

# STRENGTHENING OKLAHOMA FAMILIES

## Family and Consumer Science News

### Technology: friend or foe? Maintaining a balance

Technology – friend or foe? The advancement in technology has had a big impact on families across Oklahoma and beyond. The constant availability and influx of information at our fingertips can be a good thing when students are doing research for a school assignment, a parent is looking for a quick recipe to feed the family on a busy night or a person simply wants to relax with a fun game of Words with Friends.

But what about the downside? While offering many benefits, it's vital to be aware of technology's potential negative impacts, said [Matt Brosi, Oklahoma State University Extension](#) family science specialist.

"We must find a balance in the use of technology because it can have negative effects on individuals and within families," Brosi said.

Research shows technology can affect individuals in various ways, including reduced attention span, social isolation, mental health issues, sleep disruption, addiction and dependency, decreased physical activity, privacy concerns and information overload.

Brosi said it's important to employ strategies that will help minimize the impact of technology to promote healthier habits.

"Parents must set boundaries and limits not only with their children but with themselves," he said. "Establish



specific times during the day when technology is off-limits, such as mealtimes or an hour before bedtime. Consider a designated screen-free day each week. Boundaries will help reduce dependency on devices and improve mental health."

Engage in mindfulness and meditation to help manage stress and improve focus. Apps such as Calm and Headspace can be useful tools for guided meditation. Something else to consider is turning off notifications. This may help staying focused and reduces the urge to constantly check the phone and other devices.

Technology has been known to affect a couple's relationship. Brosi said engaging in technology separately can lead to feelings of disconnection and frustration.

"A couple's opportunities for communication and intimacy are reduced when one partner is engrossed in screen time for large periods of time," he said. "Technology certainly can be a source of entertainment and relaxation, but it's important for couples to balance its use with activities that promote emotional and physical intimacy. Set boundaries for using technology and consider creating tech-free zones in the home." (cont. pg. 2)

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Although it is highly popular, there is little, if any, evidence that social media is safe for kids. Youth today are in a national mental health crisis and the Surgeon General has called for warning labels to highlight the potential dangers of social media platforms on developing brains and adolescent mental health.

“Children can easily encounter harmful material on social media platforms, including bullying, sexual content and violence,” Brosi said. “The American Psychological Association has issued several recommendations to help parents protect their children from the potential dangers of social media.”

Parents should closely oversee their children’s social media activities and maintain open conversations. Implement time restrictions to help reduce potential dangers.

It’s vital for parents to increase their social media literacy. Because platforms change constantly, parents should be aware of what’s available and communicate with their children about potential risks and guide them on how to safely navigate online spaces.

Don’t be afraid to use parental controls and privacy settings to help shield children from inappropriate content that could lead to harmful interactions online.

Brosi also encourages parents to promote healthy social media practices such as putting away devices an hour before bedtime to prevent disruptive sleep. Also, encourage kids to be physically active. This will help children maintain a balanced lifestyle and minimize negative effects on mental health.

“Most importantly, create a supporting environment where your children feel safe about discussing any negative online experiences,” he said. “This approach enables parents to quickly address issues such as cyberbullying, extortion and exposure to inappropriate content.”

###

## **“Best of Wheat” Bread Baking Contest**

**Open to all Wagoner County residents.**

- ▶ **August 27, 2025** (pre-enter by Aug 26<sup>th</sup>)
- ▶ **Senior Division** (18yrs and older)
  - \*White Bread    \*Whole Wheat Bread
  - \*Dinner Rolls    \*Other Wheat Breads
  - \*Sweet Breads    \*Bread Machine
- ▶ **Junior Division** (under 18)
  - \*White Bread    \*Dinner Rolls
  - \*Sweet Breads    \*Other Wheat Breads
  - \*Bread Machine    \*Specialty Shape Bread

**Call the office for more information!**

## **Pressure Canner Gauge Testing**

Drop off your lid with the gauge and we will inspect, test and make recommendations.



OSU EXTENSION  
**FAMILY AND  
CONSUMER SCIENCES**

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## The Beauty of an Organized Home

As the weather warms and we dive into summer vacation planning and trekking in and out of the house for outdoor activities, having a clean and organized home can help you stay grounded and relaxed in between summertime adventures. Here are some tips to organize and de-clutter your space, helping you enjoy the time you spend in your home after fun in the sun.



- **Go room by room** – Make a list of rooms or areas to tackle and focus on one area at a time, even if it's just a drawer or a playroom. If you see progress, you'll be motivated to continue the task at hand through short, focused spurts of cleaning and organizing.
- **Set a timer and put on your favorite playlist** – Set a time limit of 30 minutes so you don't spend all day organizing and cleaning. Accomplish what you can in that time and save the rest for another day. Then go enjoy the sunshine!
- **Create designated piles** – Make "relocate," "donate," and "toss" piles. Use these piles to guide how you declutter or organize a space. Group like items. For example: how many flower vases or pairs of rain boots do you use at once? Keep the one or two that you love, and donate, sell, or give the rest to a friend. Consider donating gently used items to local organizations to give them a second life.
- **Get creative with storage** – Repurpose household items to help contain like items. Have glass jars taking up cupboard space? Use them to organize office supplies. Extra laundry baskets that aren't being used? They can house sports gear, shoes, or toys.
- **Encourage the whole family to help** – Ask everyone in the household to help with little things, like loading dishes in the dishwasher rather than leaving them in the sink. Assign partners and kids one chore a day to help lighten the workload – something as simple as taking out the trash is helpful and one less thing for you to do. Have everyone do a quick pick up before bed – grab toys, books, and remotes and put them in their place.

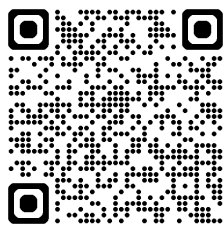
By following some of these tips, you'll feel more organized and ready to tackle other summertime activities. Now, enjoy the beauty of an organized home as an oasis to relax, recharge, and enjoy time with family and friends.

Source: [Cleaningiscaring.org](https://cleaningiscaring.org)

Strengthening Oklahoma Families is a bi-monthly publication of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. The information given herein is supplied with the understanding no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Cooperative Extension is implied.

## Wagoner County Fall Free Fair August 25<sup>th</sup>-August 29<sup>th</sup>

Scan the code to find the schedule of events, fair books, entry forms & more



Or visit:

<https://extension.okstate.edu/county/wagoner/wagoner-county-fair/>

Family & Consumer Sciences helps 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.



Oklahoma Home & Community Education, Inc. is a local and statewide partner with Cooperative Extension which brings the best knowledge from OSU to its members. Join a local OHCE group and enjoy programs that help make Oklahomans be their best.

## Peaches – Ten Quick Ideas

1. Make a Parfait. Mix 1 tablespoon honey into a 6-ounce carton of plain yogurt. Layer the yogurt into a tall, narrow glass, with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped peaches. Top with 1 tablespoon granola.
2. Top your breakfast cereal, hot or cold, with fresh or frozen chopped peaches.
3. Make peach tea or lemonade. Muddle fresh or frozen peaches in the bottom of a glass before pouring.
4. Add sliced peaches to a fresh salad. Try starting with fresh spinach, toasted walnuts, your favorite grated cheese, peach slices and a low-fat vinaigrette. Toss gently.
5. Mix finely chopped peaches into waffle or pancake batter and top them after cooking with fruit.
6. Add them to pudding. For something special put a vanilla wafer in the bottom of an 8 oz custard cup. Top with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup vanilla or tapioca pudding. Spoon chopped peaches or a couple peach slices on top.
7. Mash together a ripe, mashed banana,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped peaches and a 6 oz carton of fruit flavored yogurt. Spoon into muffin cups. Freeze well, then enjoy on a hot afternoon.
8. Replace the jelly on a peanut butter sandwich with very ripe, slices of fresh peach. Lean over a plate to catch any juice that escapes the sandwich.
9. Peaches taste great warm from the grill! Place them on kabobs with your other favorite fresh fruit or just grill some slices to enjoy.
10. Pick up a ripe juicy peach and snack away!



Source: [Oklahoma Gardening - Recipes](#)

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## **Dates to Remember**

### **July**

- 4 – Office Closed for Independence Day
- 13-15 – OHCE Annual State Meeting
- 18 – Recycled T-Shirt No-Sew Workshop (register by July 15)

### **August**

- 13 – OHCE Executive Meeting
- 22 – OHCE Craft Day
- 25-29 – Wagoner County Fair

### **September**

- 1 – Office Closed for Labor Day
- 19 – OHCE Craft Day

### **October**

- 8 – OHCE Executive Meeting
- 13 – Office Closed for Columbus Day
- 17 – OHCE Craft Day
- 22 – OHCE Fall Council Meeting

## **Wagoner County OHCE Groups**

### **In-Towners**

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the Month, 12 p.m.  
Yorkshire Village, Wagoner

### **Shahan**

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the Month, 10 a.m.  
Wagoner County Fair Building

### **Starlight**

1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month, 7 p.m.  
Individual homes

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