

Montana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Project



GRG Newsletter

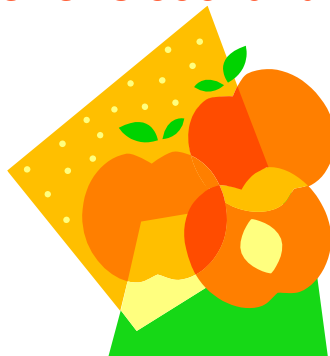
August, 2010
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Beat the summer heat with this cool and nutritious treat!

Banana Peach Pops

Ingredients:

- 1 cup plain yogurt
- 1 large banana, sliced
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup diced canned peaches, drained (canned in juice or water)



Instructions:

- 1) Combine all ingredients in a blender container and process until smooth.
- 2) Pour into small paper cups and freeze.
- 3) Place a plastic spoon or a popsicle stick in each cup when yogurt mixture is half frozen.
- 4) To serve, turn cups upside down and run hot water over them until the pops slip out.

Yield: 5 pops

Nutrition Analysis:

Serving Size: 1 pop; Total Carb: 12 g; Calories: 68;
Dietary Fiber: 1.7 g; Total Fat: 0.9 g; Sodium: 36 mg;
Calories from Fat: 12%; Protein: 3 g; Saturated Fat: < 1.0 g;
Calcium: 92 mg; Trans Fat: 0.0 g; Iron: 0.2 mg



Source: Bernie Mason, Yellowstone County Extension

Find more recipes and great food and nutrition information in the Healthy Families newsletters from Eat Right Montana: www.eatrightmontana.org/eatrighthealthyfamilies.htm



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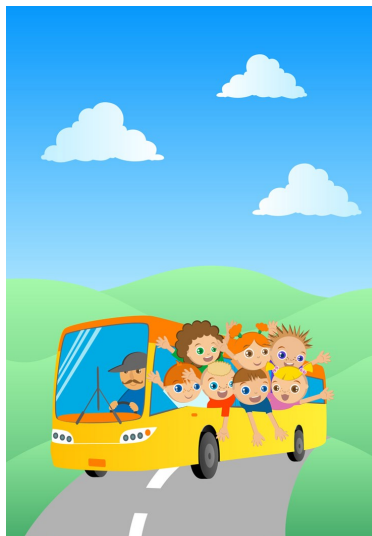
Your grandchildren will soon be going back to school...

Here are some tips on how you can be an active member of their academic lives.

Whether they live next door, in the next town or thousands of miles away, grandparents can play an important role in children's education. Grandchildren raised by their grandparents struggle more than children raised by other guardians. Knowing that their grandchildren may struggle in school, grandparents can get involved in the school and can provide support in the academic journey. The following list is a starting point for grandparents on ways to get involved in the school life of their grandchildren.

Strategies Grandparents Can Use

- Ask children about events in their lives and at school. Keep in touch with school activities. Rather than ask how school is going, be specific. Ask children what book they are reading, what their favorite part of the school day is, or what they are studying in a particular subject. If children are studying a certain period in history, share experiences from your own life in that period or discuss what you learned in school about that time. Write notes to your grandchildren, even if you live nearby, passing along a favorite joke or asking a specific question. Ask children's opinions about current events or issues the kids are studying in class.
- Praise children, not for their accomplishments but for their effort. Tell your grandchildren why you are praising them if they put special effort into a project or pursued more information about a topic that interested them. Avoid comparisons between siblings or between your adult children and your grandchildren. Look beyond sports to praise your grandkids in a variety of ways – how they played fairly, how they followed the rules or listened carefully. Write a special note or invite your grandchildren on a special outing in recognition of their effort.



- Participate in your grandchildren's school. Plan a visit to the school and explore the types of resources available. For example, what types of tutoring are available? What supports do guidance counselors provide? Is there a support group for grandchildren? The school's web site also contains valuable information about staff, school activities and policies. Participating in special school activities is another way to stay involved with the child's school. If you can't attend a special event, come to school with your grandchild. Meet the teacher, and even ask if you can be a guest speaker or read a book to the class. You might want to share a hobby with the class or be a regular volunteer at the school.
- Learn, both by yourself and with your grandchildren. Grandparents can be wonderful role models for children by demonstrating how to be lifelong learners. Read with your grandchild, visit the library together, cook together, take a class on a topic that interests you. Explain to grandchildren how to learn from mistakes and how to continue learning, even after leaving school.
- Encourage your grandchildren in their future plans and goals. Let your grandkids know you believe in them and the importance of trying. Demonstrate how to be confident and relaxed.

If you as a grandparent are raising your grandchildren, remember that it is important to know the child's school and teachers. Get involved in your grandchildren's homework, make school work a priority and stay in contact with the school.

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Reference:
Hayslip, B. and P.L. Kaminski, eds. (2008). *Parenting the Custodial Grandchild: Implications for Clinical Practice.*
New York: Springer Publishing

Find more articles like this at:
<http://www.extension.org/>

Couple Relationships: Resolving Conflicts

-Excerpted from the Montana State University Extension MontGuide, *Couple Relationships: Communication and Conflict Resolution* by Sandra J. Bailey, Ph.D., CFLE

All couples have conflict at some time. This is because we have a strong emotional connection with those we love. Conflict is not bad if the couple works through the problem and are respectful of one another in communication and action. Men and women respond to conflict in different ways. Men are more likely than women to withdraw from conflict. They withdraw more when women try to get them to talk about the problem. Women are more direct than men and want to address the conflict. This may be related to women's tendency to be concerned with the emotional aspect of the relationship. Women are also more critical in addressing conflict. When couples are unhappy, resolving conflict is more difficult. Unhappy couples often have miscommunication. Here are some things that cause miscommunication:

Not focusing on the problem that we need to address. Some people try to change the subject so that they don't have to focus on the problem. Others may try and bring in all of the problems the couple ever had to avoid the original issue.

Not listening to our spouse or partner causes problems. Interrupting your spouse or partner is one way to tell the person you are not listening.

Assuming our spouse or partner can read our mind. We can't read minds. The other person will not know how we feel unless we let him or her know.

Finding fault with everything our spouse or partner brings up as a solution is not helpful. This is called "yes, butting" where one person can't find anything to agree on.

Competing with your spouse to try and make your problem seem worse does not help when there is conflict. This does not help when trying to solve a problem.

Displaying a negative attitude does not help when there is conflict. This includes mocking or insulting the other person, being defensive, withdrawing from the conversation, being aggressive or belligerent.

Conflicts need to be resolved. Those that aren't will "simmer" between partners and eventually boil over into a larger problem. Resolving conflicts can be done in a constructive way. Some good strategies to use when there is a conflict include:

Using active listening skills.

- "I" statements are less offensive to the other person. For example instead of saying, "You never spend time at home with me," say, "I would like to spend more time with you. I get lonesome when you are gone so much. Can we think of a way to be together more often?"
- Acknowledge the other person's feelings. For example, "You sound upset."
- Check to make sure what you heard is what the other person is saying. For example, "Am I hearing you correctly, that you would like to find a different job?" The other person then has the chance to clarify if needed
- Focus on the topic of the conflict. Don't bring in other problems.

Saying what we mean. Being clear in our messages and asking the other person what they heard.

Being polite and staying cool. If the situation is too tense, take a break and come back to the issue later. Be sure to set a specific time when the issue will be revisited otherwise it may be left unresolved. Allow at least a few hours to pass before revisiting the issue. For example, "I need to think about this, let's talk about it after dinner."

Offering respect and validation. Even if the couple disagrees. Being respectful and validating one another's feelings is important in a relationship.

Asking yourself whether or not the issue is important enough for a conflict. Sometimes we argue over small issues that can be resolved by agreeing to disagree.

Download the entire MontGuide, *Couple Relationships: Communication and Conflict Resolution*, at <http://www.msuextension.org/store/>

The Importance of Play in Early Childhood Development

-Excerpted from the Montana State University Extension MontGuide, *The Importance of Play in Early Childhood Development* by Jona K. Anderson-McNamee and Sandra J. Bailey, Ph.D., CFLE

Playing With Your Child

In today's world of balancing work and home schedules, parents find it hard to have quality time with their children. It is essential for parents to make the best use of time they have with their children. Your child needs time with you to relax and play.

Playing with children builds lasting bonds. Playing allows parents to appreciate the uniqueness of each child. Playing with children can also be a stress reducer for over-worked parents. Laughing and relaxing are important to your own well-being. Try to spend individual time with each of your children. When a parent or sibling plays a board game with a child, shares a bike ride, plays baseball, or reads a story, the child learns self-importance. Your child's self-esteem gets a boost. You are sending positive messages to your child when you spend quality playtime with him. From these early interactions, children develop a vision of the world and gain a sense of their place in it.

Family activities are important for the whole family. They help develop strong family bonds, which can last a lifetime. Families who play together are more cooperative, supportive and have better communication. Have movie nights and game nights, or go for walks together. A game night allows parents to teach children to take turns, how to win, how to lose and methods of sequencing events. Listening to music together by singing along, or playing rhythm instruments will help children to listen for and recognize patterns in music, which will assist with math skills in school. If you are a single parent or have only one child, invite family and friends over to play.

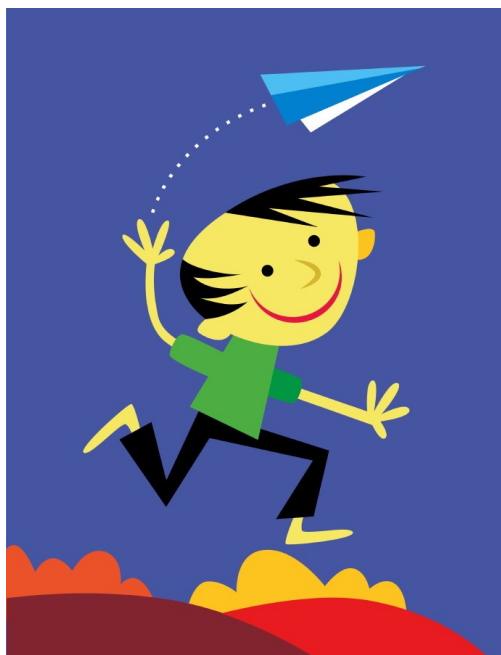
Today, children of all ages are exposed to technology such as computers and videos. Children who spend most of their time using technology often are not physically active or using their imagination. You can help your child by reducing screen time. Limit screen time to no more than two hours per day. Make sure your child gets a minimum of one hour of physical exercise everyday.

You have important roles in play. You can encourage play by providing interesting materials that promote exploration and learning. Playing with your child helps him learn how to manipulate toys and other play materials by modeling your actions.

Benefits of Play

There are many benefits to play. Children gain knowledge through their play. They learn to think, remember, and solve problems. Play gives children the opportunity to test their beliefs about the world.

Children increase their problem-solving abilities through games and puzzles. Children involved in make-believe play can stimulate several types of learning. Children can strengthen their language skills by modeling other children and adults. Playing house helps children create stories about their roles, such as "I am the Mom." They also imitate their own family experiences. This helps children learn about the different roles of family members.



Children gain an understanding of size, shape, and texture through play. It helps them learn relationships as they try to put a square object in a round opening or a large object in a small space. Books, games, and toys that show pictures and matching words add to a child's vocabulary. It also helps a child's understanding of the world.

(continued on next page)

The Importance of Play in Early Childhood Development, cont...

Play allows children to be creative while developing their own imaginations. It is important to healthy brain development. Play is the first opportunity for your child to discover the world in which he lives. Play offers a child the ability to master skills that will help develop self-confidence and the ability to recover quickly from setbacks. For example, a child may feel pride in stacking blocks and disappointment when the last block makes the stack fall. Play allows children to express their views, experiences and at times, frustrations.

Play with other children helps a child learn how to be part of a group. Play allows a child to learn the skills of negotiation, problem solving, sharing, and working within groups. Children practice decision-making skills, move at their own pace and discover their own interests during play. Unstructured play may lead to more physical movement and healthier children.

Play is important when your child enters school. Play can assist children in adjusting to a school setting. It enhances children's learning readiness and their cognitive development by allowing them to move from subject and area without of the fear of failure. Playtime in school such as recess time, allows learning and practicing of basic social skills. Children develop a sense of self, learn to interact with other children, how to make friends, and the importance of role-playing. Exploratory play in school allows children time to discover and manipulate their surroundings.

Download the entire MontGuide, *The Importance of Play in Early Childhood Development*, at <http://www.msuextension.org/store/>

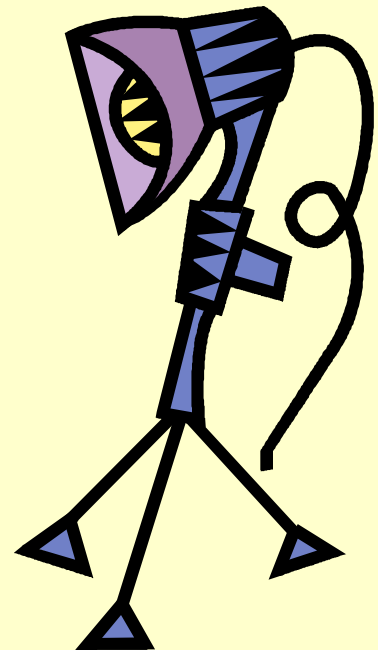
Hopa Mountain's StoryMakers Program: An Early Learning Initiative for Families with Children 0-5

Did you know that even though infants and toddlers may not be able to speak yet, hearing an adult read, sing silly songs, and talk lovingly to them teaches early literacy skills that will contribute to success in school and life? Community Teams made up of engaged citizens throughout the state partner with **Hopa Mountain**, a nonprofit organization based in Bozeman, Montana in order to share this simple message with caregivers—many of whom are grandparents.

Hopa Mountain invests in citizen leaders, adults and youth who are working to improve education, ecological health, and economic development. Twice a year, **Hopa Mountain's StoryMakers** program works with teams of involved community members—most working in the fields of education, social services, and medicine—in order to deliver 7,000 high quality board books to families of children 0-5 in rural and tribal areas of Montana. The program reaches over sixteen counties, including sites on all seven of Montana's American Indian reservations.

To learn more about **Hopa Mountain**, please visit www.hopamountain.org. To find out if there is a *StoryMakers* team in your community, call 406-586-2455 or email madelinek@hopamountain.org.

Spotlight on Montana Programs



New Fact Sheet from Generations United: Social Security Keeps its Promise to All Generations

Social Security pays more benefits to children than any other federal program. Six and a half million children in the United States receive part of their family income from Social Security through survivors, retirement, and disability benefits, as well as the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. The critical role Social Security plays in providing indispensable protection for children is often overlooked by the press and policy makers who almost exclusively refer to Social Security as a retirement program for seniors. While Social Security indeed plays a critical role in the economic security of retired workers, it also provides near universal support for children – covering 98% of all children in the event of the death or disability of a caregiver.*

Generations United has a new fact sheet describing all the ways Social Security can work for children. It includes:

- Descriptions of the ways Social Security benefits children.
- Stories from real-life Social Security beneficiaries.
- An easy-to-read chart on the five main ways Social Security helps children.

Download your free copy of this fact sheet and other free resources for grandfamilies at the **Generations United** website: www.gu.org.

**excerpted from the Generations United fact sheet,
The Benefits of Social Security for Children*



Remember These Great Resources...

Get Your Fact Sheets!

State fact sheets are available for grandparents
and other relatives raising children.

www.grandfactsheets.org

Get Your Back Issues!

Be sure to check out all the GRG Newsletter back issues.

<http://www.montana.edu/wwwhd/grg/grg/newsletters.htm>

Get Your MontGuides!

There are many helpful MSU Extension MontGuides available to you.
Topics include parenting, financial planning, retirement and many more.

<http://www.montana.edu/wwwhd/montguides.html>

Western Region

Flathead County

The Nurturing Center, Inc.
Deb DeMuth
Kalispell
(406) 756-1414

Lake County

Nori Pearce
Ronan
(406) 676-4271

Lewis & Clark County

Dorothy Dilman
Helena
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(406) 439-5676 (cell)

Ravalli County

Brenda Fisher
Family Services
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WORD—Local Living Family
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Hill County

Rocky Boy Reservation
Stone Child College
Box Elder
Mary St. Pierre
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Fort Belknap Reservation
Paula Enkerud
Harlem
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Stillwater County

Lisa Terry
Columbus
(406) 322-8035

Teton County

Jane Wolery
Choteau
(406) 466-2491

Grandfamily Support Contacts Across Montana

Eastern Region

Dawson County

Pete Bruno
Montanans for Children,
Youth and Families
Glendive
(406) 992-2090

Roosevelt County

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Culbertson
(406) 787-5312

Rosebud County

Jennifer Anderson
Forsyth
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Yellowstone County

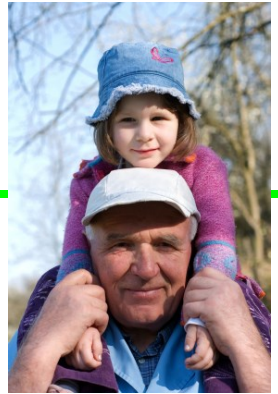
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**The Montana
GRG Project**

*Call it a clan, call it a network,
call it a tribe, call it a family.
Whatever you are, who ever you are,
you need one.
~ Jane Howard*



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