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Mississippi County

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Perry County

321 N. Main, Suite 1
Perryville, MO 63775
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In This Issue

Conversations with Children about Coronavirus

By: Mary Engram, Human Development Specialist

Gardening Tips all Gardeners Should Know

By: Donna Aufdenberg, Field Specialist in Horticulture

How Value is a Competitive Advantage for Small Business

By: Ashley Bales, MBA and Community Development Specialist

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Conversations with Children about Coronavirus

Mary Engram, Human Development Specialist

Over the last days and weeks, children have undoubtedly had questions about the Coronavirus. Sometimes we, as adults, have difficulty deciding how to handle questions, or how to find out if the children in our lives have fears they may not be sharing. Below are a few suggestions:

Children need information based on what their questions or fears are and what is appropriate for them developmentally. They most likely have heard some things about Coronavirus and may have fears or worries about what they have heard. It is important not to overwhelm them with too much information at once, but rather start with their questions and concerns and answer with relevant and factual information.

Young children also need reassurance about their safety, as well as the safety of their families. Emphasizing that most people are sick for a while, but most of the time get better, will help them keep it in perspective.



Too much information, unfiltered or unexplained, from media sources such as TV news, social media or other online formats, could be upsetting. Limit access to screen time, and monitor and talk about what information children are getting.

Adults should make sure their own responses to Coronavirus concerns do not make children fearful. They take their cues from parents and other adults. While concerns are valid, it is best for adults to have their own private conversations with each other away from children.

Teach healthy strategies from the CDC to decrease the risk for getting Coronavirus. Even young children can learn basics like washing their hands often, using wipes to clean surfaces, not gathering in large groups/keeping distance from others, and cough or sneeze into their elbow.

Finally, try to create or maintain some structure in each day. When children are out of their “normal” routine, it adds a layer of discomfort which might show up in unwanted behavior. A new routine should, over a short period of time, be comforting to children.

Source: 2020 American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress.

Calming Exercise

There is a very physical component to fear, anxiety and grief. This Calming Exercise is something that children and teens can use to “calm” themselves in a very physical way.

Practice a breathing exercise with your child and/or teen. Tell them to breathe in slowly, while pretending to smell their favorite flower. Then, breathe out slowly, pretending to blow out candles. Repeat this exercise together a few times.

Practicing this calming activity a few times will give kids a strategy to cope with the difficult emotions that grief, worry, and/or loss might bring.

Source: 2020 National Alliance for Grieving Children

For adults, the above breathing exercise is also very helpful in coping with stress, anxiety and worry. Spending a few minutes taking deep breaths in and then slowly back out is something that most anyone can do anytime. When more time is available, such as 10-30 minutes, focused breathing such as guided meditation is helpful. Get in a comfortable sitting position, in a quiet setting and simply focus on your breathing. This brings the body back to a restful state and is effective in counteracting chronic stress.

Tips for Making Gardening Easier

- Plant your garden near your house – you will visit it more often and see its beauty from your windows.
- Garden in the morning before the sun's rays are too strong and while your energy level is highest.
- Protect yourself. Wear a wide-brimmed hat, sunscreen and sunglasses.
- Buy supplies in smaller packages to avoid the stress of lifting heavy bags.
- Try using children's tools – lighter and easier to handle
- Use light weight soil...usually a soilless mix
- Use raised pots. Turn something over and set your pot on it.
- Consider a raised bed for an early start in the garden season and to have an edge to sit on while working.
- A mailbox can be placed at the edge of a garden area to hold tools, gloves, etc.
- Place stools, garden chairs or benches at strategic places in the garden so you can take a rest in between activities.
- Buy a garden cart to carry long handled tools and other things that you need often so you do not have to make repeated trips back to the shed for these items.

Gardening Tips all Gardeners Should Know

Donna Aufdenberg, Field Specialist in Horticulture

It is easy to get in a rut when it comes to gardening. We get in a habit of doing things every year whether they are right or wrong. Here are some tips that can help us be better gardeners.

- Sample soil and have it tested every two to three years. Adding or NOT adding amendments can get our gardens out of balance and gardens may start to develop problems.
- Keep a record of how the garden is laid out each year. This way you can develop a three year rotation. Most diseases require two to three years to “burn out” of an area.
- Apply preplant fertilizer to garden area in recommended manner and amounts. Base these on a soil test for best results.
- Use recommended varieties for your area of the state.
- The easiest method to sowing seed is to broadcast, but gardeners commonly forget to thin plants to one to two inches apart when they are small. Plants that are crowded do not grow well and do not develop into a good harvest.
- Harden off transplants before moving them outdoors in the garden whether you grow them at home or buy them from a store. Generally plants placed directly in all day sun may get sun burned or suffer from heat stress.
- Examine garden often to keep ahead of potential problems. Visiting the garden every day is the best routine to develop.
- Keep garden free of insects, diseases, and weeds. This is not always easy to do - weeds and insect problems can get out of hand easily and it is all about prevention in most cases when it comes to diseases.
- Use mulches to conserve moisture, control weeds, and reduce ground rots on vegetables. In wet years, mulch can be detrimental. Apply mulch only when it starts to dry out in spring.
- When dry weather hits and water is needed, wet soils to a depth of six inches. Water seldom, but thoroughly, instead of a little bit at a time.
- Do not let weeds go to seed! If you cannot weed in time, at least take time to remove the flower head or seed heads.
- Plant cover crops such as clover, buckwheat, and cow peas in summer or winter wheat and cereal rye in fall to keep down weeds and erosion after harvesting crops out of the garden.



Use raised beds to get an early start in the garden season.

How Value is a Competitive Advantage for Small Business

Ashley Bales, MBA & Community Development Specialist

How do small businesses compete with larger chain stores? They add value in ways that chain stores cannot. There are four parts of the value equation that a small business owner can always win on if used correctly – form and function, time, place, and ease of possession.

- **Form and function**: A small business owner has the freedom and ability to purchase items that a big box store would never purchase. This difference in product helps position the business as a place to get “unique items”.
- **Time**: This especially applies in the service industry, but small businesses generally have the ability to respond faster to calls - and in turn - provide a more satisfying experience for the consumer.
- **Place**: Many small businesses are able to offer delivery and/or a more personalized shopping experience. They are usually more centrally located and parking is closer. We all know about the long hike through the parking lot of some of the larger chain stores!
- **Ease of possession**: Local stores may have more flexibility with both how to purchase items (“pay me next time you are in”) and with repairs, replacements and refunds.

As a business owner, think about how your customers see your store or how potential customers could see your store. Work on the value you can bring. You can do that by communicating it to your current and prospective customers through your advertising, their in-store experiences and any other customer touchpoints.



Customer Profiling for Small Business

Users vs. Choosers:

Often, it is not the Users who are buying the product, but the Choosers.

Both audiences need to be marketed to, but in different ways. The business owner should focus on understanding the motivation to buy or recommend behind each segment - this will help drive sales up.

Learn buying habits:

Where else do your customers shop, spend their money or spend leisure time? Where are they using *your* product? Knowing where your product is being used can help you target your marketing in a more detailed way.

Know your demographics:

Age? Marital status? Home owner? Important details!

Ask yourself “Who is my marketing *currently* reaching and do they look anything like my ideal customer?”:

If they do not, make an immediate plan to revise your message and where your message is being distributed.