



## District I Parenting News Extension Nutrition Program

Prepared by Carol Hampton, UI Extension Educator, Boundary County

### Closeness With Young Children Pays Off Long-Term

If you're worried about your kids becoming sexually active too young, you're not alone. And you're right to be concerned: the younger kids are when they start having sex, the less likely they are to use contraceptives and the more likely they are to become pregnant and contract sexually-transmitted diseases.

What can you do? Especially if your children are very young, it's hard to conceive of sex education. It'll be necessary soon enough, but in the meantime, here's another way to help prevent eventual problems. Start now to develop close relationships with your children, regardless of their ages. The closer you and your kids are, the more likely they are to avoid risky behavior.

A recent publication by the University of Minnesota, "Mothers' Influence on Teen Sex," available free at [WWW.allaboutkids.umn.edu/kdwbvfc/fr\\_pub.htm](http://WWW.allaboutkids.umn.edu/kdwbvfc/fr_pub.htm) (look under "Monographs" for 2002), reports that kids who are close to their parents are more likely to delay having sex. As teenagers, these kids are also more likely to understand their

parents' values. In other words, when their parents express disapproval of early sex, the kids hear and understand what their parents are saying.

Based on research involving middle-school students and high-school freshmen, this publication cites several other factors that may cause kids to delay sex. The actions listed below can be taken at any time—even if your children are now only preschoolers—and continued as your kids approach the more vulnerable teenage years. The benefits will be long-term.

- ◇ **Know your children's friends and the parents of those friends**
- ◇ **Have high expectations for school**
- ◇ **Have family rules**
- ◇ **Know where your kids are all the time**
- ◇ **Have meals together as a family**



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# PARENT-CHILD ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Egg Carton Nursery



Place empty eggshell halves in the cups of an egg carton. Let your children fill the shells with potting soil and carefully plant one or

two radish or carrot seeds in each shell. Have them add a teaspoon of water to each shell. Keep the egg carton closed so the soil will stay moist.

After the seeds have sprouted and grown into seedlings, help the children plant the seedlings outside. Have the children crush the eggshells slightly before placing them in the ground.

## Goofy Goggles



Cut two adjoining cup sections out of an egg carton. Cut an eye hole in the bottom of each section. Attach a piece of elastic

string to the sides of the goggles to hold them in place on a child's face. Let your children decorate their Goofy Goggles with crayons or felt-tip markers.

**Variation:** To make Color Goggles, cover the bottom of each egg cup with a different color of cellophane.

## Make A Book With Your Kids

### What You Will Need:

- ◇ Pictures (either family photos or cut outs from magazines)
- ◇ Crayons, Pens, Pencils
- ◇ Glue
- ◇ Construction Paper
- ◇ Clear Shelf Liner
- ◇ Hole Punch
- ◇ Yarn or String



### What To Do:

1. Pick out pictures you like and glue them to construction paper. (Cut paper in half and try to make all "Pages" the same size.
2. Write below picture what it is or who it is.
3. "Laminate" each page by covering each side of page with clear shelf liner.
4. Punch holes along one side.
5. String yarn or string through holes and tie
6. HAVE FUN!

## Reading Is For Everyone

- ⇒ Read when it's hot or when it's raining.
- ⇒ Read at bedtime
- ⇒ Read as a group
- ⇒ Read when you're bored
- ⇒ Read to your little brother, sister, or child
- ⇒ Read while you're waiting to do something
- ⇒ Read in the doctor's or dentist's office
- ⇒ Read in the car (if you don't get carsick) or if you do—listen n to an audio tape instead
- ⇒ Read to your friends
- ⇒ Read as a family