



Aging and the Economy

The U.S. is being reshaped by the aging of its population, yet it is not really planning for this demographic inevitability because the emphasis has only been on the challenges. Aging may actually be good for the economy. The current aging population represents a vast pool of knowledge and experience, and businesses and communities will be successful if they make use of this human capital.

Successful multi-generational societies move beyond a rigid progression from education, to work, to retirement. They integrate all ages into the mainstream of productive life. Studies show that people stay healthier as they age if they are optimistic, grateful, proactive, and continue to learn. It is important that a person believes he or she is making a positive contribution, no matter what age.

Many employees today want a “turning point,” or chance to step away from a

job or career to take a break, reinvent themselves, and go back to work. Businesses will benefit if they learn to meet needs by allowing flexibility to move from employment to leisure and then back into the workforce repeatedly.

Another reason this flexibility is needed is that sixty-five percent of individuals 65 and over will require long-term care, much of it provided in their own homes by family members. With increasing longevity and varying lifestyles, families and communities of today may contain five or more generations spanning nearly 100 years. Businesses, government and families will benefit by working together on cost-effective, humane care solutions.

Source: “Aging as a Process: Interconnectedness of the Generations,” by Catherine Amoroso Leslie, Ph.D. and Carole J. Makela, Ph.D., CFCS, Journal of Family & Consumer Sciences, January 2008.

Health Information on the Web

There are millions of websites that offer health-related information, but many present myths and half-truths as if they are facts.

To avoid unreliable health information, ask yourself the following questions:

Where did this information come from?

Any website that provides health-related information should list the information’s source. If the organization that runs the website didn’t write the information, the original source should be clearly documented. If not written by a health care professional, it should indicate that it has been reviewed by a doctor or other medical expert.

How current is the information?

Health information is constantly changing. Many web pages will post the date on which the page was last reviewed or updated. If this date isn’t included, check to see whether the page has a copyright line. If the page you’re reading hasn’t been reviewed in the past year, look for more recently updated information.

Who is responsible for the content?

Look at the site’s home page. If the home page doesn’t tell you who published the site, look for a link that says “About us.” Health-related websites may be published by the U.S. Government (.gov), a nonprofit organization (.org), or a college or university (.edu). These sites may be the most reliable sources of health information because they’re usually not supported by for-profit companies, such as drug or insurance companies. Websites published by individuals may offer support and advice about coping with certain conditions and their treatments, but it is important to double-check health information you see on a website published by an individual.

Remember, information on a website does not replace your doctor’s advice.

Source: “Health Information on the Web: Finding Reliable Information,” American Academy of Family Physicians, 2008, retrieved from <http://familydoctor.org>.

Involved Fathers Are Important

The message is clear-- fathers are important in the lives of their children. But many fathers ask, “How much is enough?” Researchers find that the quality and type of activities fathers do with children are far more important than the amount of time spent.

Spend quality time with your child. This is time when you focus on healthy, positive and nurturing experiences with your child. Put aside distractions when you are spending time together and focus attention on your child. Do activities that you both enjoy.

Stay involved in all phases of their life.

Research shows that fathers who are involved in all phases of their child’s care are happier as a parent and raise healthier, more successful children.

Provide unconditional love and positive attention. Make sure children know you love them for who they are, not just for what they do. Children who receive positive attention from their parents do better in most aspects of their lives regardless of what type of neighborhood they live in or how much money they have.

Have a plan. Fathers have many demands on their time and it may seem impossible to drop something in order to spend more time with your child. It is not easy. Start small by setting aside a block of time to spend with your child. You may decide to play with them for 15 minutes before dinnertime or help with the nighttime bath. The time alone with your child will grow and become more rewarding for both of you.

Most fathers agree that in the end, the benefits of focusing on their relationship with their children far outweigh the sacrifices made.

Source: “Being an Involved Father: What Does It Mean?” by Garret D. Evans, Psy.D. and Kate Fogarty, Ph.D., University of Florida IFAS Extension, July 2005.

My Child Doesn't Like Sports

Team sports can help a child gain self-esteem, coordination, and fitness. They also help them learn how to work with other kids and adults. But some kids aren't natural athletes or just don't like sports. Here are some reasons why sports might be a turnoff for a child and what you can do:

Your child may still be developing basic skills. Trying and failing might frustrate your child. Practicing at home may help them build skills and fitness in a safe environment. Your child can try new things and risk failing without the consciousness of being around peers.

The coach or league may be too competitive. Investigate sports programs before signing up and consider your child's age. As kids get older, they can handle more competitive aspects such as keeping score and keeping track of wins and losses.

Toddler Table Tactics

Parents can turn common food concerns into opportunities to teach a toddler healthy eating habits:

Avoid bargaining for bites. Don't make dinner a negotiation session or use dessert as an incentive. This makes "treats" more valuable than mealtime food.

Serve right-sized portions. A few tablespoons are plenty to start with. Small portions are less overwhelming to your child, while big portions may encourage overeating.

Prepare and serve healthy meals and let your child decide what to eat. Encourage your child to "try one bite," but don't fall into the negotiating trap.

Have family meals together. Children eat a more nutritious diet, with more fruits and vegetables, when they regularly have family meals.

Your child may be uncomfortable with the pressure of being on a team. Self-conscious kids might worry about letting their parents, coaches, or teammates down. Keep expectations realistic. Let your child know the goal is to be fit and have fun.

Your child may not have found the right sport. Be open to your child's interests in other sports or activities. He or she might want to try individual sports or other activities that can boost fitness levels such as shooting hoops, riding bikes, jumping rope, running, hiking or dancing. By exploring other options, you give your child a chance to get invested in something he or she truly enjoys.

Be patient and keep talking. It often takes several tries before a child finds a physical activity that feels right.

Source: "Fitness for Kids Who Don't Like Sports," Barbara P. Homeier, MD, and Mary L. Gavin, MD, 2005, retrieved from <http://www.kidshealth.org>.

Create positive peer pressure. Toddlers eat more fruits and vegetables if they see their peers eating them, so look for opportunities where your child can eat healthy with friends at home or at playgroups.

Let kids feed themselves. Toddlers need to decide whether to eat, what they will eat, and how much to eat – this is how they learn to recognize when they're hungry and when they're full. Toddlers also need practice learning to feed themselves.

Structured meals and snack times are important. Your child will come to expect that food will be available during certain times of the day. If your child chooses not to eat anything at all, simply offer food again at the next meal or snack.

Source: "Toddlers at the Table: Avoiding Power Struggles," Mary L. Gavin, MD, 2005, retrieved from <http://www.kidshealth.org>.

On the Web

www.gasbuddy.com

Gasoline prices change frequently and may vary by as much as 20 percent within only a few blocks. If you want to compare prices of fuel in a particular area, GasBuddy.com has a network of more than 181+ gas price information websites. GasBuddy websites allow motorists to share information about low priced fuel with others as well as target the lowest priced stations.

Note: These websites contain advertising messages!

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"The young do not know enough to be prudent, and therefore they attempt the impossible - and achieve it, generation after generation"

Pearl S. Buck

