

Kids' Nutrition Q & A

Q: *Myschool-age children love to snack on ready-to-eat cereal. How bad is this?*

A: Ready-to-eat cereals are usually fortified with vitamins and minerals, which make them a better choice than chips or candy. However, too much snacking on even a low-sugar cereal can derail the nutritional quality of a child's overall diet.

Instead of routinely reaching for the cereal box, consider your children's desire to snack as a way to supplement any nutrition gaps, say nutritionists at the USDA's Children's Nutrition Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

Begin by looking for the weaknesses in your children's overall diets. Then, when the snack attacks hit, offer foods from those food groups first. Do your children turn their noses up at milk? Offer yogurt, low-fat pudding, string cheese, or calcium-fortified juice. Ready-to-eat baby carrots and a low-fat dip can fill a veggie void, and they are just as easy to grab as a box of cereal. If your children are not getting enough fruit, offer raisins, orange segments, grapes, or make a blender drink with frozen fruit, a touch of sweetener, and yogurt or mineral water. With a little ingenuity, it's easy to turn snack breaks into nutrition breaks.

Q: *How will I know when my infant son is ready to start solids?*

A: Readiness is a developmental issue. Although solids can be safely started once an infant is four months of age, some infants might not be ready until they're six months old.

Recognizing the 'window of opportunity' for starting solids can help make the transition easier for parents as well as their infants. Accord-

ing to Dr. Judy Hopkinson at the USDA's Children's Nutrition Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine, developmental signs to look for in your son include:

- Being able to hold his shoulders straight and back and neck upright

- Opening his mouth for a spoon and closing his lips around it

- Being able to hold offered food in his mouth and swallowing most of it, rather than pushing it out with his tongue

- Being able to control the position of food in his mouth and making chewing movements, showing interest in food, and beginning to use his fingers as a 'pincher'

- Introduce single ingredient foods first, one-half teaspoon at a time. Start off with baby rice cereal thinned to a liquid consistency with breast milk or formula and feed from a spoon. Avoid putting solids in a baby bottle, which can cause choking. Follow cereals with strained fruits and vegetables when your son is five to six months of age and offer pureed meats at about seven to nine months. Continue to provide breast milk or formula to your son until he's at least one year of age.

Q: *How can I protect my family against salmonella food poisoning?*

A: Nutritionists with the USDA's Children's Nutrition Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine offer these safe food handling tips to help you 'fight bac'.

- Wash hands and surfaces often and between cooking tasks with warm, soapy water. Always sanitize kitchen surfaces after working with raw poultry, fish or meats.

- Separate foods that are to be cooked from other items in your shopping cart and in your refrigerator.

- Use an 'instant read' thermometer to check temperatures while cooking. Cook steaks and roasts to at least 145 F, ground meats to 160 F., poultry parts to 170 F, whole poultry to 180 F, and leftovers to 165 f.

- Minimize the time foods spend in the temperature 'danger zone.' Store cooked or perishable foods in shallow containers and refrigerate within two hours of purchase or preparation. Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator, under cold running water or in the microwave. Marinate foods in the refrigerator.

To discuss your food safety questions with a USDA expert, call the Food Safety Information Hotline at 800-535-4555.

Q: *Can food coloring affect children's behavior?*

A: Parents who blame their children's 'ants in the pants' on food colorings need to look elsewhere, says Dr. Debby Demory-Luce of the USDA's Children's Nutrition Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine.

A link between food additives and hyperactivity was proposed by some scientists in the 1970's. However, well-controlled studies produced little evidence supporting the theory. In 1982, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) went on record stating there is no scientific evidence to support the claim that additives or food coloring cause hyperactivity. Research since then continues to support their position.

Mail your nutrition questions to: Kids' Nutrition Q & A, USDA/ARS Children's Nutrition Research Center, 1100 Bates St., Houston, TX 77030; or E-mail to: cnrc@bcm.tmc.edu. although individual responses are not possible, questions of general interest will be answered in this column.

Living Wages for Human Service Workers!

On Thursday, April 8th, County Commissioners launched a campaign to raise wages for direct care workers who serve children, the elderly, the sick and disabled, the homeless and abused, on contract with Multnomah County. In the first step of an unusual advocacy collaboration by local government, labor unions and community and faith-based organizations, the hearing kicked off an effort to move the state legislature to value the labor of human service workers.

County Chair Bev Stein lead off testimony with experts from the Northwest Job Gap Study, who pegs a living wage for a single person in Oregon at over \$10 per hour and for a family of three at over \$16. Stein was followed by testimony from workers, clients and agency management about the extent of sub-poverty employment among direct care workers and its effect on the workers' families, client services, and the use of tax dollars. Living wages advocates will argue that low wages not only force workers to rely on public assistance (food stamps, housing subsidies, ect.) but low wages produce low morale and high turnover, causing deterioration of client services and inefficient use of tax dollars.

Tim Crawl, Executive Director of

the Oregon Rehabilitation Association, unveiled the results of a study showing a 250% turnover among local workers in non-profit agencies serving the developmentally disabled. Many in the field believe the turnover is even worse among those who work with the mentally ill. Any increase in wages and benefits would affect thousands of workers in Multnomah County. Many state legislators, who must ultimately pass living wage legislation, have promised to attend the hearing.

The County Commission is acting in accord with their historic Living Wage resolution passed last October, which recognized that 'employees of non-profit social and human service agencies continue to experience low wage and a lack of benefits. The County's ability to affect those wages is limited because the Oregon Legislature controls the funding for those contracts... Multnomah County will seek the Support and cooperation of the Living wage advocates and together with them will bring a strong request to the 1999 Oregon Legislature social and human services.'

Living wage advocates face major stumbling blocks. The state Legislature is hostile to increasing social service spending. The government

contracts with non-profit social service agencies allow the agencies to hide actual wages and benefits provided to workers. Contracts also allow increased funding to be absorbed by administration rather than increased compensation to frontline workers. The hearing on April 8th will explore ways to break through these barriers to living wages.

SPONSORS of the LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN

Jobs with Justice Portland New Party Portland Rainbow Coalition • Service Employees Union locals 49, 140 • Coalition of Black Men Northwest Oregon Labor Council (AFL-CIO) Portland Association of Teachers • Oregon Action • PCC Faculty / Classified Federation • Workers Organizing Committee • Oregon Public Employees Union • Metanoia Peace Church • Gray Panthers • Coalition for a Livable Future • Firefighters Union • Community Alliance of Tenants • Laborers 483 • Hotel Employees Restaurant Employees 9 • AFSCME locals 88, 189, 3580, 328, 3336 • Letter Carriers 82 • Community Development Network (Multnomah) • Machinists 1005 • United Food and Commercial Workers 555 • Audubon Society in Portland Impacting Real Issues Together (SPIRIT)

Family Leave Bill Passes House of Reps

SALEM — The Oregon House of Representatives passed an updated Family Leave bill Wednesday. It allows workers, who take family leave, an opportunity to return to their same position, if it still exists. It does not; they must be offered an equivalent position with the same benefits, pay and other term of employment. If an equivalent position is not available, the employer must offer one

at another site within 20 miles of the employee's former job.

House Majority Leader, Steve Harper, R-Klamath Falls, the bill's author, said, "this corrects a problem employers were having in temporarily filling some positions — sometimes for as long as 24 weeks. And it gives employees some added job security."

The bill, which passed by a vote of 35 to 24, updates the current Or-

gon Family Leave law, established in 1995.

State Rep. Roger Beyer, R-Molalla, Chairman of the House Business and Consumer Affairs committee, which heard the bill said, "this strikes a balance between employer and employee and offers further protections than current Oregon or federal law."

The bill now goes to the Senate.

Training Helps Landlords Keep Rentals Safe

The City of Portland's Office of Planning and Development Review (formerly the Bureau of Buildings), in partnership with the Portland Police Bureau will offer an eight-hour training to help landlords keep rental properties safe and free of illegal activity. The first of the Spring 1999 Landlord Training Programs will be held on Friday, April 16th at Parkrose Community Center, located at 12003 N.E. Shaver. Sign-in begins at 8:00 a.m., with the training starting at 8:30 a.m. and ending at approximately 5:00 p.m.

Landlords, property managers, and others interested in attending may call the City's Landlord Training Program information line at 823-7955 for registration information. Advance registration is requested. Although the seminar is offered free of charge, there is a \$10 charge for the eighth edition of Portland's Landlord Training Program manual.

The Landlord Training Program was originally developed in 1989 under the lead sponsorship of the Portland Police Bureau and has now been

thoroughly updated and revised for issues facing landlords in 1999 by Portland's Office of Planning and Development Review. Under the original program, over 7,000 landlords and property managers representing over 100,000 rental units attended. Since the program was updated in 1998 almost 600 participants representing over 10,000 rental units have attended in just seven trainings to date.

The program, which began in Portland with funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, has become a national community policing model, winning for the City recognition as an Innovation in State and Local government by Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and being replicated, in various formats, by over 400 state and local jurisdictions nationwide and in Canada.

The training will be presented by the program's original creator and now national Landlord Training Program Director, John Campbell of Campbell DeLong Resources, Inc.

In addition to the training on April 16th, two other training dates for the program are also being offered: Saturday, April 24th at Providence Portland Medical Center Amphitheatre, located at 4805 N.E. Glisan; and on Friday, April 30th in the Metro Regional Government's Council Chamber, at 600 N.E. Grand.

Reactions from landlords who have completed the course are consistently strong and positive: surveyed landlords and managers overwhelmingly agree that the training increases their confidence in screening rental applicants and their ability to recognize warning signs of illegal activity or chronic nuisance activity. Under the Office of Planning and Development Review's sponsorship and guidance, landlords new to the program will gain important insights, while landlords who have attended in the past can expect plenty of additional information about issues crucial to the safe and successful management of property in the City of Portland.

Keeping Food Safe During a Power Outage

Sooner or later, every home has a power outage. The electricity may have gone off during a snowstorm or thunderstorm, or the refrigerator may simply quit working. Whatever the cause, dealing with food involved when the unit is off requires a knowledge of food safety.

USDA recommends the following guidelines:

KEEP THE FREEZER DOOR CLOSED.

Keep what cold air you have inside. Don't open the door any more than necessary. You'll be relieved to know that a full freezer will stay at freezing temperatures about 2 days; a half-full freezer about 1 day. If your

freezer is not full, group packages so they form an "igloo" to protect each other. Place them on one side or on a tray so that when thawing, their juices won't drip over food. And, if you think power will be out for several days, try to find some dry ice (see box below). Although dry ice can be used in the refrigerator, block ice is better. You can put it in the refrigerator's freezer unit along with your refrigerated perishables such as meat, poultry, and dairy items.

Handling Dry Ice

To locate a distributor of dry ice, look under "ice" or carbon dioxide" in the phone book.

Buy 25 pounds of dry ice to

keep a 10 cubic-foot freezer full of food safe 3 to 4 days; half full, 2 to 3 days. A full 18 cubic-foot freezer requires 50 to 100 pounds of dry ice to keep food safe 2 days; half full, less than 2 days.

Handle dry ice with caution and in a well-ventilated area. Don't touch it with bare hand; wear gloves or use tongs.

Wrap dry ice in brown paper for longer storage. One large piece lasts longer than small ones.

The temperature of dry ice is -216°F; therefore, it may cause freezer burn on items located near or touching it. Separate dry ice from the food using a piece of cardboard.

Do You Have a Child with Special Needs?

Attend the Guardianship & Forum for families of Children with special needs.

Tuesday, April 20th, 7:30PM
Providence Child Center
830 NE 47th Avenue, Portland
Topics covered: Letters of intent, types of trusts, how to choose a

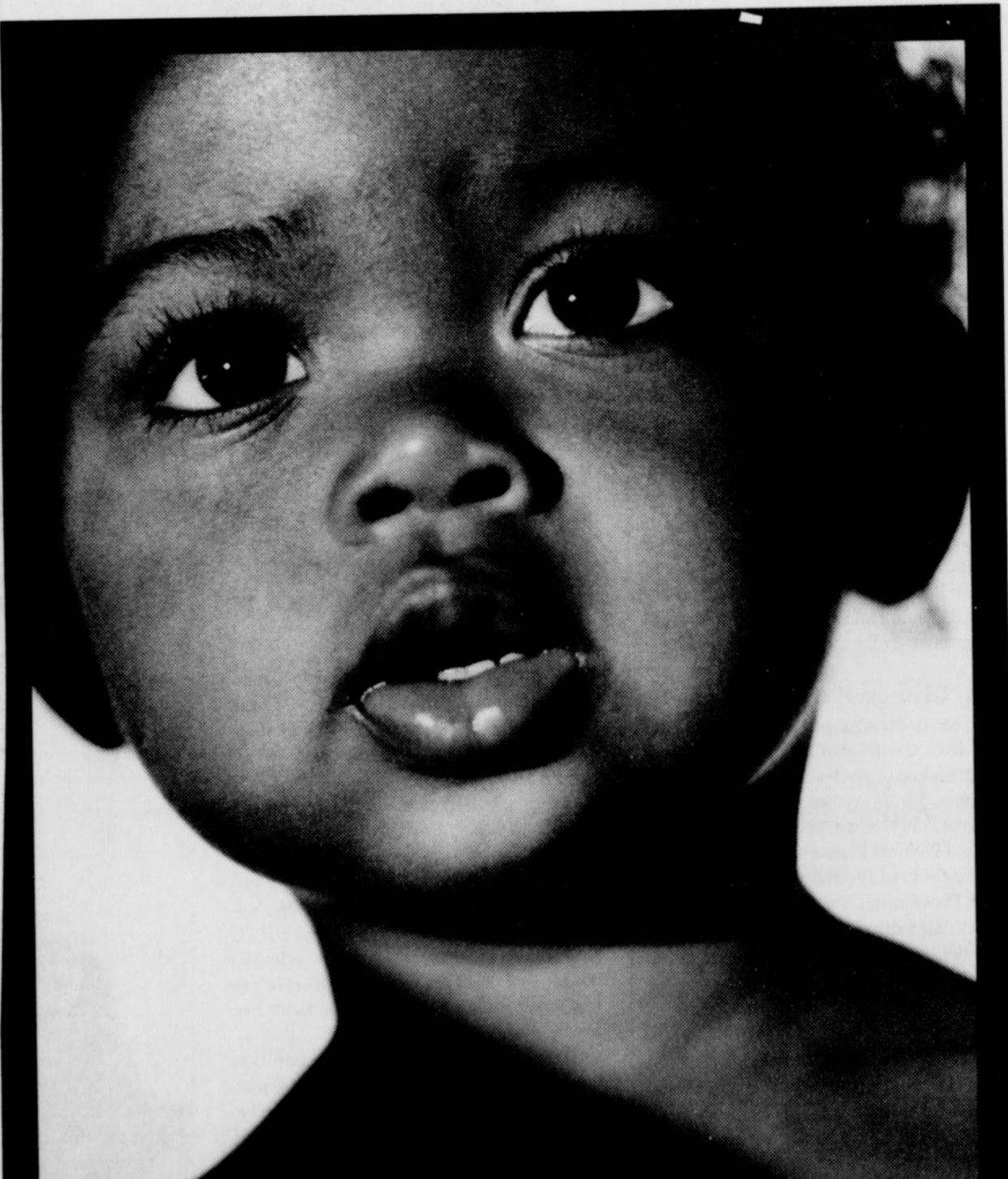
trustee, and the legal procedures for appointing a guardian

Guest Speakers: Steve Smith Partner of the law firm Palmer, Feitz, Smith and McDonald

Orie Johnson Retired Trust Officer from First Interstate Bank and past Member of the Arc of Oregon

G.A.P.S. (Guardianship, Advocacy and Planning Services)

Presented by
Providence Child Center
Public Welcome - Free Admission. For more information or to arrange special accommodations, please call (503) 215-2442



HOW TO PREVENT YOUR DAUGHTER FROM COMMITTING SUICIDE 16 YEARS BEFORE IT HAPPENS.

Without a father in her life, she'll be 53% more likely to attempt suicide. Give your kids a better chance. Even if they don't live with you, they need your emotional and financial support. They're your kids. Be there for them.

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