Fostering a Work Ethic
Teaching your children how to work is a lesson that will benefit them throughout their lives. Having a good work ethic enables children to study and achieve in school and to feel competent and self-sufficient. A strong work ethic also is key to their future success in the workplace.

Start early. Young children love to help their parents. Encourage them to do so. Let their little hands share the dust mop handle or the hammer. These early experiences will feed your child with good feelings for being productive.

Teach. Find ways that your children can assist in housework or a do-it-yourself project. Remember, the goal isn’t to get a good day’s labor out of them, but to nurture their work attitudes and make them feel able.

Have expectations. Even very young children can contribute to a household. Whatever their age, expect every child to play a role. Putting away toys, setting the table or raking leaves are examples of tasks that children can do.

Work with them. Don’t send your children alone to the basement to clean for hours. Work together, and use the time as an opportunity to talk and bond, and to teach them to work cooperatively. When it fits the task, you can be the helper.

Pay reasonably. Some parents prefer to tie chores to allowances. If you choose to pay for special work duties, keep the salary modest. A fifth-grader doesn’t need to earn the hourly wages of an adult.

Be a good model. Parents are children’s ambassadors to the adult world. Lead by example, demonstrate responsible work attitudes and try to keep grumbling about your job out of your children’s earshot.
Green Ways to Recover from Holiday Clutter

For the last couple of months we shared tips on how to green up your holiday season, but now the gifts are unwrapped and it’s time for the tree to come down, now this question remains: What can I do with the stuff that’s literally littering my homes?

National EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) figures show that our waste stream increases by about 25 percent between Thanksgiving and New Year’s, bringing the total amount of stuff we toss out to more than 25 million tons. With landfills being one of the top sources of worrisome greenhouse gas emissions, it’s important to pay attention to how do we dispose of the extra stuff we gather at this time of year. With that in mind, here are 10 solutions for dealing with post-holiday clutter . . .

1) **Mulch that tree.** If you chose to use a live tree this year, make sure it’s disposed of properly. Find out how you can dispose of it so it will be so it can be mulched or used for landscaping, not landfill. For more info contact Keep Onslow Beautiful at (910) 455-4470.

2) **If you fake it, make it last.** Roughly 130,000 fake trees are imported to the U.S. from China each year. If you’ve got one, make it last. Not for just five or six years, shoot for 20 or more, and even then, try to pass it along to someone who wants it. Fake trees are made from plastic, aren’t recyclable and can last in the landfill for more than 500 years. So please don’t toss yours in the trash before its time has come.

3) **Got paper?** Paper is the number one thing clogging up our landfills. Some, but not all, wrapping papers are recyclable. If it’s super-shiny or glittery, it probably has to go in the trash. Simpler, plainer papers can be tossed in your curbside-recycling bin. Try to reuse bags and bows instead of throwing them out.

4) **Have you made the switch to LEDs?** If you finally swapped out your energy-sucking incandescent string lights for holiday LED, give yourself a pat on the back. Your can recycle your old lights by sending them to: HolidayLEDs.com Attn: Recycling Program 2500 W. Argyle Street Jackson, MI 49202

5) **If re-gifting is wrong, why does it feel so right?** Got yet another candle from a cousin who doesn’t know you so well? Re-gifting doesn’t have the tacky rep it once it did, but it does require some decorum. It’s better than filling your
storage shelves with stuff you’ll never use.

6) **Gift cards, reborn.** Got a gift card to Hollister but you’re so much more J Crew? You can swap or sell the gift cards that you don’t want for ones you do.

7) **Greetings, Earthlings.** Every year, 2.65 billion holiday cards are sold in the United States. To know which holiday cards are recyclable follow the rules of thumb outlined for wrapping paper above. You can also donate your cards to St. Jude’s Ranch for Children, where old cards are recycled into brand-new ones, which are then sold to help children who were the victims of abuse, neglect and abandonment. Another option is to keep this year’s holiday cards to make into tags next year.

8) **Don’t be e-wasteful.** If you received new electronics as a gift, know how to get rid of your old ones properly. Some manufacturers have take-back programs; several business in Onslow hold e-waste and toxic waste drop-off days. To find out more go to: [www.earth911.com](http://www.earth911.com)

9) **Stop the catalogs.** It takes 14 million trees to produce the mail-order books we receive annually, and the majority end up sitting in landfills, emitting harmful greenhouse gases. Don’t let your holiday stack keep on coming; call to be removed from lists, or sign up with service like catalogchoice.org or mailstopper.tonic.com (formerly known as Green Dimes), that helps keep your name off junk mail lists on an ongoing basis.

10) **Make way for the new.** If you’re clearing out old stuff to make space for the new, use services like lejeuneyardsales.com, craigslist.com, eBay.com or freecycle.org or donate to thrift stores to find a proper home for your now-unwanted goods that still have some life in them.

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**The Importance of Physical Activity**

If you want to be healthy, inside and out, you simply must incorporate exercise into your life. Regular physical activity is a major contributor to effective weight loss, improved physical health and emotional well-being. Research consistently shows that regular
physical activity, combined with healthy eating habits and adequate water intake, is the most efficient and effective way to improve your health, control your weight and enhance your mood. There is simply no replacement for exercise. A consistent exercise program offers a reliable and natural way to boost your mood and increase your self-esteem. When you exercise, your body produces substances called endorphins. These are the bio-chemicals that are associated with producing a euphoric feeling of peace and satisfaction. Besides the obvious physical benefits, exercise also offers important emotional benefits and is one of the most powerful influences that you can inject into your life. If you are not presently engaged in a consistent exercise program, it is time to embrace this concept and begin. As George Bernard Shaw so eloquently said, “You see things and you say, why? But I dream things and I say why not?” Why not make today the day you revisit your dream of health and commit yourself to exercise. There is no better gift to give your body and your mind and it will help make your dream of a healthier life come true.

**Drug Safety Checklist**

Drug interactions are a leading cause of accidental injury to senior citizens in America. Many seniors visit more than one doctor and are often prescribed medication by more than one. It is very important to always make sure that all the doctors you visit know all the medications, including over the counter remedies and supplements you take. It is best to carry all your medications with you to all your appointments, or at least a list of your medications long with dosage information. To assist you in taking my medicine properly, and to reduce the risk of dangerous drug interactions, ask your doctor or pharmacist to help you answer the following questions:

1. **What is the name of my medicine?**
   - Brand: ________________
   - Generic: ________________

2. **What is my dose?** __________

3. **What time(s) should I take this Medicine?**
   - __ AM  __ AM  
   - __ PM  __ PM

4. **Should I take this medicine:**
   - _____ With food
   - _____ Without food

5. **Are there any foods I should avoid?**

6. **Are there any precautions or warnings I should know about?**

7. **Is there any reason this medicine would not be appropriate for me?**
8. Which other medicine should I avoid?

9. Are there any over the counter remedies I should avoid?

10. What side effects are common with my medicine?

11. Are there any symptoms that are so serious you would want to know about them immediately?

12. Are there any vitamins or supplements I should avoid?

**Putting Germs in their Place**

Experts agree that frequent handwriting is one of the first lines defense colds and flu.

But no matter how many times you wash your hands, there are always some sneaky little germs lurking around to hitch a ride on your skin. They loiter on shopping cart handles, linger on light switches, lurk about the phone and even around on the remote controls.

The length of time that cold or flu germs can survive outside the body on these or other surface varies greatly. But the suspected range is from a few seconds to 48 hours – depending on the specific virus and the type of surface. Flu viruses tend to live longer on surfaces than cold viruses do. And it’s suspected that cold and flu viruses live longer on nonporous surfaces, such as plastic, metal or wood, than they do on porous surfaces, such as fabrics, skin or paper.

When killing surface germs is your goal, look for products that contain a disinfectant. Some of the more frequently used active ingredients are sodium hypochlorite, ethanol, pin oil, hydrogen peroxide, citric acid and quats (quaternary ammonium compounds). Products that say “Disinfectant” on the label are required to meet government specifications. To be sure the product has met all government requirements for effectiveness, look for an EPA Registration Number on the label. You must follow the product label instructions exactly for the disinfectant to be effective. Your choices include:

- **Chlorine bleach.** It disinfects when mixed and used properly. Read the label for instructions.

- **Disinfectant cleaners.** These dual purpose products contain ingredients that help remove soil as well as kill germs.

- **Disinfectants.** These products are designed to be effective against the germs indicated on their labels. Surfaces should be clean prior to disinfecting.

**Be vigilant**

While you can’t control every germ in your environment, it makes good sense to defend against the germs that can make you sick. Be particularly vigilant during the fall and winter months, when colds and flu are at their peak. And even if you think you’re savvy about germ
control, Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association, has identified a few “hot spots” you may have overlooked.

- **If you take small children to the supermarket**, use an antibacterial wipe on the cart handle before settling the child down in the cart.

- **Be aware of what you do with your hands.** Even the unconscious act of rubbing your eyes can transfer germs from your hands into your system. Small children are not notorious for putting germ-laden hands in their mouth, eyes and nose. But, while adults should know better, that isn’t always the case.

- **If communal snacks are part of your office culture,** two things should be constant on the snack table: hand-wipes and bakery tissue paper. The former will remind people to clean their hands before dipping into the donut box; the latter, which are available from restaurant supply houses, will help insure that those hands, clean or dirty, don’t touch other people’s food.

- **Steer clear of germs.** When you get back in your car after being out and about, clean your hands with a hand-wipe or alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Then use an antibacterial wipe to clean your steering wheel.

- **If someone in your household has a cold or the flu,** position antibacterial wipes in strategic places around the home and encourage everyone to use them frequently on common-touch surfaces, like the television remote, faucet handles, doorknobs and light switches.

### 5 Tips for Getting the Most from Your Credit Card

**Pay on time.**

1. Paying your credit card account on time helps you avoid late fees as well as penalty interest rates applied to your account, and helps you maintain a good credit record. A good credit record leads to a higher credit score, which helps you qualify for lower interest rates. Know the date your payment is due. If your bill is due at an inconvenient time of the month – for example, if it’s due on the 10th and you get paid on the 15th – contact your credit card company to see if they will change your billing cycle to fit your cash flow.
Stay below your credit limit.

2. If you go over your credit limit on your card, your card issuer could charge a fee and increase your interest rate to a higher penalty rate. To avoid this, keep a record of your spending or check your balance online. Also, be aware that some merchants (for example, hotel and car rental companies) put a “hold” on your credit card based on their estimate of the amount you will charge. This can reduce your available credit until the final charge is processed.

Avoid unnecessary fees.

3. Credit card companies not only charge late payment and over-the-limit fees, but also fees for cash advances, transferring balances, and having a payment returned. Some companies charge a fee when you pay your bill by phone. Pay attention to the transactions that trigger these fees. If you need a cash advance, withdraw enough so that you don’t have to take a second cash advance and incur a second fee later in the month. Read your credit card agreement to learn more about the fees that your credit card company charges.

Pay more than the minimum payment.

4. If you can’t pay your balance in full each month, try to pay as much of the total as you can. Over time, you’ll pay less in interest charges—money that you will be able to spend on other things, and you’ll pay off your balance sooner.

Watch for changes in the terms of your account.

5. Credit card companies can change the terms and conditions of your account. They will send you advance notices about changes in fees, interest rates, billing and other features. By reading these “change in terms” notices you can decide whether you want to change the way you use the card. For example, if cash advance fees increase. You may decide to use a different card for cash advances. If you have a card with a variable rate or if you have an introductory rate that is ending, be aware that credit card companies are not required to send you a notice about raising your interest rate. Interest rates are listed on your monthly bill. Read your bill carefully and take note of any changes.
Onslow County Master Gardener Volunteer Program

The Master Gardener Volunteer Program is a joint endeavor of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service and volunteers who wish to learn how to be better gardeners and help other gardeners by sharing their knowledge. The program is designed to recruit and train volunteers to help meet the educational needs of the citizens of Onslow County.

The term ‘gardening’ is used in a broad sense. It includes, vegetables, fruits, lawn grasses, shrubs, flowers and trees. The training focuses on developing diagnostic skills for insects and diseases of plants. Classes are also given on landscaping for water quality, soils, composting, propagation, wildlife control and much, much more!

As a Master Gardener, you will receive 40 hours of intensive horticultural training.

After graduation you will be expected to provide an equivalent amount of volunteer work in the community. Examples of the types of activities that you can choose to perform are: answering homeowner inquires at the Extension Office, mailing out information bulletins to homeowners, conducting plant clinics, working with elementary school children on special horticultural projects, talking to Garden Clubs, advising on community beautification projects and writing newsletter articles.

The volunteer work is fun and interesting, and you will not be required to do anything with which you are not comfortable. Master Gardeners make ‘friends for life’ and enjoy working and learning together.

The 2010 Master Gardener course will begin February 16th and end March 18th. Classes normally will be taught Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 9:00 – Noon. Cost for the course is $100.00, which includes a comprehensive Master Gardener Manual that you keep.

If you would be interested in receiving an application for the 2010 course, please call the North Carolina Cooperative Extension – Onslow County Center at (910) 455-5873, and leave your name, address and phone number. Enrollment will be limited, so inquire early.