

**HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES NEWSLETTER**

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**Effective Communication Tools with Your Teen**  
**Anger Management**

By Joe Pergola, Regional Family Life Extension Faculty

- Remember – Most cases you are not the cause of your teens unhappiness.
- Pick your battles. Stay calm and firm.
- Ask yourself questions to clarify YOUR feelings. "Why does this make me so angry?"
- Don't answer anger with anger. Don't give up your power by getting angry.
- You can't solve problems when you are angry.
- "I'm sorry you are upset. I'm getting upset too. Let's talk later."
- Take deep breaths. Count to 10. Give yourself time to sort things out.
- Help teen label their feelings through reflective listening. Acknowledge feelings. Restate what you hear and see from your angry teen.



- Turn off negative inner dialogue and negative expressions.
- Communicate through active listening and "I" messages ~ own your feelings and use direct expressions of feelings.
- Communicate frequently and consistently.
- Help discharge pent-up emotional energy by suggesting anger or stress management strategies to fit style of anger (physical, verbal, both).

**LISTEN without judgment.**

**Ask:**

**What can I do to make it better?**

Source: "Teening-Up" With Your Adolescent  
Understanding  
Teen Anger and  
Managing Yours



# Practice What You Preach: Teaching Virtues in Everyday Life

Diana Converse, Family Life Education

Virtues are objectively good human qualities. What we hold true in our lives is demonstrated by the everyday examples that we set in our lives. The “little things” are the big things when it comes to developing moral fiber in our children’s lives. The way in which we respond to needs of others, the attitudes we take in accomplishing our chores, the tone of voice we use in answering questions are all essential in character education.

How do we teach the virtues we hold dear to our children? There is no better time than the present to “practice what we preach.” Here are a few tips:

- Spend time together. In order to have conversations and to relate to real life examples, we must have a relationship with our children. Make time to talk, turn off the TV, and play a game or take a walk together. Show your children they are a priority in your life. This is essential as they grow and enter circles where the values and virtues may be different from those they have learned at home.
- Talk about the things that are important to you. If you highly value honesty, talk about why it is important. Avoid telling your children what they ought to believe and instead, lead them through a problem solving strategy to help them identify good choices and the advantages of telling the truth.
- **Take an example from a television show or book.** Ask your family, “What would happen in our home if that happened?” Be willing to talk about alternative choices or additional reasoning that children may not have thought about. Take



opportunities of daily life to share ethical dilemmas that adults may face. Honestly share how you feel and how you might solve the problem. It’s also good to review the problems after the fact and look at what we felt good about or what we would do differently the next time.

- **Model the actions you expect from your children.** Be careful of your tone of voice and timing of discussions with children. Are you showing them the same respect that you expect from them? Do we ask them to be deceitful on the phone when we don’t want to speak to a telemarketer by saying “She’s not home?” Our actions will speak louder than our words.

Keep in mind that each day offers many teaching opportunities from their life or ours. Learn to value the time spent in conversation and savor the moments when they reach positive conclusions on their own. Maybe there are areas in which you want to make improvements. Select one, ponder what avenues you want to take, and then work in that one area.

Don’t try to do too much at once, but take little steps to stay on a positive course.

Look for words of character at school or other places in your community, and take the opportunity to explain what they mean in your family.

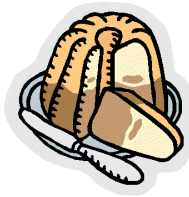


Raise a child with character, a child who will do the right thing, and make the right choices in their life journey.

*Source: Ohio State Extension*

## Tired of Brown Bread? Lots of Alternatives

Mary A. Keith, PhD, LD, Foods, Nutrition and Health Agent



Even if you know about the benefits of whole grains, if you're like most people you've stuck with just a few. Whole wheat toast for

breakfast, brown rice occasionally for dinner, maybe some oatmeal for a change, that's as far as many people go. Surveys suggest that barely 20% of us get more than one serving a day, even though the recommendation for best health is that half our grain servings should be whole.

Don't worry about them taking too long to cook. You can cook several meals' worth of these whole grains at one time. Refrigerate or freeze the extra. Thaw and reheat in the microwave or on the stove top.

But please, don't stop at one serving of the same old 2 or 3 kinds! There are lots of alternatives on the shelves of your local grocery. Here are a few to try.

### Barley

Especially if you're trying to keep your cholesterol levels down, this is one to try. The fiber in barley helps lower our cholesterol levels. Scotch, pot or lightly pearled barley have more fiber than pearled barley, but all barley has some fiber.

It's great in soups and stews, and can be cooked with seasonings like a pilaf, or plain like rice. Quick barley cooks in 10 minutes, regular needs an hour.

### Oats

Not just oatmeal, but oat groats or whole grains are available too. Groats can be cooked and eaten like rice, with a nuttier flavor. Brown them in a dry frying pan for a few minutes, then

add water or broth, cover and simmer for 45 minutes.

Steel-cut, Scotch and Irish names refer to how the oat grain has been cut but not flattened. Rolled oats have been flattened. Quick and instant oats are more finely cut and may have been steamed or partly cooked.

### Corn

Yes, corn and corn meal are whole grains! Adding sweet corn to salads, soups and stews is a quick and easy way to bump up the fiber content.



Popcorn is a healthy whole grain snack. Plain boiled cornmeal was called mush by the early settlers and now goes by its Italian name, polenta.

You can buy tubes of cooked polenta, ready to slice and heat. Or make your own by adding corn meal to boiling water and cooking until it's thick. Top it with spaghetti sauce or maple syrup, grilled veggies or shredded chicken.

### Quinoa

The name is pronounced "Keen-wah". It's a seed, not a grain. But it is nutritionally similar or better than many grains. It's high in protein and low in carbohydrates. It grows best at high elevations. Originally from the Andes of South America, we now raise quinoa in the Rocky Mountains.

The seeds are tiny and round. Because they're so small they cook in half the time. But cooked quinoa can be substituted for rice in many soups, salads, main dishes or desserts. Read the directions on the package, because some varieties need to be rinsed and rubbed to remove bitterness.

# Exercise for Everyone

Jessica Brennan, Extension Agent  
Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program

It is April and Florida's hot weather is quickly returning. Comfortable options for exercise outdoors are decreasing with each rising degree. Is there any relief in sight?

Take a plunge! Aquatic activities are your answer for reasons even more important than a solace from the heat. They are activities that anyone can take part in regardless of age, physical or mental ability level while improving fitness in all areas.

## Muscular Strength



In the pool, a person is 80% lighter than on land. This makes actions that you may not be capable of doing on land, now a possibility. For example, take standing leg raises. On land, gravity produces a downward force which

opposes the upward force that you are applying to your leg muscles to make your leg rise. However, the aquatic environment decreases that gravitational pull by 80%. Now, try doing a set of leg raises in the water. The activity will prove to be much easier than on land.

In the water, not only is there less weight to lift, but you also have the water to support your body. Exercise in the water is less harmful to your joints because of the added support around them and by alleviating the impact of your body on the ground. In addition, you do not have to worry about the extra degree of difficulty that maintaining your balance adds on land.

## Cardiovascular Endurance

Aquatics can improve not only the strength of muscles you can see, but also those internally. Rhythmic breathing is essential to swimming. This requires repetition, control and strengthening of your heart, lungs and abdominal muscles resulting in increased cardiovascular endurance.

## Flexibility

Flexibility is another area that can be enhanced simply by swimming. A complete swimming stroke encourages a full range of motion from your joints. Therefore, you do not have to go through painful and time consuming stretching exercises prior to entering the pool. Not only will you warm up your muscles by swimming, but gradually stretch them safely at the same time.

## Psychological

Aside from the physical benefits of activity, emotional and psychological rewards have been proven, as well. Exercise results in decreased stress, anxiety and undesirable behaviors in children and adults. It has also shown to increase desirable traits such as positive mood, self-esteem, concentration and ability to learn. Finally, completion of an exercise program gives one a sense of accomplishment and general well-being.



For information regarding public swimming pools and aquatics programs in your area, please visit [http://www.tampagov.net/dept\\_recreation/aquatics\\_wellness\\_section/aquatics.asp](http://www.tampagov.net/dept_recreation/aquatics_wellness_section/aquatics.asp) or call (813) 274-8615.

## Free Tax Filing Help

Compiled by Lisa Leslie

The Internal Revenue Service is continuing to partner with commercial tax preparation companies to offer free tax return filing. The free service, called **free file**, was first offered in 2003 and since that time 15.4 million filers have received tax preparation help.



Free file is available to tax filers with an adjusted gross income of \$52,000 or less.

The service gives these eligible tax filers access to online tax preparation software. A tax filer must have access to the internet to use

the service. Free file can be entered at the IRS website [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) and is also available in Spanish.

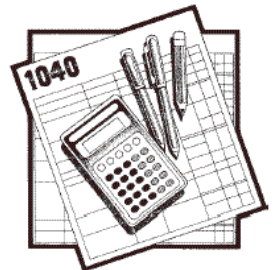
The commercial companies that are offering the free tax preparation software do offer other products and services for a fee. However, you are under no obligation to buy any of the company's other products or services. Consumers should consider avoiding high cost services such as rapid refunds. In most cases, anyone filing electronically and having their refund direct deposited into their bank account should receive their money in less than three weeks.

The IRS has taken precautions to make sure your personal information will not be shared or stolen when you free file. All companies involved use secure technologies. The companies must also follow strict privacy standards that prohibit them from sharing your information with other companies without your consent.

### Free Tax Preparation Sites

The Prosperity Campaign of Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties is offering free tax preparation help at several sites throughout the county. If you earn less than \$50,000 and have a simple return, tax preparation help is available at the following Neighborhood Service Centers: Lee Davis, West Tampa, and the University Community Resource Center. If you qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit you can get help at the Neighborhood Service Centers or many other neighborhood locations. Call 2-1-1 for more information about locations.

The AARP Tax-Aide program offers free one-on-one counseling, as well as assistance on the telephone and internet in order to help individuals prepare basic tax forms, including the 1040, 1040A, 1040EZ and other standard schedules. The service is available from February 1 through April 15 each year. You can search by zip code to find an AARP Tax-Aide site near you at their website [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org) or by calling 1-888-227-7669.



If you have a specific question about your tax return, you can call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 and receive live assistance. This assistance is available Monday – Friday from 7:00am – 10:00pm during the tax filing season.

Sources: Internal Revenue Service, [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).  
AARP, [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org).  
Prosperity Campaign of Hillsborough & Pinellas Counties, [www.uwtb.org](http://www.uwtb.org).

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