Trying New Adventures

Does your daughter greet the unknown with excitement or fear? Is she a natural with physical adventures but shy socially? Keep her individuality in mind as you guide her.

♦ Ages 1-7: Be aware of how you respond to new things she is doing. Say “you’re brave”, “it’s just a little scrape.” “It’ll be better soon.”

♦ Ages 8-13: Encourage adventures. Say “Let’s learn together.” “What new things do you want to try this summer?”

♦ Ages 14 and up: Allow some independence in her adventures. Support her interests. Separate your fears as you teach reasonable precautions. Say “I know it’s hard! I’ve got confidence in you. “It’s fun...a challenge.” I was homesick when I went to camp and didn’t know anyone. That’s when I met Sally.”

Don’t say “Are you crazy?” “Stick with what you know you can do.” “Don’t be a scaredy-cat!” “Better safe than sorry.”

Stay connected to your growing daughter

Build a strong foundation of communication early

Raising girls and boys has many common experiences, hurdles and rewards. There are also key differences based on gender that require parents to know the special nuances of guiding a girl rather than a boy.

According to Saralee Jamieson, MU Extension human development specialist, “Most parents feel a special need for communication help with their daughters during adolescence, which seems to be starting earlier and earlier — socially, emotionally and biologically.”

But it’s important to remember that building the solid foundation of strong communication best begins long before puberty exerts its pressures. In fact, every effort we put into improving communication and understanding with our preadolescent daughters will repay us amply during times that may be difficult.

Nancy Gruver, author of “How to Say It to Girls” has created a few simple steps to improve communication between adults and girls. Conveniently, these steps spell out the word GIRLS.

♦ “G” is for Get to Know Her. Spend time with them doing the things they want to do, playing games, listening to music and watching the movies and TV shows they watch. It means accepting her for who she is and not trying to get her to be a different person.

♦ “I” is for Improvise and Ignore Stereotypes. Girls as well as adults bring their own special knowledge, style and needs to any situation. Embrace this fact and don’t fight it. Stereotypes put blinders on our perceptions and prevent us from seeing the whole picture.

♦ “R” is for Remember Who She Is. Remind girls of their special strengths and experiences, especially at difficult times. Girls lose sight of their truest selves and their goals, especially during the preteen and teen years.

♦ “L” is for Listen. Truly listening to another person is one of our greatest communication challenges. Girls know quickly when we’re not listening or “don’t get it”. This challenge can be even more crucial with girls. Ask for her feedback to show her that you’re listening.

♦ “S” is for Share Ourselves and Our Knowledge. We may think that our children might take advantage of our mistakes and shortcomings and use them to manipulate us. But when we’re honest in an appropriate way, respecting a child’s age and level of maturity, we build the deep trust that makes it possible for her to be honest with us.

There’s no doubt that girls need our greater knowledge of the world and its workings to help them navigate successfully. They also need the supportive people and resources that we can connect them with.

The best way to increase the chance that a girl will be open to our help when she needs it the most is to be honest about who we are and what we have done.
If your family’s summer plans include travel, give a little thought to eating well along the way. Linda Rellergert, MU Extension nutrition and health education specialist suggests, “Take your own snacks or meals to be certain to have food your family likes when you need to eat.”

- Keep food safety in mind when choosing foods to carry with you. A cooler is great for car trips. On planes, trains or buses, a small insulated bag with cold pack keeps perishables like meat, hard cooked eggs and salads fresh and safe to eat for several hours. Plus, you’ll have the bag available at your destination for carrying other meals and snacks.

- Fresh fruits and veggies make great snacks and go well with sandwiches too. Make sure all are washed and ready to eat. Bite-sized veggies like cherry tomatoes, baby carrots, celery and sweet pepper sticks are obvious choices. Grapes, apples, cherries and blueberries are sweet and easy to eat.

- Water, juice and milk are better choices than soft drinks and energy drinks for staying well hydrated.

- Bagels, whole grain crackers and rolls are sturdy enough to travel well and serve as sandwich base or snack.

For snacks, granola bars, nuts and trail mix are a better nutritional bet than candy bars and chips. Watch portion sizes, though, as these snacks are rather high in calories as well as nutrients. Take out a reasonable amount and put the rest of the package out of sight and out of mind until true hunger returns.

Whatever choices you make for road food, remember to bring along plenty of paper towels, wet wipes and trash bags to keep passengers and your vehicle clean.

**Road Food**

Control portion sizes and keep snacks out of sight until hungry

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**Staying hydrated this summer**

The summer months bring many opportunities for outdoor fun — and with that, many opportunities to become dehydrated. The exertion of many outdoor activities, along with the higher temperatures and sun exposure increase our need for water.

How much water should you drink? According to Megan Webb, MU Extension nutrition and health education specialist, “This depends on the individual, the environmental conditions, and the activities in which the person is involved.” The Mayo Clinic suggests the guideline of 2.2 liters per day for women and 3 liters per day for men, in a temperate climate. This is just slightly more than the common advice of at least eight, eight ounce glasses of fluid per day.

Similarly, for kids, the amount of water needed daily will depend on age, gender, and activity level.

How do you know if you are drinking enough? If you wait until you are thirsty, your body is already becoming dehydrated. Try to drink a glass of water before meals. Drink water before, during, and after exercise. While extremely rare, it is possible to drink too much water. If you have questions about how much water you should be drinking, contact your physician or a registered dietitian. Remember, your urine should be clear to very light yellow.

Sports drinks help supply electrolytes that can be lost through perspiration, however, they often, also contain sugar. Sports drinks are generally recommended for activities lasting longer than ninety minutes or under extreme conditions (such as high temperatures).

When sports drinks are used, it is usually a good idea to alternate with water. Soda, tea, other beverages, and many foods do provide fluids — but water should still be your go-to option. It is usually readily available, inexpensive, and calorie free.

Some great ideas to help you drink enough water:

- Always have it with you.
- Use a special container.
- Make it more appealing by adding ice or fruit.

Try getting children (and yourself) everyone’s own BPA free water bottle. Water bottles are make water readily available and are often inexpensive, and come in many sizes and colors.

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