

AUGUST 2011

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI  
**M** Extension  
Live. And Learn.

# Kindred *Spirits*

## “Teaching” Responsibility

### With chores and expectations

#### Chore Jar

The chore jar method is a fun way to divide chores among family members.

Write one chore per slip of paper, fold them and place in a jar or basket.

Each family member draws out slips of paper each day and completes the tasks.

Some families have two jars, one for daily chores like setting the table and another jar for weekly tasks like taking the trash out or dusting.

Start them early when kids like to help and it will become a habit to help the “family team.”

“What is our goal in raising children and grandchildren?” Lisa Wallace, MU Extension human development specialist asked a group of parents and grandparents recently.

“Be happy,” one said with a big smile. Others chimed in with, “Responsible and respectful.” Finally, one parent exclaimed, “I want them to be able to live on their own and pay their bills.” The group applauded. Then discussion continued about how to make that happen.

We all agreed that we wanted our children and grandchildren to eventually live on their own and pay their own bills. However, we also acknowledged that a lot of preparation, nurturing and skill building was needed to make that happen.

So, what can you do to help children learn skills? Let’s talk responsibility.

You really cannot actually teach responsibility but, you can model it, expect it and talk about it. For instance, give your grandchildren household chores and expect them to do them. Children as young as 2 can help set the table, match socks and

fold wash cloths. Start them young when they are excited about doing and helping.

As your grandchildren get older, add to the chore list and set a timeline for the chores to be done. Teaching kids to do chores and *expecting* them to do them helps children feel good about themselves and it instills responsibility.

When children get older, they are not as excited to do chores and be helpers. At that point, begin a new strategy called “**when... then.**” This strategy is quite simple. Say, “**When** you take the trash out, **then** you may watch TV.” Or, “**When** you do your homework, **then** you may go to your friend’s house.”

The *when...then* strategy is similar to a paying job. **When** you work, **then** you get paid. So, you do a task and then get a reward. When children understand this concept, they begin to understand the world in a more mature way which leads to being more responsible.

Raising children is hard work. Stay strong as you work at raising children into responsible adults.

Published in partnership with the Family Friends Program, Children’s Mercy Hospitals and Clinics.

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# Are you over 50 years old?

## You may need more Vitamin B12

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines revised recommendations specifically aimed at those ages 50 and older for their needed level of Vitamin B12. Some researchers believe there is more B12 deficiency in our population than previously thought. Are you low?

“You need a blood test to know for sure,” says Glenda Kinder, MU Extension nutrition and health specialist. Scientists determined that blood levels below 150 picograms per milliliter (pg/mL) is too low; but between 150 and 300 picograms is also a concern. You want to have blood levels greater than 300 pg/mL. To achieve this level, the recommended daily allowance (RDA)

is 2.4 micrograms which is about the amount in a 3 ounce serving of beef or 3 glasses of milk.

However, as we age, our bodies become less able to extract B12 from the food we eat. And some medications further inhibit the absorption of Vitamin B12.

Medications that affect acid levels in the stomach are of particular concern. This includes Prilosec, Prevacid, Tagamet, Pepcid, and Zantac or prescriptions taken for acid reflux. Metformin, a common prescription for diabetes may also reduce absorption of B12.

A number of health conditions are linked to B12 deficiency. Conditions such as anemia, fatigue, weakness, soreness of the mouth or tongue,

constipation, loss of appetite and weight may be caused by this deficiency. Also neurological changes, such as numbness and tingling in the hands and feet can also occur, along with difficulty maintaining balance. Vitamin B12 deficiency has been associated with depression, confusion and poor memory.

Low levels can be corrected by adding more to your diet through food sources rich in B12 or by adding foods that have been fortified, or supplements. The best food sources include beef liver, clams, salmon, beef, yogurt, haddock, tuna, and milk. For those 50 years or older, adding a daily bowl of fortified cereal or a supplement containing at least 2.4 mcg of B12 should be adequate.

*Source: Tufts Nutrition Letter*

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## Benefits of Active Living

It is “old news” that being physically active is key to a healthy lifestyle for children and adults. In recent years, more has been discovered about the benefits of active living, such as:

- ◆ Reduces stress, anxiety, and depression
- ◆ Improves self-esteem & feelings of well-being
- ◆ Helps maintain a healthy weight
- ◆ Enhances academic performance

To motivate children to move, Lynda Johnson, MU Extension nutrition and health specialist suggests:

- ◆ Make small changes, start with a 10-15 minute activity break after school in place of watching TV or playing computer games.
- ◆ Make activity FUN! Encourage children to find activities they enjoy: riding a bike, shooting baskets, jumping rope, playing tag with siblings.
- ◆ Be a role model, & walk with children – promotes quality time together.