



Swain County Crossroads

Family and Consumer Sciences Newsletter

Best Wishes, Cheryl

We wish a happy retirement to Cheryl Beck, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent in Jackson County. She retired on June 29 after 32+ years. She provided wonderful articles for the Crossroads newsletter over the past two years. In the absence of an FCS Agent in Swain County, Cheryl willingly offered programs in Swain County, provided newspaper articles, answered messages and more. We appreciate her sharing her knowledge and skills with us. Best wishes, Cheryl, and thank you!!

In Cheryl's own words: "After 32 years and 9 months, I am retiring on June 29th to pursue

some family and personal goals. I have enjoyed my time, first as 4-H agent for 15 years and now as FCS agent for almost 18 years. Thank you for allowing me to come into your home each month with tips, recipes, and announcements designed to help you and your family "eat right, spend smart, raise healthy kids, and live well". I hope they have been helpful and that you will continue turning to Cooperative Extension for the latest, research-based information in family and consumer sciences, agriculture, and 4-H and youth development. Best wishes!"



It's Good to be Back!

Home sweet home describes how I feel after a brief period away from the NC Cooperative Extension. I am excited to be back working in Swain County, along side some of the best co-workers possible, Nira Franklin, 4-H agent; Christy Bredenkamp, Agriculture/Horticulture Agent; Melissa Vaughn, Administrative Assistant; and our fearless leader, Rob Hawk, County Extension Director.

Family and Consumer Science programs typically address three issues that families often face: the economy, education and health. We provide credible information to families to help them gain new skills and knowledge to be better prepared to improve and grow their financial outlook, to foster and develop

educational success and to promote the overall health of every family member. It is true when we say we want to empower families to improve their lives. As the FCS agent for Swain County, I look forward to bringing the research from the university system directly to you in an interesting, fun and active learning environment.

If you are interested in a particular program or learning about a topic, please contact me! I hope to see you at a workshop or program soon.

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Creativity in Young Children

Children who amaze adults with unusual responses to questions or display a keen sense of humor are thinking creatively. Parents can help children learn to think and solve problems in creative ways by giving them the freedom to make mistakes and by respecting their ideas.

To solve problems creatively, children need to be able to see a variety of perspectives and to generate solutions. When working on a problem, adults should teach children to examine their surroundings for “cues” that will help them generate a pool of possible solutions. In addition, adults can encourage creative thought simply by providing:

- **Choices** – Children who are given choices show more creativity than do children who have all choices made for them.



- **Stimulation** – Physical environments designed to stimulate the senses can enhance creative problem solving. For example, when shown an object in the shape of a half-moon and asked, “What can we use this for?” children will exhaust their mental images and begin developing ideas from what they see in their surroundings. Research has found that children who keep looking around a classroom or playroom for cues are using a creative problem-solving method.

- **Time for play and fantasy** – Dramatic play just before engaging in problem-solving tasks can lead to more creative thought.
- **Encouragement** – When children show special aptitudes, such as an ability to generate many questions, a keen memory, advanced reading or pre-reading skills, artistic skills, or other above-average abilities, adults should encourage them to build on and expand their skills.

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Drying Fruits & Vegetables

Food drying is one of the oldest methods of preserving food for later use. It can either be an alternative to canning or freezing, or compliment these methods. Drying

foods is simple, safe and easy to learn. With modern food dehydrators, fruit leathers, banana chips and beef jerky can all be dried year round at home.

Dried foods can often times be more nutritious, contain less sugar and save the consumer money when compared to store bought alternatives. Homemade trail mixes, fruit leathers, etc. can encourage children to eat more fruits and vegetables.

To learn more about dehydrating foods, plan to attend the upcoming workshop "Just Add Water".

How Drying Preserves Food

Drying removes the moisture from the food so bacteria, yeast and mold cannot grow and spoil the food. Drying also slows down the action of

enzymes (naturally occurring substances which cause foods to ripen), but does not inactivate them.

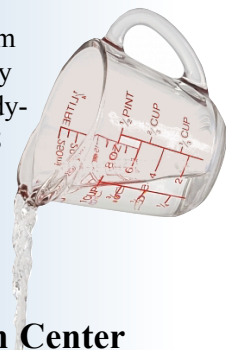
Because drying removes moisture, the food becomes smaller and lighter in weight. When the food is ready for use, the water is added back, and the food returns to its original shape.

Foods can be dried in the sun, in an oven or in a food dehydrator by using the right combination of warm temperatures, low humidity and air current.

In drying, warm temperatures cause the moisture to evaporate. Low humidity allows moisture to move quickly from the food to the air. Air current speeds up drying by moving the surrounding moist air away from the food.

"Just Add Water" - Dehydrating 101

Learn the how-tos of dehydrating foods, presented by Kim Lippy! Use fruits, vegetables, and meats to make a variety of foods, such as: beef jerky, fruit roll-ups, trail mix, ready-mixes and ingredients for fast cook meals! Call 488-3848 to register.



August 30, 2012

1:00 p.m.

Swain County Cooperative Extension Center

Cost: \$5.00

Creativity in Young Children . . . *continued from page 2*

- **An environment where there is no one right answer for every problem** – Parents who enthusiastically encourage children to develop more than one solution to a problem see greater creativity in problem solving.

Art is one way children can express themselves, but because it develops before writing, or abstract thinking, adults can see creativity expressed in art more easily with young children.

Utilizing creative materials such as clay and play dough can offer opportunities for children to be creative and to release energy and stresses. Clay and play dough can be pulled, pushed squeezed, and punched. Rolling pins, cookie cutters, and various containers will add to imaginative play with clay.

Painting is creative play that can be calming for children. It allows them to plan and make decisions about color and form, and it provides them an opportunity to work on their own. Allow children to try painting with straws, eye droppers, pipe cleaners, Styrofoam, and fruits and vegetables cut crosswise. Add a bit of powdered soap to the paint to make cleanup easier.

Sand has a wonderful unstructured quality that allows children to mix, pour, sift, stir, measure and mold. While playing with sand, children are using their pre-math skills, socializing, and using their imaginations. Working with sand can be relaxing, and it provides a smooth sensory experience. Add dry tempera paint to color the sand, and let children create sand paintings by gluing sand to paper or by layering the colored sand in clear containers.

Water offers one of the most exciting and yet soothing play opportunities. Let children experiment with water by trying to float objects of different weights, pouring and measuring, adding food coloring, adding bubbles, washing dolls and toys and using paint brushes.

Remember, that creativity is more than just a finished product – it's a process that appears in almost all aspects of life. Understanding the creative process encourages children to become adults who will make a difference in our world through their creative problem-solving skills.

Play Dough

Mix flour, water, cooking oil, salt, and cream of tarter. Heat slowly on low and stir constantly while adding food coloring. Continue heating until the dough forms a ball.

Remove from heat, let cool, then knead the ball. Store in an airtight container.

1 cup flour
1 cup water
½ cup salt

1 tablespoon cooking oil
2 teaspoons cream of tartar
Food coloring

Cooking with Soy

Bring your favorite apron and get cookin' with this great hands-on learning experience . . . Learn more about the benefits of soy, presented by Laura Rogers! Prepare a delicious soy meal alongside Chef, Alex Forde! Sample the various soy dishes! Take home new soy recipes!

September 10, 2012

1:00 p.m.

Swain County Cooperative

Cost is FREE

Register by September 3

Soy & Spinach Artichoke Dip

1 pound	Silken tofu, crumbled
1 pound	Low-fat cream cheese, cubed
1 cup	Low-fat mayonnaise
1/2 teaspoon	Ground pepper
1 pound	Frozen chopped spinach, thawed, drained
1 pound	Marinated artichoke hearts, drained, chopped
1/2 cup	Green onions, chopped
	Parmesan cheese grated, for garnish



Beat tofu until smooth; mix in cream cheese, mayonnaise and pepper in mixer bowl. Fold in spinach, artichokes and green onions. Divide mixture equally into 12 (4 oz.) au gratin dishes. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese on top, if desired. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes or until bubbly and browned on top.

Nutrition Per Serving: 62 calories, 6.6 gm protein, 5.7 gm carbohydrates, 1.4 gm fat, 3.9 mg cholesterol, 254 mg sodium, 1.5 gm dietary fiber.



Swain County Center
P.O. Box 2329
Bryson City, North Carolina 28713

Upcoming Extension Programs

Call 488-3848 for more information and to register.

- August 2** **Organic Pest Management Seminar** - 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., Swain County Extension Center. Learn how to organically control insects, diseases and weeds that plague your vegetables? Topics include companion plants, farmscaping, soil amendments, organically approved sprays and more. Plus . . . it's FREE!
- August 3** **Leopold Education Project - Educators Environmental Workshop** 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Oconaluftee Visitor Center (GSMNP). Cost is \$30. Register by July 27. School Teachers, Camp Counselors, Extension Agents, Environmental Educators and anyone who wants to educate the next generation about conservation steward-ship and land ethics are encouraged to attend this workshop. Learn more about Leopold Education Project www.lep.org | www.aldoleopold.org
- August 30** **Saving Seeds & Season Extender Tips** - 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m., Swain County Extension Center. Program is FREE. Now is the time to plant vegetables for round two! Choose the right vegetables for a fall crop (season extenders), and join others in becoming seed savers! Season Extender topics include: cultivar selection, shade, multiple cropping, mulches, floating row covers, low tunnels, and cold frames. Saving Seeds topics include: basics in seed selection, harvesting, processing, and how to store your valuable vegetable seeds.

Crossroads is a quarterly newsletter designed to inform and educate Swain County residents on issues that affect them, and to provide ideas for helping improve their quality of life.

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