



FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

Newsline



July & August 2007

Choctaw County

Helping children cope with the deployment of a parent

Being a parent is a challenging job under the best of circumstances. Military families often face even more challenges when one parent is deployed or is facing deployment.

There are thousands of families across the country, and Oklahoma, who are dealing with the impact of military deployment, said Debbie Richardson, Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service parenting assistant specialist.

“Being separated from a parent is difficult for children of all ages,” Richardson said. “Children experience a parent’s departure with feelings of intense loss. No matter how hard the remaining parent tries to maintain a sense of normalcy, the child’s feelings need to be acknowledged and addressed.”

Keep in mind there are three distinct stages in the cycle of deployment. Different issues and needs can arise from each stage.

The first stage is the Pre-Deployment Stage. During the pre-preparation period, children can experience stress and confusion. These emotions often stem from the stress they perceive in adults.

“This is especially true for families who haven’t ever experience long-term separation from a parent,” she said. “For children, their whole world seems to be turned upside down as the adults are making preparations for the deployment.”

The second stage is the deployment phase. Families often deal with feelings of loss, grief and fear. The remaining caretaker struggles with his or her own grief, as well as those feelings of the children, all while taking on new duties and responsibilities of the home.

“Some children, despite the fact that they have been told the reason for the deployment, may feel guilty thinking that it’s something they

did that resulted in their parent leaving,” Richardson said. “As the family acclimates to their new lifestyle, the sense of separation and loss remains constant. Providing special support for children is critical at this time.”

The third stage of the deployment cycle is the reunification phase. The reunion of the family unit is typically met with feelings of great joy.

However, as the excitement fades, the family may be faced with mixed emotions.

Children generally feel happy their parent is safely returning, but they may have trouble instantly reconnecting with the parent. From a child’s perspective, their life is once again disrupted as they must now get used to having the family all together once again.

Richardson said a major challenge for both the children and the parents is to establish some stability for the family with respect to routines, roles and responsibilities.

Stressors in a relationship that existed before deployment can resurface and can come as a surprise given that the family has waited the reunion with such excitement.

“While the returning parent feels that life should simply pick up where they left off when the deployment began, it’s important that the returning parent realizes these emotions are perfectly normal,” she said. “The returning parent must realize the child has become older and perhaps more independent. And, both the parent and the child must keep in mind that the relationship must be modified to meet who they are currently, not who they were when the deployment began. Although everyone involved was eagerly anticipating the reunification of the family, it will take some time before things get back to normal.”

Making Going Back to School A Success



As summer comes to an end, the beginning of a new school year is about to begin and one of the biggest milestones in your child's life will be his or her first day of school. The first day of school is an important event not only in a child's life, but for parents as well. Starting off the school year with a good first day will help shape a child's future attitude toward school and supports healthy growth and development.

Parents can help prepare their children by recognizing the first day of school as an important event and showing them that it marks the entrance into a new universe of friendship, learning and adventure. Learning to like school relates closely to an enjoyment of learning

A child's first school experience can contribute to a good or bad attitude toward school in the years ahead. Parents play an important role in making sure that children feel successful. Here are some tips for parents on making the first day of school a hit.

🍏 Talk with your child about their fears and concerns likes and dislikes, as well as the fun and importance of school. Treat going to school as part of the normal course of events. Let your child see your positive attitude toward school.

🍏 Prepare your child for the new school experience by explaining what to expect and answering all questions honestly. Knowing details helps children handle stress. Children need to know the number of days per week they will be in school and the length of each day. Will they eat breakfast and lunch there? How can they reach mom, dad, family or friends? What about arrangements for the before and after school care? Be clear about transportation plans and safety rules. Visit the school building and meet the teacher.

🍏 Prepare and handle your own feelings. Many children do very well on the first day and it is the parent who experiences adjustment difficulties. Allow time and find support to get used to the transitions and changes you are experiencing with your children.



🍏 If a child cries or is very upset when going to school, try not to overreact. Briefly comfort and reassure them, be direct and say goodbye. Usually the sad feelings will soon disappear.

🍏 Create a normal routine atmosphere at home the first few days of school. Starting school means getting used to a more structured environment and schedule. Set bed times and waking up times to allow enough rest and to reduce the morning rush. Give your child some free playtime at home to relax.

🍏 Spend time each day to talk with your children about school and take an active interest in what they tell you. Be a good listener. Discuss both positive and negative aspects

🍏 Visit your child's school often. Get to know your child's teacher. Find out how you can get involved and help at school.

Remember, how you respond to your child's first days of school can play a big part in making their school experience successful.

Parenting Education Programs Available

1 2 3 4 Parents!

*A program geared for parents of toddler
ages one to four.*

Active Parenting Now

*A program geared for parents of children ages
5 to 12, to help parents raise responsible and
cooperative children who are prepared to meet
the challenges of the teen years.*

For additional information, contact
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Gas Saving Tips



They're up, they're down, and they're back up. Gas prices got you down? Here's some advice to conserve gasoline:

Monitor your tires. Under-inflated tires or poorly aligned wheels waste fuel by forcing the engine to work harder. Let the tires cool down before checking the air pressure. Out-of-line wheels, as evidenced by uneven tread wear, should be aligned by a professional.

Consolidate your daily trips and errands. Some trips may be unnecessary. Also, try to travel when traffic is light so you can avoid stop-and-go conditions.

Avoid excessive engine idling. Shut off your vehicle while waiting for friends and family. Observe speed limits. Speeding decreases your miles per gallon.

Drive gently. Sudden accelerations guzzle gas. Anticipate traffic patterns and adjust your speed gradually. Use cruise control. (You'll help your brakes and suspension system last longer, too).

Get rid of excess weight by removing unnecessary items from the vehicle. Store only the essentials in the trunk.

Use windows and air conditioning wisely. Your mileage should improve if you keep the windows closed at highway speeds, since air drag is reduced. This is true even with the air conditioning on – assuming that the system is in good working order. If possible, try to avoid using your air conditioner in heavy, stop-and-go traffic such as traffic jams or holiday weekend back-ups.

Keep your engine operating at its “peak efficiency”. A well-maintained engine will help you maximize the gas mileage.

These conservation tips will not only save gasoline, they're helping extend the life of your vehicle and help you conserve precious natural resources.



Tiny Bites Total BIG Calories



Have you ever felt that no matter how much you watch what you eat at mealtime, you still seem to put on weight? To answer that question, we often have to look closer and check

those “tiny” bites of food we might overlook throughout the day. For instance:

One-fourth cup of orange juice left in the carton. You might as well finish it right? **Calories: 26**

2 tablespoons of fruit loop are left in your child's bowl. You eat it before putting the bowl in the sink. **Calories: 50**

You add two teaspoons of sugar to your coffee in the morning. **Calories: 31**

You just take a small sample of leftover cake. Well, maybe a second sliver would be okay. **Calories: 73**

You forget to ask them to leave the mayo off the hamburgers at noon. **Calories: 100**

You also forgot to leave off the onion. Better have a mint or two for your breath to be safe. **Calories: 20**

You are watching TV and feel a little thirsty. A cola sounds good! **Calories: 140**

While you are in the kitchen, you have a few chips with a cola. **Calories: 55**

Another pop while checking out at the grocery store. **Calories: 140**

Two tablespoons of Mac & Cheese sampled while cooking just to make sure it taste okay. **Calories: 54**

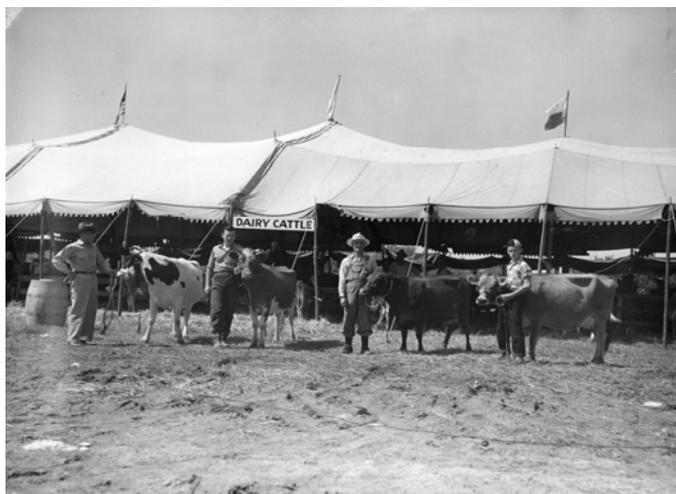
¼ cup of Mac & Cheese leftover – you don't want to store it, so you eat it! **Calories: 108**

Grand Total “extra calories for the day 902! If these extra calories are eaten daily, it might possible to gain more than a pound a week! If you've been adding “mystery” pounds, consider counting the calories in those “tiny” bites!

Choctaw County OHCE Recognized At State Meeting

Choctaw County OHCE was awarded the “Small County Membership Award” having 30% of their members attend the State OHCE Meeting held in Oklahoma City. Members attended were Stacy Knight, Kathy Hood, Linda Knight, Christie Hood, Maria Langford, Sherrie Vansickle, Dinah Strawn, Jean Brinkley and Mary Duke.

The history of the Choctaw County Fair and historical photos were highlighted during the “OHCE Partners in Growing County Fairs in our State of Oklahoma” workshop held at the state meeting. Wilma Ingram an active member of the Boswell Homemakers Group who has served as the county’s Food Preservation (Canning) fair superintendent for over forty years and has entered fair exhibits for forty-six years was also featured in the workshop’s presentation.



1951 photo of the Choctaw County Fair

NEW DATES 2007 Choctaw County Fair September 5 – 8

It’s time to start putting some thought into what items you might enter in the Choctaw County Fair. All entries must have been made after October 1 of 2006.

The 2007 fair book will be available soon for viewing on the Choctaw Co. OSU Extension web page: www.county.okstate.edu/choctaw/

OHCE Schedule

July 19th, Thursday
Lunch-n-Learn



12:00 noon
OSU Extension Office, Hugo

August 16th, Thursday
Fall Council Meeting

10:00 am
Lunch-n-Learn
Four Ingredient Dishes



12:00 noon
OSU Extension Office, Hugo

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