



# Family Matters

March/April 2003

A Family Newsletter prepared by Iowa State University Extension Family Specialists

## Helping Children Say “I’m Sorry”

Sometimes when children say they are sorry, it comes off as insincere. Forcing children to apologize does little to change their behavior and may make the person receiving the apology even more resentful.

Here’s some ideas for making the most of an apology. Children can form their apology using three full sentences.

- The first sentence describes what he/she did or said that was wrong.
- The second sentence explains why it was wrong.
- The third sentence asks for forgiveness.

An example might be, “I said words to you that were mean. That was wrong because it hurt your feelings. Will you forgive me?” Using these guidelines can help children think through how their actions affect others and put real meaning into “I’m sorry.”

*(adapted from Family Information Services, January 2003)*

## Activities for Infants

Babies grow and change so quickly. Being with your baby can be a real joy. Spend lots of time holding, cuddling, and playing with your infant. By providing a warm, secure environment, you give your baby a smart start. At different ages and stages of development, you can enhance your baby’s development by offering simple toys and activities.

### ***Between two and four months of age offer:***

Simple pictures (especially faces), mobiles and colorful objects where your baby can see them, about 2 feet in front of his face

Interesting items that are safe to explore such as rattles, plastic measuring cups, colorful washcloths, and large spoons



Your older baby will enjoy balls, stacking rings, soft washable dolls, and musical toys. Toys need not be expensive, nor are lots needed. Talking and reading to your baby will help him or her develop language skills.

Allow your baby freedom to move around. Babies like to lie on their backs and practice kicking, wiggling and looking around. Turning over, crawling, pulling up, and stepping are skills that your child will develop through repetition.

Safety in your home is a must. Baby proof everything. Store toxic substances such as soaps, makeup, and medicine up high. Install safety latches on cupboards and cover electrical outlets. Cover sharp corners of tables and shelves. Watch climbers with care; many items of furniture will easily tip over if climbed. Never allow your baby to play with anything smaller than a fifty-cent piece (1 inch).

## Remodeling? Think long-term!

Where would you like to live at age eighty-five or ninety? Most people want to stay in their home or another familiar location. Will your current home meet your needs as you age?

If you are building or remodeling a home in the coming months, you have an ideal opportunity to add features that make the home functional for people with physical limitations, while also making it more comfortable and convenient for everyone. The five features listed here add little cost when done as part of a larger building or remodeling project, but can be difficult or expensive to change later.

1. **No-step entrance:** A no-step entrance eliminates the need to add a ramp in the future. You can make the entrance attractive by landscaping
2. **Spaces for eating, bathing, and sleeping on an accessible level:** Not every part of the house needs to be accessible, as long as these key spaces are.
3. **Wide doorways** (36 inches preferred, 32 inches minimum) on the accessible level
4. **Wide halls and pathways through rooms on the accessible level** (42 inches preferred; 36 inches minimum)
5. **Extra floor space for possible wheelchair** use is needed in activity areas. This requires a 60-inch turning circle in all rooms, including bathrooms.

Homes with these universal design features are attractive, spacious and convenient for everyone. In addition to enabling older adults to “age in place,” these features add convenience for others, including parents with a baby stroller or a teen on crutches.

For more information on adapting homes for special needs see this ISU Extension Web site:  
[www.extension.iastate.edu/housing/](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/housing/).

## When Not to Use a Debit Card

Debit cards are becoming increasingly popular. They offer the convenience of cash machine transactions and, when you use them to make purchases, they save you the cost of a check. Unlike credit cards, they do not create debt; you pay with the convenience of a card, but the money comes directly out of your bank account, so there's no bill to face at the end of the month.

**Are there risks in using debit cards?** Yes, there are a few. Because the money comes out of your bank account almost immediately, the most common problem comes from overdrawing your account because you forgot to record transactions. *Fortunately, this risk is completely in the user's control; simply make sure all transactions are recorded in your check register.*

Another risk is the chance that by accident or by fraud more money could be taken out of your account than expected. With a credit card, you can check your bill for accuracy and correct errors before paying. With a debit card, by the time you get your bank statement it is too late.

### The following recommendations can help:

- Use your debit card only in situations where you are present in person and can be sure the amount is correctly printed. Avoid using a debit card for mail-order, telephone or Internet purchases because an error could wreck temporary havoc with your bank account.
- Avoid using a debit card for hotel registrations or car rentals. When you check in, these businesses often “block” a larger amount on your credit card than the actual rental fee in case there are any damages or extra charges. This “blocking” can create problems with your bank account; use a credit card instead.

Debit cards can be convenient and cost-effective tools; but like all tools, they must be used safely.

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## New Federal Health Privacy Regulation

Effective April, 2003, new federal regulations offer consumers new health privacy rights. Most health care providers and health plans will be required to begin providing you with written explanations of how they use and disclose your medical information and what your rights are. Read those statements and ask questions to make sure you understand them.

Under the new law, individuals in all states will have a right to inspect and copy their medical records. Prior to this law, Iowa citizens (like citizens in half the states) are not guaranteed access to their own medical records. For more information, see the Health Privacy Project of the Institute for Health Care, Research and Policy at Georgetown University, [www.healthprivacy.org](http://www.healthprivacy.org).

## March is National Nutrition Month®

The theme for this year's National Nutrition Month® is *“Healthy Eating, Healthy You.”*

National Nutrition Month® is a nutrition education and information campaign sponsored annually by the American Dietetic Association. The campaign is designed to focus attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits.

Initiated in March 1973 as a week-long event, “National Nutrition Week” became a month-long observance in 1980 in response to growing public interest in nutrition.

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## Healthy Eating on the Run

Increasingly, consumers want fast, easy and good-tasting foods to fit their busy lifestyles. Eating out has become part of the American way of life. Today, food is available almost everywhere — schools, businesses, drugstores, convenience stores, bookstores, supermarkets, vending machines, sports and cultural events, and recreation centers. The following tips will help you make wise food choices for *“Healthy Eating, Healthy You.”*

1. Choose fried foods only sometimes — go for grilled, broiled, or steamed foods more often.
2. Order the regular or kid-size portion. Mega-sized servings are probably more than you need.
3. Split your order. Share fries or an extra large sandwich with a friend.
4. Boost the nutrients in sandwiches by adding tomato, peppers and other vegetables.
5. A baked potato offers more fiber and fewer calories than fries, just go easy on the sour cream and butter. Top your potato with broccoli, a small amount of cheese or salsa.
6. At the deli or sub shop, choose lean beef, ham, turkey, or chicken on whole grain bread.
7. For a lighter meal, order an appetizer for your entrée.
8. Go easy on condiments, sauces and dressings on sandwiches and salads. Ask for mustard, catsup, salsa or low-fat spreads and dressings.

## New pyramid to debut in 2005

What is the fuss about the food guide pyramid? Some of the criticism concerns issues that the original food guide pyramid was not developed to address. The goals of the food guide pyramid were to:

- Focus on overall health, not to suggest diets to prevent or treat specific diseases
- Address the total diet for a wide variety of ages
- Be a simple and useful nutrition education tool for consumers

Review and revision of the food guide pyramid is necessary because of new information available. You should look for a new pyramid in 2005. It will be a challenge to incorporate new information while keeping the tool simple and useful. In the meantime, the current pyramid is still a good guide to healthy eating!

9. At the salad bar, pile on the dark leafy greens, carrots, peppers and other fresh vegetables. Lighten up on mayonnaise-based salads and high-fat toppings.
10. Restaurant portions too large? Take home half the main course for another meal.
11. Pass up all-you-can-eat specials, buffets and unlimited salad bars if you tend to eat too much.
12. Try a smoothie made with juice, fruit and yogurt for a light lunch or snack.
13. For the fastest breakfast of all, go with dry cereal and milk. Make the cereal whole-grain or bran and you'll get fiber along with B vitamins and complex carbohydrates.
14. Instead of a doughnut, order an English muffin, bagel or a plain soft baked pretzel. Lightly spread the cream cheese or margarine — or just use jam or jelly.
15. Be “size wise” about muffins, bagels, croissants and biscuits. A jumbo muffin has twice the fat grams and calories as the regular size.
16. Look for yogurt and fruit for a quick, on-the-run breakfast to start your day.
17. Tuck portable, nonperishable foods in your purse, briefcase or backpack for on-the-go snacking. For example, crackers and peanut butter, small boxes of cereal, dried fruit, or pretzels are good choices. Fresh fruit is already packaged to go. Try a variety of seasonal fruits.