

-Major and Blaine Counties-**Don't Let Hectic Schedules Interfere With Family Cohesiveness**

With children back in the classroom and schedules ramping up, it can be tough juggling the multiple demands families are facing. As people navigate the waters of these hectic schedules, it's a good time to take stock of what is needed to be a successful family.

It's more than scheduling sports practices, obtaining the right school supplies or attending PTA meetings.

Now is a good time to truly step back and look carefully at what we need from and within our family relationships to thrive under the pressure of busy schedules. It's vital to look at how we as individuals can prepare, how we can prepare in our intimate relationships and what we can do as a family system to become more ready to tackle the changes.

It's important for parents to have clarity over what they can control and what they can't, all while maintaining flexibility to adapt to changes that will come. Getting organized, setting clear, meaningful and attainable goals, as well as prioritizing demands can help people stave off the feelings of being overwhelmed by the pressure.

When a person feels pressured to continually give without reprieve or reciprocity it can lead to eventual burnout. Learning to communicate more effectively with others is a proactive measure that can keep emotions from boiling over and leading to emotional reactivity. This results in saying things we often don't mean, or perhaps we do mean but wish we hadn't said it so harshly.

There is something to be said for taking care of mental, emotional and physical needs. Maintaining perspective and logical thinking helps to separate issues as all or nothing, thus triggering a survival stance.



Being aware of maladaptive coping is also important and recognizing some of our reactions, such as emotional eating, using substances or binge-watching television, aren't helpful. This awareness may help us engage in more adaptive and helpful coping mechanisms. One of the best ways to deal with stress and subsequent mental health issues is to get adequate sleep.

Couples tend to thrive when they both prioritize their relationship. Even after marriage, dating one another helps maintain that feeling of connection and care. Don't put off difficult conversations. Having those conversations helps couples feel productive and growing rather than stagnant and disconnected. Talking about feelings of disappointment rather than blaming keeps things moving forward as opposed to breeding defensiveness.

As a family unit, it's important for parents to be active in parenting their children and spending time together in meaningful ways. This helps kids feel grounded and connected. Take a walk together after dinner or go on a family bike ride to the park. Show your children that they are important to you.

Continuing family traditions, or creating new ones for your family, facilitates value, togetherness and predictability. These are factors in maintaining a healthy family.

Regular mealtimes together at the table – without cell phones within reach; everyone sharing about their day, including the highs and lows; and sharing family fun time together are just a few examples of building family cohesion.

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Blaine County OSU Extension

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Literacy Can Affect a Person's Health

How does literacy affect a person's health? Literacy is the ability to read, write, compute and solve problems of proficiency necessary to function at a job, in the family and in society. So, what exactly is health literacy? It's the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to make informed health-related decisions and actions for themselves.

Health literacy requires a complex group of reading, listening, analytical and decision-making skills, along with the ability to apply these skills to health situations.

Health literacy is a key social determinant of health, or factor in the environment that affects people's health. More than one-third of adults in the U.S. have low health literacy. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, people aged 65 or older with self-reported poor health, have health insurance from Medicare/Medicaid or have no insurance; live below the poverty level; are Hispanic or Black; and more likely to have poor health literacy skills.

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention indicates that 9 out of 10 adults struggle to understand and use health information when it's unfamiliar, complex or filled with jargon.

Unfortunately, limited health literacy has very real consequences on a person's health. Adults with limited health literacy have more serious medication errors; higher rates of emergency room visits, hospitalizations and death; and worse preventative care and health outcomes for their children. In addition, those adults are more likely to report poorer overall

health and have poorer ability to manage chronic diseases, and they're less likely to understand their diagnosis.

Individuals with low health literacy are less likely to have screenings or preventative care, tend to seek treatment in later stages of the disease and are more likely to be hospitalized and re-hospitalized.

Some individuals have difficulty understanding the correct dosage of medicines, misinterpret warnings on prescription labels or simply don't know when their next appointment is scheduled.

Each day, millions of adults make decisions and take actions on issues that protect not only their own well-being, but also that of their family members. This goes beyond the traditional health care settings such as a doctor's office or hospital. These actions take place in homes, at work and in schools across the state and country. The combination of errors made with these decisions is estimated to cost the health care system between \$50 billion and \$73 billion per year."

This is why it's so important for individuals to know how to read, write, compute and solve problems. In Oklahoma, 43% of the residents are unable to perform more than simple, everyday literacy activities. On average, about 24 percent of students starting high school as a freshman drop out of school prior to graduation. Also, 59% of Oklahoma students live in poverty.

A rise of 1% in literacy scores leads to a 2.5% rise in labor productivity. The higher the literacy scores, the more likely individuals are of having a better understanding of health issues and treatment.

Food Handlers: Food Safety Training

Choose from one of these remaining 2023 dates:
-September 14 -November 9

-3:00 P.M.

-Online Format Only (Zoom)

(participants will need internet access)

Everyone is welcome to participate in any of these **free online** Food Handlers Food Safety classes presented by Major and Blaine Counties OSU Extension. These are basic food safety classes that will last about an hour. Anyone working in any capacity with food service and/or regularly cooking for large groups is encouraged to attend. Participants passing a quiz will receive a certificate.

Please register at least one week prior to the class you plan to participate in. We will need your name, phone number and email address.

Contact/Presenter is: Dana Baldwin, Extension Educator- FCS/4-H & Major County Extension Director
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Blaine County OHCE *News and Notes*



Lesson Leader Trainings

The Lesson Leader Training in August will be Thursday, August 24 at 10:00 a.m. at the Watonga Library. The lesson topic is "Cast Iron Cooking".

The Lesson Leader Training in September will be Thursday, September 28 at 10:00 a.m. at the Watonga Library. The lesson topic is "Families and Mental Health".

The Lesson Leader Training in October will be Thursday, October 26 at 10:00 a.m. at the Watonga Library. The lesson topic is "Cut the Clutter and Get Organized".

County Officers Meeting

County officers will meet on Monday, October 23 at Noon at the Watonga Library. Please submit any agenda items.

Check us out on Facebook!

There is information in this newsletter for some upcoming programs that may interest you so be sure to check them out! For updates/announcements, check out and "Like" our page on Facebook: *Blaine County OSU Extension*

Also, visit our website and add it to your favorites:
<http://extension.okstate.edu/blaine>

Fall Association Meeting

The Fall Association Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 28 at 6:00 p.m. at the Noble House. Please make note of this on your calendar and plan to join us.

Cheese Food Contest at the Cheese Festival

The 2023 Watonga Cheese Festival is Saturday, October 14 and we are again sponsoring the Cheese Food Contest. The contest will be held at Watonga City Hall and is only one day. At your group meetings you will have the opportunity to sign up to volunteer and help with the contest. Entry forms will be sent out soon. What are you entering?

Officers and Dues for 2024

Group officer lists for 2024 will be due by October 13 as well as membership forms and dues for 2024. Group Presidents will receive more information as it gets closer.

Volunteer Hours

Please continue to keep track of your volunteer hours- and thank you to those that have turned in forms. Those have all been recorded on the online site. These hours are beneficial in our reporting efforts statewide.

JELLY ROLL LAP QUILT WORKSHOP

Friday, October 6, 2023

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Major County Fairgrounds, Fairview

-Participants will complete a lap quilt made with jelly roll fabric strips.-
(Fabric will be a variety of prints and colors.)

Fee is \$60 and includes snacks, drinks and lunch.

Participants will need to bring your own sewing machine, extension cord, fabric scissors, straight pins, measuring tape, iron & ironing board.

Please RSVP and pay the fee no later than Friday, September 29.

**Contact the Major County OSU Extension Center at 580-227-3786
or the Blaine County OSU Extension Center at 580-623-5195 with questions.**



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**OKLAHOMA COOPERATIVE
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Newsletter Editor:

Family & Consumer Sciences assists communities, families, youth and individuals address issues of health, wealth and well-being through research-based Extension education and programs that are proven to work.



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