

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for September 14, 2020
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, and Healthy Relationships we'll talk about child development and some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

A couple of years ago I came across a book written by University of Minnesota faculty, Jean Illsley Clarke and David J Bredehoft called "How Much Is Enough?: Everything You Need to Know to Steer Clear of Overindulgence and Raise Likeable, Responsible and Respectful Children." I mean, really. Who wouldn't be drawn to title like that?

Clarke has conducted research over the past two decades about the effects of overindulgence on children and how this affects them as they grow up to be adults. She and her team of researchers define overindulgence as "giving too much of anything to a child so that it slows their learning and developmental tasks." Overindulgence hinders children from learning the necessary life lessons and skills needed to thrive as adults.

One question parents can ask themselves is: "Will doing or giving this keep my child from learning what he or she needs to learn at this age?" I think that naturally leads to question what is developmentally appropriate for children at different ages. How much can kids really handle? Here is some research-based guidance about expectations that are appropriate for children at every stage of development. You can find a complete list at go.osu.edu/jobsofthechild.

At different stages, we become capable of learning and experiencing different things. Here are some key words to describe the expectations in each stage of development:

- Prenatal is "becoming" • Birth to 6 months is "being" • 6 to 18 months is "doing"
- 18 months to 3 years is "thinking" • 3 to 6 years is "identity & power"
- 6 to 12 years is "structure" • 12 to 18 years is "identity, sexuality & separation"

You may not think that a 6 to 18-month-old child could have a "job," but one of the expectations is that they begin to signal their needs and to form secure attachments with parents. They also should begin to learn that there are options in life and not all problems are easily solved.

The 18-month-old to 3-year-old child is beginning to establish the ability to think for themselves. They should follow simple safety commands such as stop, go, and wait. This is the time they begin to express anger and other feelings. They can also begin to do simple chores at this point.

During the pre-school ages of 3 to 6 years old, children learn that behaviors have both positive and negative consequences. They begin to separate fantasy from reality as they move through this stage. They also begin to learn what they have power over and what they do not have power over.

I feel like I've been in the 6 to 12-year-old phase for a while now as a parent. I love one of the phrases that Clarke uses – “To learn when to flee, when to flow, and when to stand firm.” This is also the age when they gradually become skillful at and responsible for complex household chores. My son was doing all our household laundry by age 8. He would continue to ask questions to validate his sorting skills, but he had the mechanics down.

And then we come to adolescence. Their jobs are to emerge gradually, as a separate, independent person with their own identity and values within the context of the family. They should find and support a healthy peer group. They should also continue to participate in family celebrations and rituals.

Parenting is a tough job. Keep the end in mind. If we want to raise responsible adults, then helping them develop skills and competence at each stage of development is the greatest gift we can give them.

Now we'll take a look at some upcoming OSU Extension programs. I'm teaching an interactive virtual workshop to give you strategies to jumpstart conversations about inheritance and some key decision-making factors in non-titled property transfer. “Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate?” will be at noon next Thursday, September 24. Please RSVP to the Coshocton Public Library at 740-622-0956. Also, this year the Farm Science Review will offer virtual programs on Food Preservation topics, September 22-24. You can find links to these presentations on our OSU Extension Coshocton County Facebook page.

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!