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News Release
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Share Time, Words and Intention to Help Children Learn

Reading and talking to children, even infants and toddlers, is a good way to increase their language skills, says Cindy Thompson, a human sciences specialist with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

Children begin learning very early in their lives. Infants and toddlers are busy analyzing their world. They’re figuring out how they are separate from everything they see. They’re beginning to identify objects and routines and who they can depend on for their everyday care. They also are beginning to understand that movements and sounds are used to communicate with others, said Thompson, who specializes in family life issues.

Oral language development begins with social interaction with others, Thompson said. “Infants and toddlers learn language as we talk, from nursery rhymes, telling stories and singing songs. We can have two-way conversations with infants by imitating the sounds they make and taking turns ‘speaking.’”

Make eye contact with the child, and use gestures and other nonverbal communication, Thompson said. “Talk about what you are doing like a play-by-play sportscaster. Describe what you and others are doing, as well as daily routines.”

Reading shows children that written words have meaning. It also promotes listening and speaking, which are part of oral language development. Reading to children introduces new words and helps them develop a larger, more complex vocabulary.

This is important because by the age of three, children should be learning at least 2,500 new words each year. Reading and talking about a variety of topics will help children understand more about their world, Thompson said.

Thompson offers the following tips for sharing books with infants and toddlers:

- Read as long as the child is interested.
- Talk or sing about the pictures.
- Let the child turn the pages if he or she can.
- Skipping pages is acceptable until the child knows the book better than you do.
- Run your finger along the words as you read.
- Use your voice to create interest in the characters.
- Relate your own family or community to what is happening the story.
- Let the child tell the story and have fun.

“The gifts of presence, time, words, print and intention are important as we share language and literacy with infants and toddlers. Intention turns a routine activity into a pleasant play time that also is educational,” Thompson said.
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Research Farm Highlights Crop Markets and Pest Management

NASHUA – The Annual August Field Day at the ISU Northeast Research and Demonstration Farm will run from 1:00 to 4:15 PM on Friday, August 25. Chad Hart, ISU Economist, will kick-off the program in the Borlaug Learning Center, by providing his insights on the grain markets. Shawn Shouse, ISU Extension Ag Engineer, follows with tips on grain drying and storage for the upcoming harvest. We will then convene outside for the farm wagon tours; Alison Robertson, Extension plant pathologist, will share crop disease research results from the farm and their practical applications, and Bob Hartzler, Extension weed management specialist, will discuss Iowa’s first season with dicamba resistant soybeans and other weed management priorities.

The field day is free and open to the public. It starts at the Borlaug Learning Center Headquarters on the ISU Northeast Research Farm and Demonstration Farm. Directions: From Nashua at the Jct. of Hwy 218 (Exit 220) and Co. Rd. B60, go west on B60 1.1 miles to Windfall Ave., then south 1 mile to 290th St., then east 0.2 miles to the farm. CCA credits will be available (2 CM, 2 PM). For more information about the event, call Brian Lang at 563-382-2949.

On-Farm Calf Workshops Feature Precision Management, August 31

Precision management in calf care is needed as there are many ways to add value to these heifers before they join the milking string. Join these on-farm calf workshops on August 31, for a first-hand look at how fellow dairy farmers are housing pre-weaned calves using technology to help manage their calf program. These include automatic calf feeders, pasteurizers, and milk cooling systems. Areas of focus will include basic sanitation for automatic calf feeders, equipment hygiene, and housing and ventilation.

- 12:30-1:30 PM at Jeff West Farm- 22956 200th Street, Farmersburg, IA. From Hwy. 13, turn west on 200th St, first farm on the left. Retrofit parlor to automatic calf feeding barn utilizing a milk jug to cool milk
- 1:45-2:45 PM at Lee Pattison-22127 Hwy. 52, Garnavillo, IA. From Jeff West’s farm, head south on Hwy. 13, turn east on 205th Street (gravel road), then turn south onto Hwy 52 for 2 miles, farm on the west side of the road (right). All in, all out system in 2 hoop buildings and 1 monoslope barn, utilizing pasteurized milk and automatic calf feeders
- 3:00-4:00 PM at Kregel Farms-30392 Garber Rd., Guttenberg, IA. From Pattison’s, head south on Hwy 52 through Garnavillo, turn right onto Kale Ave./X47 for 2 miles, then turn right onto Garber Rd. for 1.5 miles, farm is on the south side. Automatic calf feeding system utilizing powdered milk

Each of these workshops is open to the public, no preregistration is required. Workshops are sponsored by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Fitzgerald’s, and Calf-Star. If you’d like to attend the workshop or would like more information contact Jenn Bentley at jibentley@iastate.edu or 563-382-2949.

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