

**Family Living
Focus**
by
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Father Makes Home Run

It's the bottom of the ninth inning with two outs and the batter has a full count. Billy hugs second base and Janet is rooted on third. Billy and Janet watch dad inside the batter's box. He grips the bat and firmly plants his feet waiting for the pitch. The pitcher lets the ball fly, dad swings and...dad is expected to knock the ball out of the park, thus winning the game and becoming the hero.

Is that a fair and realistic image for fathers and their role in the family? If the role of super hero is what we expect from fathers, it could lead to feelings of guilt and confusion.

Today, the image of dad is changing from that of the solitary breadwinner that comes home at the end of the day to hide behind the newspaper or become engrossed in the television. He is freeing himself of the old stereotype to take on a more involved role in the life of his children. Dad is discovering what research has concluded: the role of father has a profound influence on the social, emotional, and intellectual development of his children.

According to Ann K. Smith, Ph.D., Ohio State Cooperative Extension. "Fathers have an important impact on their children from infancy through adulthood. One researcher concludes that fathers who are more involved in infant caregiving have infants with greater cognitive development at one year of age than fathers who are less involved in infant care giving. Infants can distinguish fathers from other adults early. Another investigator reported that fathers who were very involved with their preschool children helped foster their verbal ability. One study on parenting skills with adolescents noted that adolescents need firm guidance followed by explanations and reasons for that guidance."

Research findings document the importance of the father's influence on their children in the areas of self-esteem and school achievement. One father reports being affectionate with his children.

Andrew says, "My greatest thrill is coming home at the end of the day to have my daughters throw their arms around me for a group hug. When they were babies and toddlers they would curl up on my lap, and we would read their favorite book...over and over again."

Another dad shared his favorite activity was brushing and combing his son's hair.

father can have an influence on the level of importance of education for sons and daughters.

Each father is a unique person who parents in his own style, yet there are some characteristics that caring fathers have in common.

Caring fathers are involved in the lives of their children. Jason says, "My work keeps me on the road, yet whenever I'm home I make every effort to attend their parent-teacher conferences, school plays, and soccer games. The kids like to go with me when I take the car to have it serviced. It's a great way for them to learn about adult responsibilities."

Caring fathers expect a great deal from children, but also accept and support the unique individuals their children are becoming. They acknowledge each child and are never ashamed of the children.

Caring fathers set limits and are firm. According to Andrew, "I try to set realistic expectations for my three children. We talk about the rules and they know what will happen if they break the rules. I try to be realistic. I know they will break a rule sometime. I try to hear their side of the story before I discipline them."

Caring fathers spend time with their children. They realize that their time with children is really an investment in them. Taking time for the child when the child needs that time will be much more important than taking time for the child when it is convenient for the father.

Being an involved father has a profound influence in their children's growth and development, it is the way to make a home run.

It was an activity that help them both to unwind. Sharing time and affection with children contributes positively to their self-esteem.

Researchers report that fathers who value education have children who do better in school than those fathers who do not value education. One investigator reported a relationship of children's reading levels to the amount they saw their fathers reading in the home. Thus, the



Game Booths Wanted For Montgomery County 4-H Fair

COLLEGEVILLE (Montgomery Co.) — Local community service organizations, home and school groups, and other non-profits are invited to participate in the Montgomery County 4-H Fair by setting up a game booth during the 4-H Fair. The 4-H Fair is scheduled for Aug. 8-10 at the 4-H Center, located on Route 113 near Skippack.

The 4-H Fair is family-oriented, non-commercial, and attended by approximately 5,000 people over the three days. 4-H would like to offer community groups the opportunity to make money for their organization and at the same time, add additional entertainment for families at the Fair. The group is asked to make a small donation to the 4-H program, to help offset the costs of the Fair.

Organizations may charge a nominal fee to play their game and keep the profits. The game

must be family-oriented (no betting), award small prizes for winners, and must be pre-approved by the 4-H staff. No individual entrepreneurs may participate and no food may be sold — strictly games.

All of the game booths will be outdoors and must have their own table, chairs and any other needed equipment. Groups are welcome to put up a sign to advertise their organization and the name of the game. Electricity will not be available, but there will be adequate lighting in the evening. The hours for game booth operation are: Thursday, 7-9 p.m.; Friday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Those interested in participating should contact Helaine Brown, 4-H Agent, at (610) 489-4315, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. before Aug. 1.

Cooking For Crowds Workshops

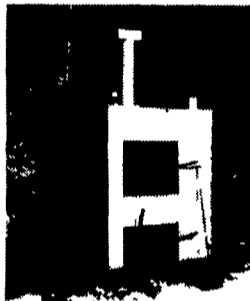
COLLEGEVILLE (Montgomery Co.) — Montgomery County Cooperative Extension is hosting A Basic Food Safety Workshop for Non-Profit Organizations such as churches, fire companies, organizations, and school groups.

Volunteers may take the class for free. The cost of the program is \$6 which includes materials

and refreshments. The Cooking for Crowds class will be offered June 26 from 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. and June 27 from 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. at the Montgomery County 4-H Center, located on Route 113 between Route 29 and Route 73 in Creamery. Call for directions (610) 489-4315.

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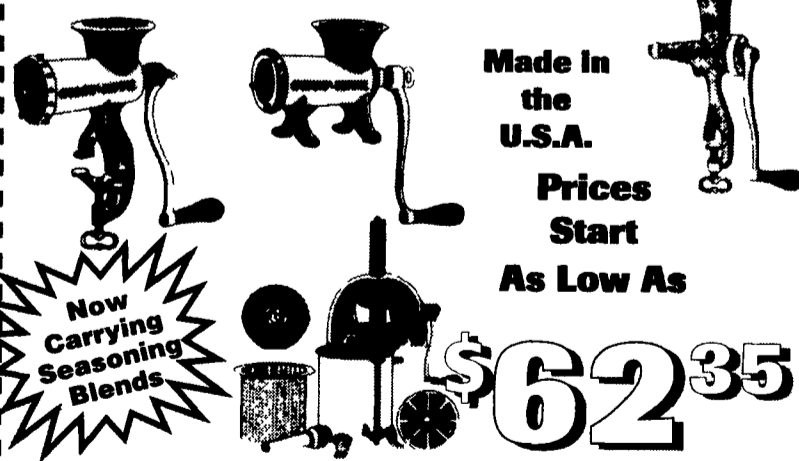
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