

## Helpful Tips for Parents During These Stressful Times



Parenting can be a struggle even under the best of circumstances. This year has ushered in many new challenges for parents, including economic and health concerns, as well as dealing with distance learning issues. Couple those with normal toddler temper tantrums and the result is a recipe for a highly stressed parent.

Now is a great time to get back to parenting basics to help prevent and cope with children's temper tantrums and distance learning blues.

A toddler or young child expresses frustration and negative emotions with a temper tantrum, which typically involves screaming, hitting, biting or throwing themselves on the floor. Because they can hurt themselves or others, it's important to take steps to help prevent this behavior. When children are calm, parents can teach them how to breathe in order to calm themselves when the kids become frustrated. When parents see that a toddler or preschooler is becoming more stressed, they can help them calm down with breathing exercises.

One method is to teach the child to blow on a pinwheel. Encourage the youngster to make it spin slowly and then faster. End with slower blowing/breathing to increase calming. Another breathing exercise is to have the child take a deep breath while raising their arms over their head and pretending to be a tree. Parents can tell the child to use their mouth to make wind that will blow the branches and leaves. Have the child blow faster and end with slower blowing and breathing to increase calming.

A key element when a child throws a tantrum is for the parent, grandparents, childcare provider or teacher to remain calm.

It's important for the adult to practice their own self-calming routines and take a few deep, cleansing breaths or whatever calming methods work best for you. If needed, have someone calm stay with the child while you walk away to calm yourself.

When dealing with the tantrum, help the child become calm by speaking softly. Hold the child gently and have them use breathing and calming routines. Do not bribe the child to stop or give in to what the child wants.

For public tantrums, or those that are affecting the whole family, give the child the choice of calming down there or going to

their room to scream and cry. However, only offer choices you're willing to put into practice.

With older children who may be stressed with virtual or homeschool learning, it's important to keep a routine. Balance the student's learning time with relaxed time and activity time. Practice patience, patience and more patience and look for the positive moments in each day.

To help enhance focus during school time, select a location in the home that is exclusively theirs for learning. Avoid distractions by turning off all electronics not needed for instruction.

Help your child identify feelings that may be clouding their learning. Respond with empathy, confidence and encouragement. Say 'I'm glad you told me how sad you are. Not being with your friends is hard. I think you can finish what your teacher wants you to do now, and then we can talk ways for you to safely connect with your friends. Recognize the child's competence and effort, as well as promote independence and planning. Also, encourage flexibility and accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative.

Parents also need to take care of themselves during this time. It can be very stressful trying to maintain working full time while helping children learn. Parents often may feel there is no break from kids or work.

To get a break, pair up with other parents and families and trade off giving each other some needed time away from the children. Start a play group for young children for an hour or two so parents (or grandparents) can take some time off. Be sure to follow all safety guidelines of wearing masks and washing hands often.

During these stressful times, it's imperative parents and other primary caregivers take breaks. Some of the breaks can be with the kids. For example, take the kids on a walk and look for positive things. Look for community opportunities where you and your children can help. We're experiencing a time of greatly heightened anxiety and distress and it's vital to stay physically and emotionally healthy.

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## Ready-to-Cook Foods:

### Follow Directions to Keep Holidays Healthy

*Eating them right out of the package, without cooking, could make you sick.*



Cookies are a holiday favorite – and this season is a good time to remind ourselves that ready-to-cook foods of all kinds, including raw, packaged cookie dough, do need to be cooked. Eating these kinds of foods right out of the package, without cooking them, could make you sick from bacteria. Cooking them according to the package directions before you eat them kills bacteria that could make you sick.

Whether it's packaged cookie dough or a frozen entrée or pizza or any of the other ready-to-cook foods we use for convenience, cook or bake them according to the directions on the package, to help keep your holidays happy.

Most people who get sick from bacteria in ready-to-cook foods that aren't cooked properly will get better by themselves, although foodborne illness isn't a very pleasant way to spend the holidays. But anyone, of any age or health condition, could get very sick or die from these bacteria. This is especially true for people with weak immune systems; for example, the very young, the elderly, and people with diseases that weaken the immune system or who are on medicines that suppress the immune system (for example, some medicines used for rheumatoid arthritis).

Pregnant women also need to be especially careful to follow cooking directions on packages, since some bacteria are very harmful or deadly to unborn babies.

It's a good safety tip to keep in mind all year, not just in the holiday season: Follow the directions on your ready-to-cook food packages to help keep yourself and your loved ones healthy.

**Happy Holidays and remember to BE FOOD SAFE!**

### Food Handlers: **Food Safety Training**

**Choose from one of these 2020 dates:**

**-Thursday, October 29 OR Thursday, November 12**

**-2:30 P.M.**

**-Online Format Only (Zoom)**

**(participants will need internet access)**



Everyone is welcome to participate in either of these **free online** Food Handlers Food Safety classes presented by Major and Blaine Counties OSU Extension. This is a basic food safety class that will last approximately 1 & 1/2 hours. Anyone currently working in any capacity with food service and/or regularly cooking for large groups is encouraged to attend. All participants passing the final exam will receive a certificate.

Please register by either October 26 or November 9 depending on 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 October (**for your November meetings**) is on Thursday, October 29 at noon at the Watonga Library. The lesson topic is "Taking Steps for Online Security to Protect Against Identity Theft". Please make plans to attend if you are able.

## **Lesson Ballot for 2021**

Be looking in the mail soon for your ballot to help select lessons for the 2021 program year. Counties included in the voting will be Alfalfa, Blaine, Major and Woods. Thank you in advance for your participation in this process.

## **Check us out on Facebook!**

There are flyers in this newsletter for some upcoming programs that may interest you so be sure to check them out! For updates and 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/county/blaine>

## **Dues and Officers for 2021**

Membership forms and dues are to be turned in by Thursday, October 15 as well as a list of your 2021 group officers!

### **COVID 19 Guidelines**

Please note that for any OSU Extension program or event, the current CDC guidelines for COVID 19 will be followed including social distancing, wearing masks, proper sanitizing, etc. (OHCE meetings can be held if you follow the guidelines.) Do not attend or participate if you are feeling ill or if you are uncomfortable in doing so. Stay safe!

## **2021 District Meeting**

The 2021 West District (north region) OHCE Meeting is set for Thursday, March 25 at the Major County Fairgrounds in Fairview. Host counties are Blaine, Major and Kingfisher. Be looking for more details.

## **Holiday Bazaar and Santa's Village**

Saturday, December 5 is set for this year's Holiday Bazaar and Santa's Village! Mark your calendars— and if you know of anyone that would like to have a booth, please let us know and information will be sent to them.

**2020**

## **Holiday Happenings**

**Thursday, November 5**

**10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

**Woods County Fairgrounds in Alva**

### **Sessions include:**

**Lighted Canvas, Reversible Porch Sign, Fall Wreath, and a lesson on "Taking Time for You".**



A registration fee of \$40 will be due by Tuesday, October 27. (payable to "Woods County OSU Extension")  
Registration fee covers: morning refreshments, lunch, and all session supplies.

**Register now— space is limited!**

-COVID 19 social distancing guidelines will be followed-



To register for this event, please contact the Blaine County OSU Extension Center at— 580-623-5195.

*This program is brought to you through the Educators with the OSU Extension Family & Consumer Sciences programs in Alfalfa, Blaine, Major and Woods Counties.*



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