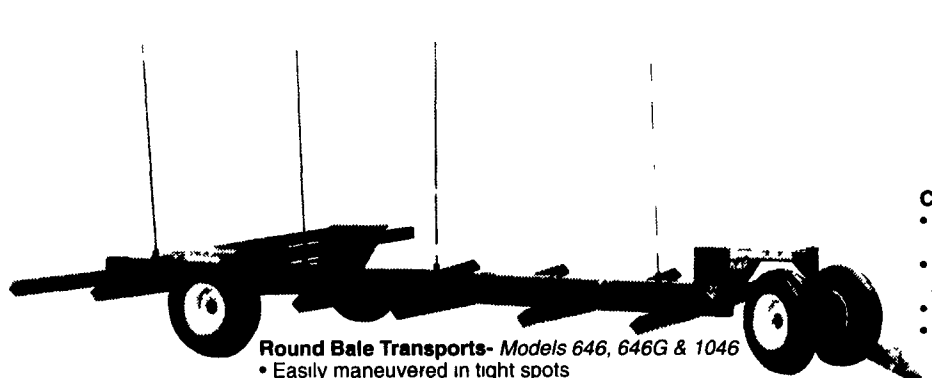
• Discover the jungle in your own backyard in "Trees+Me=Forestry." Campers will become familiar with the trees in Pennsylvania.

As a bonus, each camper will also participate in the "Food and Fitness for Fun" project with Penn State Nutrition Educator, Evie Vitali. Nutritional snacks and supplies are included in the project fees.

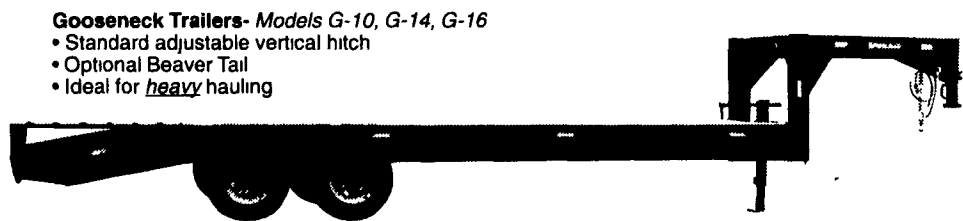
Pre-registration is required. Limited space is available in these projects. Register by calling the Wayne County Extension Office at 717-253-5970 ext. 239.

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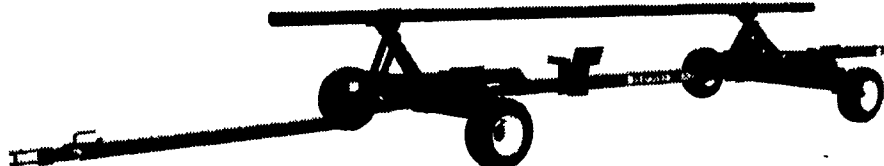
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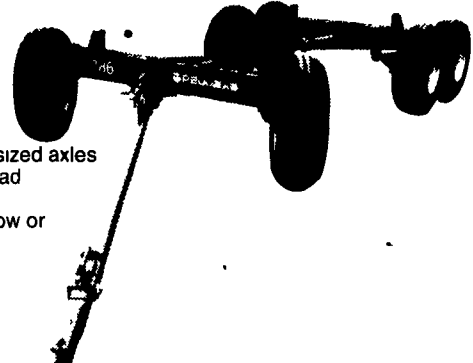
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