

Number of "latchkey" kids increasing in U.S.

Among the population of school-age children in the United States, the "latchkey" child is becoming prominent.

Latchkey children are school-age youngsters who have no one to come home to after school. The term "latchkey" is used to describe them because many carry a key to let themselves in (and lock themselves in) their home until parents return later in the day.

There have always been latchkey children, but their numbers have sky-rocketed with the increasing incidence of one-parent families, and families in which both parents work.

Today, over 60 percent of working mothers have children between six and 14 years of age. And about 13 percent (one million) of one-parent households in this country are headed by fathers who are usually employed.

Parents report feelings of anxiety and guilt over leaving children to fend for themselves. The parents themselves were not latchkey children. This makes it difficult for them to cope with traditional beliefs about parental responsibility and natural fears for children's safety and well-being.

Employers are aware that parents carry these concerns to work. Surveys of several work places have revealed a noticeable 3 o'clock slump in productivity and increase in anxiety among workers. In addition, industrial workers with children home alone in the afternoon are more frequently involved in afternoon accidents than other workers.

Research comparing self-care children with those who have adult supervision is inadequate at this time. What is happening in homes isn't known, but psychologists agree

that self-care produces major changes in the social structure in which a child's growing up occurs.

The factors affecting family decisions about child self-care are age, maturity, attitudes of the parent and child, the neighborhood where the home is located, and structure of the latchkey situation.

Observations of latchkey children show they respond in various ways. Some develop feelings of independence and accomplishment, while on the other hand some develop feelings of rootlessness and not belonging. Others become fearful and cope by hiding, or experience feelings of resentment and engage in delinquent behavior.

The studies of latchkey children to date have looked at isolated parts of the situation. For example, some research has concentrated on where the latchkey child lives. These studies have shown that latchkey children from inner city areas have more difficulty with personality adjustment, and have more academic problems and everyday fears to overcome than latchkey children in suburban or rural areas.

Other researchers point out that some urban neighborhoods are stable and friendly.

The real question is, how safe and supportive is the neighborhood for children at any time?

Parents have varying concerns over the need for adult supervision. Younger children prompt fears for safety, but peer influences are more of a worry with older children and adolescents.

A Wisconsin study showed self-care children 10 to 15 years-old who report home after school to be no different from children in the same age group supervised at home by a parent. But conditions are

important.

Young teens fare better in resisting peer pressure if they are unsupervised in their own home rather than unsupervised at a friend's or just "hanging out." Twenty percent of the children in the sample were feared at-risk because they were unsupervised, and not at home.

The Wisconsin study also showed that an authoritative parenting style provides children with guidelines to resist peer pressure.

Authoritative parenting means parent and child exchange opinions and expectations about after-

school activity, but the parent has the last word. This is different from authoritarian parenting in which the parent dictates orders, or permissive parenting in which children decide about curfew, homework, chores and whether they'll stay home or go out.

Challenge often produces growth, but children display great variation in emotional, intellectual, and physical development. Parents must avoid premature granting of responsibility and provide protective boundaries in which self-care children can thrive without fear, loneliness, or boredom.

Advice given for dealing with the angry child

Before we look at specific ways to manage aggressive and angry outbursts, several points should be highlighted.

We should distinguish between anger and aggression. Anger is a temporary emotional state caused by frustration; aggression is often an attempt to hurt a person or to destroy property.

In dealing with angry children, our actions should be motivated by the need to protect and to teach, not by a desire to punish. Parents and teachers should show a child that they accept his or her feelings, while suggesting other ways to express the feelings. An adult might say, for example, "Let me tell you what some children would do in a situation like this..." It is not enough to tell children what behaviors we find unacceptable. We must teach them acceptable ways of coping. Also, ways must be found to communicate what we expect of them. Contrary to popular opinion, punishment is not the most effective way to communicate to children what we expect of them.

Responding to the angry child

Taken from *The Aggressive Child* by Fritz Redl and David Wine-man. They should be considered helpful ideas and not be seen as a "bag of tricks."

*Catch the child being good. Tell the child what behaviors please

you.

*Deliberately ignore inappropriate behavior that can be tolerated.

*Provide physical outlets and other alternatives.

*Manipulate the surroundings. Plan the surroundings so that certain things are less apt to happen. Stop a "problem" activity and substitute, temporarily, a more desirable one.

*Use closeness and touching. Move physically closer to the child to curb his or her angry impulse.

*Express interest in the child's activities.

*Be ready to show affection.

*Ease tension through humor.

*Appeal directly to the child. For example, a parent or a teacher may gain a child's cooperation by saying, "I know that noise you're making doesn't usually bother me, but today I've got a headache, so could you find something else you'd enjoy doing?"

*Explain situations. Encourage children to see their strengths as well as their weaknesses.

*Use promises and rewards. This approach should not be compared with bribery. We must deliver our promises.

*Say "NO!" Limits should be clearly explained and enforced.

*Tell the child that you accept his or her angry feelings, but offer other suggestions for expressing them. Teach children to put their angry feelings into words, rather than fists.

*Build a positive self-image.

*Use punishment cautiously. There is a fine line between punishment that is hostile toward a child and punishment that is educational.

*Model appropriate behavior.

*Teach children to express themselves verbally.

Publications available

Nutrition and Pregnancy

A series of six letters for the pregnant woman are being offered by the Extension office. The letters will answer such questions as how much weight should I gain and is it okay to snack? Learn the truth about eating for two and why it's important to eat a balanced diet that's good for you and baby.

Oregon's Children I

Six letters for parents of children from birth to age three. Answers questions about how they develop, the importance of play, feeding,

safety and selecting child care.

Oregon's Children II

A series of six letters for parents of children ages three to six. Answers questions about how they develop, child behavior and discipline, promoting independence and responsibility, teaching about money and clothing selection.

Children are our most valuable resource. Oregon State University Extension Service offers these letters to strengthen the future of Oregon families. Call 553-1161, ext. 238 or 239.

Soil preparation important

If you're planning to plant a lawn this fall, plan and perform the groundwork thoroughly. It will make life easier for your new turf.

To give the new lawn a good seed bed, till the lawn site to loosen the soil and mix organic matter and fertilizer into the upper six to eight inches of soil.

Organic materials that help loosen heavy soils and add holding capacity to lighter soils include manure, compost, peat moss, bark or sawdust.

Six inches of extra topsoil may have to be added to the surface of the planting site if the area is gravelly or consists of heavy clay.

A 16-16-16 combination fertilizer should be spread over the planting site at the rate of 10 pounds per thousand square feet. Lime needs should be determined by a soil test.

After the seedbed has been tilled and fertilized and amendments are added, firm the soil by rolling and watering. A firm seedbed makes it easier for the seeds to germinate evenly and helps prevent unwanted humps and hollows in the surface.

Scatter the seed over the area uniformly after the soil has been raked lightly. If mulches are used to cover the seed, apply them sparingly. Mulching isn't necessary if the soil surface can be kept damp until the seed germinates.

Regular watering may be necessary to keep the soil moist until the new grass can establish itself. If weeds appear along with the new lawn, don't use any chemical weed killer until the lawn is at least 30 days old.

4-H news, tips related

4-H Awards Family Potluck

Date: Monday, September 22
Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: Agency Longhouse

4-H Club Guidelines

A. Club leaders may establish firm age limits for their club members. Only youngsters within that specific age group will be enrolled in that club.

B. 4-H associate members (any child below the fourth grade) can be enrolled and attend meetings and activities ONLY if leaders agree and ONLY if a parent or ADULT guardian attends the meeting also. Leaders are encouraged not to permit non-4-H youngsters at club meetings.

C. Traditionally, 4-H is for 4th through 12 grades. Associate members are below the fourth grade. Junior leaders are 16 and older.

4-H Club Meetings—Planning Hints

Throughout the year, every

member should have the opportunity to:

1. Plan for the project in cooperation with the leader and parents. The plan might include skills to be learned and supplies and materials needed. Members should plan and accomplish some work on their own projects during meetings.

2. Contribute to the group at each meeting and assume some responsibility such as:

—Help prepare for the meeting
—Help put things away afterwards
—Serve as host
—Report club events to newspaper
—Prepare refreshments

3. Informally discuss individual and group progress and accomplishments by thinking through some questions, for example:

—What did I learn?
—Where do I need improvement?
—How do I feel about what I did?
—What shall I plan to do or learn next?

Beef management tips given for October

*Identify replacement heifers making sure there are enough following the final culling after breeding and pregnancy testing next year.

*Brucellosis vaccine replacement heifers (Bang's Disease) which

must, by law, be performed by a veterinarian.

*Pregnancy test to determine open females and then determine the best time to market these cull cows and heifers (now, later this year or next spring.)

How to remove pine resin

Because of increased outdoor activity, the likelihood that pine resin or tar will soil clothing and home carpeting is greater during the summer and early fall months. Removing pine resin can be tricky and takes several steps.

If removing this resin from washable clothes, sponge aerosol pretreatment sprays or cleaning fluid into the stain and let dry. Then mix liquid laundry detergent and ammonia together and soak the stain.

Laundry using a liquid laundry detergent.

If pine resin gets on your carpeting, scrape off as much residue as possible. Sponge the stain continually with a cloth soaked in a non-flammable drycleaning solvent. Use a light, upward, brushing motion to lift the stain out of the carpet. Change the cloth as it becomes soiled. Continue until the stain is removed.

Arrangement

Each of the five meal preparation centers is necessary for a successful kitchen.

Steps, time, and energy are saved when the mix center is located between the refrigerator and the sink. The alternate location is between the sink and the range.

The kitchen will be more efficient if the work centers are continuous. This is possible when an L- or U-shaped is used. Although it may be possible to develop complete centers in a continuous arrangement along one wall, this is less efficient because of the increased distance from the refrigerator to the range.

When too much space for the work centers is allotted, efficiency is lost. With too little space, work must be done in cramped quarters. Inadequate work space also means inadequate storage space in the centers.

Cabinets

Cabinets above the range should have a 30" clearance, or a minimum of 24" if a hood is used.

If cabinets are placed above the sink, they should be above eye level (about one foot and six inches) for safety and to give a visual feeling of space.

Provide an additional storage area adjacent to the food preparation area for items not frequently used: portable appliances, extra staple supplies, canned food, extra sets of dishes.

Space for appliances

Space must be planned for the major kitchen appliances. Delay selecting new appliances until the kitchen is being planned.

Some decisions should be based on the total available space. For example, a one-piece range will require less space than a separate cook top and oven. The range should not usually be installed under a window that opens, because curtains are a fire hazard, and glass and window trim are hard to clean.

Space requirements for refrigerators vary.

The direction the refrigerator door opens is very important. The latch side should be adjacent to the counter. Avoid locating a refrigerator in a corner (even though there may be an adjacent counter) so it is necessary to back away each time the door is opened.

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Home buyers look for efficiency

Energy efficiency is a top consideration for more than two-thirds of home buyers when purchasing a new home according to a recent study by *Professional Builder Magazine*. Five-thousand new home buyers listed storm windows, efficient water heaters and storm doors as the leaders, followed by double-glazed windows, clock thermostats, triple-glazed windows and solar water heating. For more information on these energy savers contact the Extension office at 553-1161, ext. 238 or 139.

Which windows are best?

Q. In preparation for the fall, I'm getting ready to replace my old windows with new insulated glass windows. I've looked at aluminum, wood and vinyl frames. Is one of the three frame materials superior in energy savings?

A. Vinyl frames are new in Oregon, so we've seen little test data, but they appear to compare favorably to wood, which is the most energy efficient window frame material.

Aluminum requires little maintenance but is the least efficient window frame material. Some manufacturers are using a "thermal break" to insulate their aluminum frames. Most thermal break aluminum window frames won't be as efficient as wood or vinyl. But, they are far superior to standard aluminum. Perhaps more important, the thermal break eliminates or reduces

moisture condensation, a common problem with aluminum window frames.

Since there is considerable variation in windows made of similar materials, look for results of independent laboratory test for purposes of comparison. Many window manufacturers provide results of test data to stores that carry their products. First, look for the overall (glass and frame) U-value. The lower the U-value, the more efficient the window. Second, look for the air leakage rates. They are given in cubic feet per minute (CFM) per foot of sash length. The lower the CFM rating, the better.

DON'T FORGET 4-H THIS FALL