

Family Ties

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Northwest Area Family Newsletter
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School's Almost Out — Select Summer Care for Your School-age Child

Children look forward to summer vacation from school, but for most working parents, finding quality care for children during the summer can be challenging.

Parents need to be good consumers and shop carefully. Knowing that your children are happy and safe will make your summer much more enjoyable. Since most summer programs will not start until school is out, it may be difficult to visit a program ahead of time. However, you can call, visit with the director and ask some key questions. You also may want to check out the opinions of other parents. It is certainly OK to ask the director for referrals to families who would be willing to speak with you.

Parents should ask these key questions:

Is there ample space and is it comfortable? Look for a program that has sufficient space for children.

Eighty-five children stuffed into a school cafeteria for most of the day is not a good situation. Children should have ample space for indoor and outdoor activities, and the space should be comfortable. Kids need shady areas for outdoor play, a sofa or bean bag chairs to relax in and carpeted areas to sprawl out on during the day.

Is the program well supervised? Are there a sufficient number of adults? It is ideal for each adult to have “primary responsibility” for a specific group of children during the day and keep tabs on those children at all times.

Do children have a wide variety of activities to choose from? If a summer program is run by a preschool child care program, be sure it has suitable, age-appropriate activities for school-age kids.

School-age kids do not want to be stuck in a preschool room with three-piece puzzles, a pretend play corner and finger paint. Favorite activities for school-agers include sculpting, tie dying, gardening, polishing computer skills, reading, working jigsaw puzzles, playing board games, photography, cooking, sewing, woodworking, acting, swimming and fishing.

Is safety a priority? Does the staff have current first aid certification, including CPR? How does the staff handle emergencies? Is emergency information available at all times, including during field trips? Can staff be contacted by phone during the day? What are the check-in and check-out procedures during arrival and departure? Are permission and identification required from unfamiliar adults picking up children?

How are discipline problems handled? Most parents realize that if children are involved in interesting activities throughout the day, discipline problems are greatly minimized. “Nevertheless, even in the best of programs there will be a few problems. Is there a written discipline policy and is it one that you feel comfortable with?”

Are adults responsive and respectful of children? Adults should be genuinely interested in children and should have many conversations with them throughout the day. Discussions should include why, how and “what if” questions and should encourage children to explore ideas and exchange views. Avoid programs where adults communicate with children solely to control their behavior and manage routines.

How well do children get along? Are peer relationships usually positive or is there a strong presence of teasing, bickering and bullying? How are children helped to resolve conflict and solve problems? Do children have some freedom to choose their own companions or are they locked into assigned groups?

How well does the staff get along? Do staff members seem to enjoy working together? Do they communicate positively with each other? How long do staff members typically stay with the program? Is there high turnover of staff?



Finding high quality summer care does take effort, but it is time well invested. Parents who select a quality program will feel at ease knowing their child is safe, well supervised and engaged in interesting activities.

Be Safe and Secure Online

Thanks to the Internet, you can order books clothes, or appliances online; reserve a hotel room; download music and games; check your bank balance 24 hours a day; or access your workplace from thousands of miles away.

However, the Internet – and the anonymity it affords – also can give online scammers, hackers, and identity thieves access to your computer, personal information, finances, and more.

Protect Personal Information. If you are asked for your personal information - your name, email or home address, phone number, account numbers, or Social Security number – find out how it’s going to be used and how it will be protected before you share it. If you have children, teach them to not give out your last name, your home address, or your phone number on the Internet.

If you get an email or pop-up message asking for personal information, don’t reply or click on the link in the message. The safest course of action is not to respond to requests for your personal or financial information. If you believe there may be a need for such information by a company with whom you have an account or placed an order, contact that company directly in a way you know to be genuine.

In any case, don’t send your personal information via email because email is not a secure transmission method.

If you are shopping online, don’t provide your personal or financial information through a

company’s website until you have checked for indicators that the site is secure, like a lock icon on the browser’s status bar or a website URL that begins “https:” (the “s” stands for “secure”). Unfortunately, no indicator is foolproof; some scammers have forged security icons.

Read website privacy policies. They should explain what personal information the website collects, how the information is used, and whether it is provided to third parties. The privacy policy also should tell you whether you have the right to see what information the website has about you and what security measures the company takes to protect your information.

Protect passwords. Keep your passwords in a secure place, and out of plain view. Don’t share your passwords on the Internet, over email, or on the phone. Your Internet Service Provider should never ask for your password.

In addition, hackers may try to figure out your password to gain access to your computer. You can make it tougher for them by:



- * Using passwords that have at least eight characters and include numbers or symbols.

- *Avoiding common words: some hackers use programs that can try every word in the dictionary.

- * Not using your personal information, your login name, or adjacent keys on the keyboard as passwords.

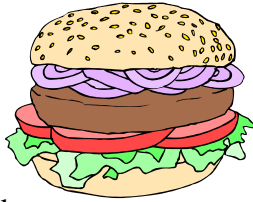
- *Changing your passwords regularly (at a minimum, every 90 days).

- *Not using the same password for each online account you access.

One way to create a strong password is to think of a memorable phrase and use the first letter of each word as your password, converting some letters into numbers that resemble letters. For example, “How much wood could a woodchuck chuck” would become HmWc@wC.

May is Beef Month

Beef is an excellent source of iron, zinc, and vitamin B₁₂ – nutrients that can be hard to get from other foods. Beef can be part of a low-fat diet if you follow three simple steps:



1. Choose lean cuts. Remember the rule of thumb – cuts with the words “loin” or “round” in the name generally have the least amount of fat. Look for names such as tenderloin, top round, or eye of round.
2. Eat small portions. A 3 oz. serving of cooked beef is about the size of a deck of cards.
3. Trim all visible fat before cooking.

Try this heart healthy recipe from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.

Beef Casserole

Yield: 8 servings – Serving size: 1 1/3 cups

½ pound lean ground beef
 1 cup chopped onion
 1 cup chopped celery
 1 cup cubed green pepper
 3 ½ cups tomatoes diced
 ¼ teaspoon salt
 ½ teaspoon black pepper
 ¼ teaspoon paprika
 1 cup frozen peas
 2 small carrots, diced
 1 cup uncooked rice
 1 ½ cups water



Drain fat from cooked beef to lower the amount of fat and calories.

In a skillet, brown the ground beef and drain off the fat. Add the rest of the ingredients. Mix well. Cook over medium heat and cover skillet until boiling. Reduce to low heat and simmer for 35 minutes. Serve hot.

Each serving provides:

Calories: 184; Total fat: 3 g; Saturated fat: 1 g;
 Cholesterol: 15 mg; Sodium: 125 mg; Calcium: 33 mg; Iron: 2 mg

Where's The Fat?

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends limiting intake of fats and oils high in saturated fat in order to reduce the risk of unhealthy blood lipid levels. Saturated fats are found in foods from animals. They should be kept at 10% of calories or less.

Calories	Saturated Fat Limit 10% of calories/day
1600	18 grams
2000	20 grams

This table shows a few practical examples of the differences in the saturated fat content of different forms of commonly consumed foods. Lower saturated food choices can be made within the same food group.

Food	Portion	Saturated Fat grams
Cheese		
Regular cheddar cheese	1 oz	6.0
Lowfat cheddar cheese	1 oz	1.2
Milk		
Whole Milk	1 cup	4.6
Lowfat (1%)	1 cup	1.5
Ground Beef		
Regular ground beef (75% fat)	3 oz cooked	6.1
Extra lean ground beef (95% fat)	3 oz cooked	2.6
Chicken		
Fried chicken (leg with skin)	3 oz cooked	3.3
Roasted chicken (breast no skin)	3 oz cooked	0.9
Fish		
Fried Fish	3 oz	2.8
Baked Fish	3 oz	1.5
Table spreads		
Butter	1 tsp	2.4
Soft margarine with zero <i>trans</i>	1 tsp	0.7

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