

## FAMILY COMMUNITY EDUCATION (FCE) CLUBS

## President's Notes — Janet's Jargon

**Janet Broer**  
2004 FCE Council President

What an exciting time of year it is to see all the spring bulbs poking through the dirty snow. Fresh new colors of green are sprouting everywhere; even newborn weeds can have a special beauty. I really enjoy this change of season.



There are some dates for you to mark on your calendar this month. April 1 scholarship applications are due in the extension office. If you know someone who is considering this application, give them a little encouragement to meet this deadline. It would be great to have several applicants. April 5 is Tune Out Violence on TV Day. Together with family and friends we can influence

better TV programming for the public. April 22 we will celebrate Earth Day. And looking further ahead, on May 1 applications are due for NeAFCE Homemaker Education Grants, state deadline for Heritage Skills Contest and 50-60-70- year membership awards.

Enjoy this time of year and snip a few flowers to bring a spring bouquet indoors.

## Reading to Your Child Has Many Benefits

Story time is one of the best ways to deepen a parent-child relationship and to also increase a child's attention span. You have more control over the books you offer your child than you have over almost any other influence in his/her young life. The only books that can harm a child are the ones so static and boring they destroy the child's natural love affair with literature.

## Read Aloud ... Do's

- Begin reading to children as soon as possible. The younger you start the better.
- Use Mother Goose rhymes and songs to stimulate the infant's language and listening. Simple but boldly colored picture books arouse children's curiosity and visual sense.
- Read as often as you and the child have time for.
- Remember the art of listening is an acquired one. It must be taught and cultivated gradually — it doesn't happen overnight.
- Picture books can be read easily to a family of children widely separated in age. Novels, however, pose a problem. If there are more than two years between the children, each child would

benefit greatly if you read to him or her individually. This requires more effort on the part of the parents but it will reap rewards in direct proportion to the effort expended. You will reinforce the specialness of each child.

- Vary the length and subject matter of your readings.
- Follow through with your reading. If you start a book, it is your responsibility to continue it — unless it turns out to be a bad book. Don't leave the child hanging for three or four days between chapters and expect their interest to be sustained.
- Occasionally read above the children's intellectual level and challenge their minds.
- Avoid long descriptive passages until the child's imagination and attention span are capable of handling them. There is nothing wrong with shortening or eliminating them. Pre-reading helps to locate such passages and they can then be marked with a pencil in the margin.
- If you are reading a picture book, make sure the children can see the pictures easily.
- Use plenty of expression when

reading. If possible, change your tone of voice to fit the dialogue.

- Adjust your pace to fit the story. During a suspenseful part, slow down, draw your words out, bring your listeners to the edge of their chairs.
- The most common mistake in reading aloud—is reading too fast. Read slowly enough for the child to build mental pictures of what he just heard you read. Slow down enough for the children to see the pictures in the book without feeling hurried.
- Fathers should make an extra effort to read to their children. Because 98 percent of primary-school teachers are women, young boys often associate reading with women and school.
- Regulate the amount of time your children spend in front of the television. Excessive television viewing is habit-forming and damaging to a child's development.
- Lead by example. Make sure your children see you reading for pleasure other than at read-aloud time. Share with them your enthusiasm for whatever you are reading. (LB)

## Workaholicism — Its Affect on Children

Take a moment to think about each of these questions...

- Are you a perfectionist?
- Are you driven to gain approval and success through your work?
- Do you work long hours for fear of being laid off?
- Do you have a hard time saying "no" to work requests?
- Is it difficult for you to find time to eat family meals together or spend time with your children?
- Do you find it almost impossible to rest and relax?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may be a workaholic. Whether overwork is an addiction or merely a habit, workaholicism is a big problem because it can drive a wedge between family members. One effect that many parents are dismayed to discover is that they have created teenagers and young adults that are just like

themselves: workaholics. There children study to the point of exhaustion, are stressed and distracted, are overextended, and seldom have time to spend with family.

A parent's habits or addictions affect the entire family. Divorce rates among workaholics are high and children often have problems. Different children react differently to the presence of a workaholic parent. Some imitate the parent and try, unconsciously, to surpass their mother or father by working even harder. Others rebel, retreating into a teen culture that offers an abundance of alternative values, including rejecting achievement.

What can you do when your workaholic ways affect your kids?

- Change the example you are portraying to your kids. Start tending to yourself and your

relationships.

- Have a heart-to-heart talk with your children about your own overwork habit.
- Be open with your children. Let them know you are aware of the harmful example you have been to them, and then take action to make amends.
- Build time into your schedule for play and relaxation.
- List your true personal priorities and share them with your child.
- Talk to your child about the importance of play and down time.

Overcoming the effects of parental overwork is a long, slow process and it begins with you for you are a "workaholic," start now to develop a plan to move away from that mode and plan for healthier times with family.

Source: Working Families Newsletter, University of Illinois Extension (LB)



by Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator

Prewash soil and stain removers are effective in removing oil-based stains like animal fats, body soils, cooking oils, cosmetics and motor oils.

Liquid or aerosol products work best while they're still wet, so wash garments within a few minutes after they are applied.

Stick and gel prewash stain removers work best when left on the soiled area three or four days before washing.

Before using, check the garment care label. Be aware prewash products can cause color loss in bright or fluorescent colors. (LB)

## Tools for Student Success

The U.S. Department of Education offers free research-

hardcopy — available online only in .pdf format.

based publications to help families and educators make good decisions about learning. They can be ordered by contacting EDPubs, The Department of Education Publications Distribution Center at EDPubs, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398; 1-877-4-ED-PUBS or online at [www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html)

Three available publications are:

**A Child Becomes a Reader: Proven Ideas for Parents from Research — Kindergarten through Grade**

**Three:** The road to becoming a reader begins the day a child is born and continues through the end of third grade. At that point, a child must read with ease and understanding to take advantage of the learning opportunities in fourth grade and beyond. This booklet offers advice for parents of children from grades K-3 on how to support reading development at home, and how to recognize effective instruction in their children's classrooms. This item is not currently available in



**Reading Tips for Parents:**

available in English and Spanish. Includes: How Can I Help My Child Be Ready to Read and Ready to Learn? How Do I Know a Good Early Reading Program When I See One? Simple Strategies for

Creating Strong Readers; and The Five Essential Components of Reading.

**Homework Tips for Parents:**

available in English and Spanish. Homework has been a part of students' lives since the beginning of formal schooling in the United States. However, the practice has sometimes been accepted and other times rejected, both by educators and parents. This has happened because homework can have both positive and negative effects on children's learning and attitudes toward school. Contains tips for reading and math homework.

Sample copies are available at the extension office. (LB)



## CHARACTER COUNTS! CORNER

## Citizenship

The duties, rights, conduct and responsibilities of the citizen of a state.

- Be a good citizen and a good neighbor.
- Care about and pursue the common good.
- Be a volunteer — help your school and community be better, cleaner and safer.
- Protect the environment by conserving resources, reducing pollution and cleaning up after yourself.
- Participate in making things better by voicing your opinion, voting, serving on committees, reporting wrongdoing and paying taxes. (LB)

