

# Fun most important ingredient when taking the kids fishing

Psst. Mom, Dad. If you're ready to take the little person in your house on his or her first fishing trip, here are three words of advice:

Just have fun. That's the main message in a series of do's and don'ts prepared by Hooked on Fishing International (HOFI).

HOFI is the expert on the subject of taking kids fishing.

Every year the Ketchum, Okla. organiza-

tion, host of the Wal-Mart Kids All-American Fishing Derby, puts on more than 1,800 fishing events for 300,000 kids in all 50 states.

The reward for a successful trip easily outweighs the risk of failure.

Seeing your little angler have a good time, maybe even catch a fish, is a significant reward, to be sure.

But, the real reward for parents is knowing that a successful trip could

become the spark that fires a lifetime of fishing, the back-to-Nature platform that teaches respect for the land, water and everything that lives.

It follows, too, that some of those trips will be family fishing trips that build a store of shared experiences and love.

To up the chances for success on your young anglers outing, HOFI suggests the following guidelines:

\*Use live bait to in-

crease the chances of catching a fish.

While catching a fish does not make the difference between a fun or lousy time, the thrill of feeling a fish on the line will just about guarantee that your little angler will want to come back for more.

For safety's sake, the adults should handle putting the worms and minnows on sharp hooks.

\*Don't forget to bring lots of snacks. As you

probably know, a hungry tummy trumps just about everything.

Keep wet wipes on hand for use before and after snacks.

\*Give the child his own fishing outfit, a gesture that will make this day even more memorable for the adults and child.

There is a practical aspect to this, too. For short anglers, short rods are easier to handle.

\*Bring a camera and shoot lots of pictures. This

day will live in the memory for a long time but the details will come flooding back, even a generation later, when you haul out the family photo album.

\*Bring sunscreen, insect repellent, and first aid basics.

\*Don't drive too far. The object is to minimize the times passengers in the back seat ask the front seat, "Are we there yet?"

\*Don't fish too long. Leave a little fishing desire in the bank for next time.

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### The foolish man seeks happiness in the distance, the wise grows it under his feet.

- James Oppenheim