

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for May 24, 2021
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll ask the question – are we overscheduling our kids during summer?- and as always, look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

The last day of school is upon us. Summertime! What memories do you have of time spent as a child during June, July, and August? I'm sure more than a few will pipe up with baling hay or tending the garden and canning vegetables. But I do hope that you have some freedom memories as well, like riding your bike, swimming, spending time in the woods, or other outside pleasures.

I am trying my best to get the right focus early this summer. My first tendency is to create plans and then strategically schedule, schedule, schedule. How can we squeeze in this trip before that trip and still get 4-H projects done? How can I make sure they are reading regularly and contributing to household chores? When will sports practices be, and which camps should they attend?

Then in the midst of this sea questions float images of my own childhood memories. Many of them are of the spontaneity of summer. I remember the year that Mom and I checked out over a dozen Shirley Temple movies from the library to watch throughout the summer. Just because we could. Cannonball competitions at the Warsaw Pool while Whitney Huston blasted over the speakers. Swinging on the big tree swing at our family shelter by the river.

I want that for my children. In these transition years from child to adult, they are not little adults, they are adolescents. Play is so important that it has been recognized by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights as “the right of every child.” The American Academy of Pediatrics says that play, or free time in the case of older children and youth, is essential to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children and youth.

Michigan State University Extension recommends five rules to support authentic play experiences. There were a few takeaways I want to remember this summer. The first is to let them be bored. In a world dominated by the instant gratification of hand-held electronic games and videos on-demand, it is not uncommon to hear “I'm bored” as soon as the television or video games are turned off. As parents we should let our children be bored. It is not our job to entertain

them and provide things for them to do constantly. They will create their own play. Complex play takes time to develop. It involves rules, conversation, negotiation, and organization on their part, not ours. Resist the temptation to give children something to do. You might be surprised how involved and complex their play becomes when adults don't interfere.

Another consideration is that taking risks is OK. The movements associated with risky play such as climbing, swinging, rolling, hanging, and sliding are more than just fun, they are essential for children's motor development, balance, coordination, and body awareness. Some kids will attempt these feats naturally, while some may need a little more encouragement to try. Allow children to struggle, succeed, and fail. When adults refrain from helping children, they can figure out what they can safely accomplish on their own, increasing their self-confidence, perseverance, and resilience.

In our home this summer, we will still have expected times to go to bed and rise and shine. There will also be expectations for barn chores, house chores, and yard chores. But, I hope my kids will be pleasantly surprised that their "rules making mama" expects them to play and explore in their own way— technology free — each and every day.

Now let's take a look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension. The ServSafe® Manager Food Safety Training series will be offered on Thursdays, July 8, 15, and 22 from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., with the proctored exam July 29 at 9:00 a.m. A separate ServSafe® Person-in-Charge certification training will be Monday, August 2 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Pre-registration is required at coshocton.osu.edu.

The final "East Ohio Women in Agriculture Program Series" webinar will be this Thursday, May 27. I will be presenting "He Said, She Said: Communication Between Men and Women in Agriculture." Visit our website to register for one or more of these free programs or to find a link to past recorded programs as well.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!