Remembering Childhood

Remember the baby book you kept when your child was an infant? Maybe it’s tucked away on the shelf in a closet or in a drawer.

Wherever it is, take it out. It will provide many hours of sharing, learning, and fun for you and your child.

A memory book is a particularly great resource for any special time you set aside to spend with your child, such as a rainy day or a story at bedtime. As he grows older, he will delight in hearing stories about himself at a time he can’t remember.

If you never kept a baby book for your child, or if it’s been a long time since you added any material, now is a good time to start a current memory book. Here are some of the things you could include:

1. **Photographs.** Take pictures of him eating; sleeping; having fun with friends and family; enjoying favorite activities such as playing with favorite toys. Be sure to label the back of each photo with a short description and a date.

2. **Artistic creations.** Keep samples of your child’s artwork in his memory book. Save early scribbles as well as his work with finger paints, crayons, water colors, collages, self-portraits and treasured colorings.

   You don’t need to save everything he does. Have him help you choose a few favorites. Remember to date them.

   Use a small bulletin board to showcase his current creations; replace them with new ones when available, and put the others in his memory book. These special art works also make great un-expected gifts for grandparents, relatives and friends.
3. **Physical measurements.** Make a growth chart marked off in inches. Every few months, measure your child and make a notation on the chart of the date on which he reached that height. Alongside make a note of his weight on that date, if you have a scale.

4. **Stories and songs.** Write down stories that your child makes up, songs he composes, interesting or funny things he says, insights he has about life and people. Include some of his favorite stories, books and songs.

5. **Video recordings.** If you own a video camera, or have access to one, use it to record special events such as holidays, birthdays, and other significant happenings. Record him singing, telling a favorite story, or talking on the telephone.

6. **Written record.** Keep a written record to go with the pictures, recordings, creative products, and other recordings, creative products, and other records of your child’s development.

With the collection of these kinds of materials and notes, you’re creating a gift for your child more valuable than any toy or gift that money could ever buy. You’re also helping him develop self-confidence by providing him with a record of his growth, a word and picture story of who he was, and who he has become.

As he grows older, it will become a special treasure not only for him but also for others, who will come to know and love him too.

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**Living Green – Composting Basics**

Everyone knows that recycling is a good thing. But what are you supposed to do with your leaves, banana peels, and the wilting floral arrangement you got for your birthday? They certainly don’t fit under the aluminum, paper or plastic categories. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that yard trimmings and food residuals constitute **23 percent** of the U.S. waste stream. That’s a lot of great organic material going to waste! If you’re looking for simple ways to lessen your impact on the environment and green your lifestyle, one of the best things you can do is limit the amount of organic waste you put in trash. How can you do this? Simple, start by composting.

**So, what is Composting?**

Composting is nature’s recycling process. Anytime a plant dies, it’s remains are attacked by microorganisms and insects in the natural environment. Through this process valuable nutrients are recycled into the newly produced humus, or compost. The composting process can either be ‘hot’ or ‘cold’ depending on how much attention it is given. A ‘hot’ compost, or active compost, requires more maintenance than ‘cold’ more passive compost.

‘Hot’ composting is an active composting process that can be completed in as little as two weeks,
depending on the material to be composted. By maintaining a proper balance of required elements, the ‘hot’ composting process is the most efficient use of organic waste. Three key activities necessary to keep your compost active are:

1. **Aeration:** By turning, or aerating, the compost pile in a regular basis, you introduce oxygen into the decomposition process. The more oxygen that’s available, the faster organic waste decomposes.

2. **Moisture:** While too much water will hinder your compost, too little water will cause your pile to fall dormant. An ideal ‘hot’ compost pile should be kept moist, but not overly wet.

3. **Carbon and Nitrogen Balance:** An active compost pile shouldn’t have too much carbon or nitrogen. A proper balance of yard trimmings and organic waste will help maintain this balance and allow your compost to thrive.

**‘Cold’ Composting:**
‘Cold’ composting also known as passive composting, will eventually produce the same product as ‘hot’ composting; it will just take a little longer. By not giving the compost any extra attention, aside from adding yard and kitchen waste, you’ll probably have useful humus in a few months instead of a few weeks. ‘Cold’ composting still keeps organic waste from taking up space in landfills, but since it’s such a slow proves, you’ll be limited in how much waste you can recycle. That is, unless you don’t mind compost taking over your backyard.

**Why Composting is Important!**
There are actually many reasons composting is good. Adults feel good because they are limiting their daily impact on the environment, children can learn about nature’s processes and develop respect for the planet, and the whole world will be living better with less waste added to landfills every day. Some people think that composting isn’t worth doing unless they have a garden to use the organic material in. While it’s true that composting is most beneficial if you can use the end product for your flower, vegetable, or herb garden, it is still a useful thing to do even if you don’t have a garden. First, composting helps you as well as others by helping to limit waste you send to landfills each day. Also, there is always someone who could use good compost; in fact, you might even be able to sell your compost to a person or company that could use more than they can produce themselves. And it may sound trite, but you’ll also benefit by keeping the planet as green as you can make it.

For more information on how to get started composting, contact your local Cooperative Extension office at 455-5873.

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**Halloween Safety Tips**

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**Trick or Treaters**
- Don’t eat treats until your parents have inspected them.
- Carry a flashlight.
- Walk. Don’t run.
- Stay on sidewalk (if there are no sidewalks, walk on the left side of the road facing traffic).
• Obey traffic signals.
• Stay in familiar neighborhoods.
• Don’t cut across yards or driveways.
• Make sure costumes don’t drag on the ground.
• Shoes should fit (even if they don’t go with your costume).
• Avoid wearing masks while walking from house to house.
• Carry only flexible knives, swords or other props.
• Wear clothing with reflective markings or tape.
• Approach only houses that are lit.
• Stay away from and don’t pet animals you don’t know.

Parents
• Make your children eat dinner before setting out.
• Someone in the group should carry a cell phone to call home or 911.
• Ideally, young children of any age should be accompanied by an adult.
• If your children go on their own, be sure they wear a watch, preferably one that can be read in the dark.
• If you buy a costume, look for one made of flame-retardant material.
• Older children should know where to reach you and when to be home.
• You should know where they’re going.
• Although tampering is rare, tell children to bring the candy home to be inspected before consuming anything. Look at the wrapping carefully and toss out anything that looks suspect.

Homeowners
• Make sure your yard is clear of such things as ladder, hoses, dog leashes and flowerpots that can trip the young ones.
• Pets get frightened on Halloween. Put them up to protect them from cars or inadvertently biting a trick-or-treater.
• Battery powered jack o’lantern candles are preferable to a real flame.
• If you do use candles, place the pumpkin well away from where trick-or-treaters will be walking or standing.
• Make sure paper or cloth yard decorations won’t be blown into a flaming candle.
• Healthy food alternatives for trick-or-treaters include packages of low-fat crackers with cheese or peanut butter filling, single-serve boxes of cereal, packaged fruit rolls, mini boxes of raisins and single-serve packets of low-fat popcorn that can be microwaved later.
• Consider non-food treats: plastic rings, pencils, sticker, erasers and coins.

Pick Fall Produce
Help your family eat healthier this fall by picking up some of the best nature and your local farmers have to offer. The Onslow County Farmers’ Market will remain open until November 7th, so come out and check for these local, fresh fall fruits and veggies. Many of these nutritional treats can also be found at your local grocery store or supermarket.
1. **Beets** – known for their deep color (that’s a good thing) beets are a good source of folate, vitamin C and potassium.

2. **Cabbage** – great in soups or salads, cabbage is high in vitamins A and C.

3. **Cauliflower** – while cauliflower doesn’t really pass the deep color test, it is still a great source of folate, fiber and vitamin C. Try it roasted or mashed for a change of pace.

4. **Figs** – Did you know that fresh figs have more fiber than any other fruit or vegetable! Pair with a strong cheese or prosciutto for a good balance.

5. **Parsnips** – Add a few cubes of parsnips to your next batch of mashed potatoes or mash them with carrots for a pleasant change. Parsnips are high in folate and vitamin C.

6. **Pears** – In my opinion, nothing beats a good pear! Pears are wonderful on their own but they also work very well with cheese. Pears are high in fiber and vitamin C.

7. **Pomegranates** – the very deep red color of a pomegranate tells of its healthy goodness! Pomegranates are a great source of iron and vitamin C.

8. **Pumpkin** – pumpkins aren’t just for decorating. Their sweet flesh makes a wonderful soup and is also good in risotto. Pumpkin is high in vitamin A and C and folate.

9. **Squash** – Winter squashes are a nutritional jackpot! They are an excellent source of vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium and fiber, and a good source of folate and thiamin. Roast, stream, use in soups, or even grill – there are so many ways to use squash.

10. **Sweet Potatoes** – why settle for a regular old spud when can get even more nutrition and flavor from its cousin the sweet potato? Sweet potatoes are high in vitamins A, C and B-6, fiber, copper and potassium.

Go for the dark, intense colors in the fall fruits and vegetables. Your body will thank you!

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**“SSDRIP $50 Rebate”**  
**The Spotlight for October**

Attention all Onslow County residents with a septic system! Onslow County received funding from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund to establish the Septic System Database, Repair, and Information Program (SSDRIP). One of the components of this program includes a $50 rebate to septic system owners for
maintaining their system by having the septic tank pumped. After the tank is pumped, the resident and pumper complete the rebate form and mail it to the Onslow County Health Department, Administration Department. Rebate forms and a brochure about the SSDRIP program are available from NC Cooperative Extension, Onslow County Health Department, Onslow County Planning Department, and various septic tank pumpers.

Septic systems do require maintenance. One of the simplest practices is to not add anything to the system that may harm it. This includes harsh chemicals, large amounts of disinfectants, grease, and solids (bones, eggshells, cigarette filters, etc.). It is also recommended to have the septic tank pumped every 3-5 years, depending upon homeowner practices. The use of “additives” is NOT an alternative to having the tank pumped.

The NC Cooperative Extension Services has several publications to help homeowners learn about their system: Septic Systems & Their Maintenance, Septic System Owners Guide, and Why Septic Systems Fail? It is also recommended that homeowners obtain a copy of their septic system permit from the health department.

For more information, contact the Onslow County Cooperative Extension office at 455-5873.

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October – More Simple Ways to Lose Weight

- Portion out your snack on a plate, not from the bag, to stay aware of how much you’re eating.
- Buy or portion out treats and snacks in small bags or packages.
- Top your favorite cereal with apples or bananas.
- Store especially tempting foods, like cookies, chips, out of immediate eyesight, like on a high shelf or a place that’s not convenient to get to, such as a high cabinet or at the back of a pantry.
- When you order fast food, take it home and put it on a plate. If you’re surprised at how full the plate looks, order smaller sizes next time.
- Try fast food options such as smaller burgers, grilled chicken sandwiches or salads with low-calorie dressings, cups or bags of fresh fruit, low-fat milk, 100% fruit juice and bottled water.
- At sandwich shops, ask for leaner cuts and smaller amounts of roast beef, turkey, or ham; extra lettuce and tomato; and whole-wheat, oatmeal, or rye bread.
➢ Make half your grains whole. Make your sandwich on 100% whole wheat or oatmeal bread or snack on whole grain crackers.

➢ Get a whole grain head start with oatmeal or whole grain cereal in the morning.

➢ Use whole grains in mixed dishes such as barley in vegetables soups or stews, bulgur in casseroles, or brown rice in stir-frys.

➢ Vary your veggies – it’s easy to go dark green. Add frozen chopped spinach, collard greens, or turnip greens into a pot of soup.

➢ Swap your usual sandwich side for crunchy broccoli florettes or red pepper strips.

➢ Microwave a sweet potato for a delicious dish.

Next month 15 more tips!!!

Prior to this new legislation, some members of the military did not receive stimulus payments, or received a reduced amount, due to the absence of an SSN for a spouse or child.

In November, the Treasury will send checks and direct deposits to military families who qualify for these stimulus payments. The IRS estimates that there are more than 10,000 military families who will receive the additional stimulus payments. A specific time frame for the payments will be announced later this year.

"The IRS wants to make it as easy as possible for military families to get the stimulus payments authorized by the new law. People who already have filed don’t need to do anything else to get their money. We’ll do the rest," said IRS Commissioner Doug Shulman. “We will work as quickly as possible to put these new provisions in place while making sure the rest of the stimulus payment program continues smoothly through the summer and fall."

To get a stimulus payment, eligible taxpayers must file a 2007 tax return. For married couples who have already filed a joint return, no further action is necessary. Generally, married couples qualify for an economic stimulus payment of up to $1,200, plus an additional $300 for each qualifying child younger than 17.

Because of the special challenges involved in making these newly-authorized payments, the IRS is taking the additional step of working with the Department of Defense to ensure that eligible filers get their money.

New Law:
Additional Military Families to Get Stimulus Payments This Fall

Married members of the military may receive economic stimulus payments this fall, even if their spouses or children don’t have social security numbers, following the newly-enacted HEART Act (Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax Act of 2008).
Originally, the Economic Stimulus Act of 2008, enacted in February, barred economic-stimulus payments to anyone filing a return who did not have a social security number. Returns using any number issued by the IRS, such as an individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN) were not eligible. For joint filers, this meant that both spouses must use valid social security numbers.

Those barred by the original law from receiving a stimulus payment included military members filing jointly with spouses who were ineligible to get an SSN. In addition, because they were not eligible for stimulus payments, they could not receive an additional $300 payment for each eligible child.

Married couples filing joint returns who are now eligible for stimulus payments under the new law will receive a notice from the IRS telling them the amount of their payment and the date it will be issued. Payments will be made by check or direct deposit. Those who chose direct deposit for their regular tax refund will typically get their stimulus payment by direct deposit. However, anyone who chose a refund-anticipation loan, had tax-preparation fees deducted from their refund or entered into other refund-related transactions, will get a check, instead.

The payments are based on 2007 income tax returns, including basic returns filed by eligible low-income people, solely to claim a stimulus payment. Those who have not yet filed, including members of the military who received nontaxable combat pay, should do so as soon as possible.

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