



CARING FOR THE FACES & SPACES OF CLARK COUNTY

**January
2010**

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**Young Families
Newsletter**

A free newsletter edited by Julie Simek-Heggebo, Family Living Agent Clark County UW-Extension

Dear Young Families:

Happy New Year! I wish you a happy and healthy 2010! With the start of 2010, I want to remind you of the numerous tax benefits you may qualify for.

Two tax benefits to keep in mind while filing your taxes are the *Earned Income Credit* and the *Child Tax Credit*. These two federal tax benefits are for low and moderate income workers. The *Earned Income Credit* (EIC) can be worth up to \$5,657 for families who worked in 2009 and made less than \$45,000. The *Child Tax Credit* (CTC) can be worth up to \$1,000 per child under the age of 17.

Families can qualify for both the EIC and CTC. In order to receive these tax benefits you must file a tax return by April 15, 2010.

Some other tax benefits you may be eligible for include: paid child care expenses, property taxes, college tuition, student loan interest and work related expenses.

Make sure you hire a reputable tax preparer. Choose a tax preparer you can contact later in case there are any questions about your tax return. Do not leave your original documents with the tax preparer and never sign a blank tax return. You are responsible for the information on your taxes, not the preparer. Finally, ask questions to understand the reason for taxes you owe or the refunds you receive.

If you have any questions about the EIC or CTC go to www.irs.gov, call the IRS office in Eau Claire at 715-836-8750 or call the Clark County Extension office at 715-743-5121 and ask for Julie.

Sincerely,

Julie Simek-Heggebo
Family Living Agent



P.S. The Young Families Newsletter is now available on the web at www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/clark. Check this web site to view parenting resources and support services for Clark County families.



COMPARING THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE EIC AND THE CTC

EIC	CTC
Qualifying Child	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Son, daughter, grandchild, stepchild or an adopted child. • Brother, sister, stepbrother or stepsister (and their descendants). • Foster child <i>placed with worker by a government or private agency.</i> 	
Residency of Child	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must live with worker in the U.S. for more than half the year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must live with worker in the U.S. for more than half the year. Exception: A non-custodial parent who is permitted by a divorce or separation agreement to claim the child as a dependent.
Age of Child	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under age 19, or under 24 if a full-time student, or any age if totally and permanently disabled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under age 17
Income	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 child — under \$35,463 • 2 or more children — under \$40,295 • 3 or more children — under \$43,279 • No children — under \$13,440 • Income limits for married workers are \$5,000 higher. • Investment income cannot exceed \$3,100. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must earn <i>more than</i> \$3,000. • No limit on investment income.
Credit Amount	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 child — <i>up to</i> \$3,043. • 2 children — <i>up to</i> \$5,028. • 3 or more children — <i>up to</i> \$5,657 • No children — <i>up to</i> \$457 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to \$1,000 per child.
Dependency	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not required (except for a claim by a married parent who separated from his or her spouse during the first half of the year). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be able to claim child as a dependent and claim the exemption on the return.
Immigration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worker, spouse and qualifying child must each have a valid SSN that permits them to work legally in the U.S. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child must be a U.S. citizen or a resident alien; SSN or ITIN for parents and children is required.
Sources of Earned Income	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wages, salary, tips • Earnings from self-employment • Union strike benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer-paid disability • Military combat pay (tax filer can choose to count for EIC, must count for CTC).
Special Forms	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule EIC required for workers claiming children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form 8812 “Additional Child Tax Credit”
Impact on Public Benefits	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not considered income for food stamps, SSI, Medicaid, federal housing, foster care or adoption assistance. • Does not count toward resource limits in the month of receipt or the following month. Exceptions: SSI—counts after 9 months; food stamps—counts after 12 months. • Rules regarding other benefit programs are state-determined. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not considered income for any federal, state, or local program financed even in part by federal funds. • Generally does not count toward resource limits in the month of receipt or in the following month. Exception: SSI—counts after 9 months.



KEEP FAMILY FOOD SAFE

One of the best ways to teach food safety to children is to practice safe food methods and talk about why it is being practiced. Have conversations about how bacteria are invisible. You can't smell, see or taste them, yet they can spread everywhere in your kitchen and can make you very sick. When it comes to preventing foodborne illness, follow these four simple steps.

CLEAN

Careful hand washing is one of the best ways to stop germs from spreading. Make proper hand washing a family habit.

Teach your child when to wash hands:

- After using the bathroom, coughing, sneezing, handling garbage, and playing outside.
- Before eating, and before and after handling or preparing raw meat, poultry, eggs and seafood.
- Whenever hands look dirty.

Teach your child how to wash hands:

- Wet your hands and apply liquid, bar, or powder soap.
- Rub hands together vigorously to make a lather and scrub all surfaces.
- Continue for 20 seconds! It takes that long for the soap and scrubbing action to dislodge and remove stubborn germs. Use a timer or sing "Happy Birthday" all the way through – twice!
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a paper towel or clean hand towel.
- If possible, use your paper towel to turn off the faucet.



Remember: *If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based wipe or hand gel!*

Wash kitchen utensils, dishes, counter tops and surfaces. Let your child help by adding dish soap to the water.



- Wash cutting boards and counters in hot, soapy water, each time they're used.
- Consider cleaning kitchen surfaces with paper towels; toss them when you're done.
- If using cloth towels wash often in the hot cycle of your washing machine.
- If using sponges for kitchen clean up, microwave moist sponge each evening for 30 seconds or run through the dishwasher daily.
- Make cleaning fun with colorful towels.

Wash fresh fruits and vegetables before preparing or eating. Let your child scrub.

- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running water including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Do not use soap.
- Scrub firm skin fruits and vegetables, such as oranges and melons, with a vegetable brush before cutting and serving.

Parenting

the

Preschooler

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/pp/>



KEEP FAMILY FOOD SAFE

SEPARATE

Harmful bacteria can spread from one food to another, from one surface to another or from a food to a surface. Show your child how to separate raw meat, poultry, and fish from other foods.

- Separate raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs from other food in your grocery cart, grocery bags and refrigerator.
- Keep one cutting board for fresh produce and ready-to-eat foods, and one for raw meat, poultry, and seafood.
- Wash cutting boards and knives with soap and water to remove bacteria, then rinse with clean water.
- After cleaning, sanitize cutting boards and food preparation surfaces with a bleach solution: 1 teaspoon bleach in 4 cups water.
- Keep raw meat, poultry, and seafood wrapped, in sealed containers or plastic bags, and place on a plate or in a bowl so juices won't drip out or drip on other foods.
- Wash anything (including your hands) that touches raw meat, poultry, or seafood before handling other food.
- Never put cooked food on the same plate or cutting board that held raw food – unless you wash it first.

CHILL

Cold temperatures keep bacteria from growing and multiplying. Your child can help keep foods cold.

- Make sure the refrigerator door closes. Together check the temperature: refrigerator—below 40°F; freezer—below 0°F.
- Thaw frozen food in the refrigerator or microwave oven, not on the counter.
- Freeze or refrigerate leftovers and other cooked foods within two hours of cooking.



- Put leftovers in small, shallow containers to cool faster and use within 2-4 days.
- When you shop, buy perishable foods such as dairy products, fresh meat, and hot cooked foods at the end of your shopping trip. Refrigerate foods as soon as possible to extend their storage life.
- Don't leave perishable foods out for more than two hours.
- If preparing picnic foods, be sure to include an ice pack to keep cold foods cold.

COOK

To kill food-borne bacteria that can make you sick, cook food long enough and at a high enough temperature for that food. Show your child how carefully you check.

- Cook to the following temperatures:

beef, venison, lamb, steaks, & roasts	145°F
Pork roasts and chops	160°F
Ground beef, venison or pork	160°F
Poultry	165°F
Fish	145°F
- Cook eggs until yolks and whites are firm. Do not use recipes in which eggs are not cooked and do not let your child taste raw dough that contains eggs.
- Reheat leftovers to at least 165°F (steaming hot).
- After each use, wash the tip of your food thermometer with hot, soapy water. Wiping with a towel isn't enough.
- Be sure your microwaved food has no cold spots. Turn (by hand or turntable) and stir while food cooks.

References:

- Ingham, B. (2005). Food safety in your home. Retrieved July 15, 2009, from www.foodsafetyinyourhome.org
- United States Department of Agriculture. (2006). Everything counts when it comes to protecting your family. Retrieved July 15, 2009, from www.fsis.usda.gov/fact_sheets/safe_food_handling_factsheets/
- United States Department of Agriculture. (n.d.). Fight bac! Keep family food safe. Retrieved May 27, 2009, from http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/Nibbles/Nibbles_Newsletter_32.pdf



UPCOMING EVENTS

TEA AT TUFT'S SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2010 TUFT'S MANSION

Cost \$18 per person
Two seatings — 11:00 am & 2:30 pm
Limited Seating — for reservations call Theresa
715-743-5121

Funds support Clark County parenting newsletters.
Sponsored by the Neillsville Optimist Club & UW-Extension

BECOMING A LOVE AND LOGIC PARENT

Monday evenings,
February 1, 8, 15, & 22, 2010
6:00—8:00 pm

All sessions will be held at the Central Clark County Community Child Care Center, 106 E Depot Street, Greenwood

This four-week course helps parents and children establish a rewarding relationship built upon love and trust. Topics include:

- Responsibility
- Control
- Ownership
- Setting limits
- Empathy
- Consequences

Pre-registration is required. Cost is \$20 per family (includes workbook & a light dinner). Free child care available.

JANUARY WIC SCHEDULE

Jan 5	Neillsville Clinic & check pick up	9-4
Jan 6	Neillsville Clinic	9-4
Jan 11	Owen Clinic & check pick up	9-4
Jan 12	Abbotsford Clinic	9-4
Jan 13	Abbotsford Clinic & check pick up	9-4
Jan 14	Neillsville Clinic & late check pick up	9-4
Jan 21	Thorp Clinic & check pick up	9-4
Jan 22	Owen Clinic & late check pick up	9-4
Jan 27	Abbotsford Clinic & late check pick up	9-4

WHAT COLOR IS YOUR BRAIN

The Clark County UW-Extension office is providing the program, "What Color is Your Brain" on January 25th, 2010. There will be two programs, the first at 2:00 p.m. at the Thorp Library and the second at 5:30 p.m. in the Clark County Courthouse Auditorium.

This insightful program allows you to understand yourself and others better. It allows you to see how your "brains color" plays a role in your everyday life. By the end of the program you'll better understand your personality type, be able to understand and work more collaboratively with co-workers and communicate more effectively.



The program is free and open to anyone who wishes to attend. For more information or to register for this program, call the UW-Extension office at 715-743-5121 and ask for Julie Simek-Heggebo.



JANUARY SNACK IDEAS

Have this warm drink ready for your kids when they come in from the cold.

- 3 cups apple juice
- 1 1/2 cups unsweetened white grape juice
- 6 orange slices, cut in half

Combine juices in a large saucepan and heat until warm

- Pour into cups or mugs
- Float orange slice in each

Saucy Waffles

- 4 frozen waffle sections
- 1 cup applesauce

- Heat applesauce over medium heat to warm it up
- Toast waffles in toaster
- Spoon some applesauce over each waffle

Applesauce

- 6 tart apples
- 1 1/4 cups water
- 3-4 tbsp. sugar
- Cinnamon

Peel, core, and slice the apples. Put them into a pan and add water. Cover and simmer until the apples are tender—about 20-30 minutes. Add sugar and cinnamon to taste. Makes 12 small servings.

Gingerbread People

- 2/3 cup margarine
- 3/4 cup baking molasses
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cloves
- 1 egg
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 2 tsp. ginger
- 3 cups flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp. cinnamon

Measure and mix margarine, sugar, egg, and molasses. Sift together baking powder, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, and flour, and salt.



Have children cut out cookies with a cookie cutter. Bake cookies for 10 minutes at 375 degrees.

Icing: Mix confectioner's sugar and water. Add a few drops of vanilla or lemon flavoring. Can add color to icing a few drops of food coloring. Use a separate bowl for each color.

The Dance of Kindness: Promoting Goodwill

“Be Nice!” We have often heard adults say, “Be nice!” or “That isn’t nice!” do we expect children to just “be nice”? Of course, we would like them to, but realistically it’s not always that simple. As with all components of caring for children, we need to consider the child’s developmental ability, family, culture, and background.

Naturally Kind?

Are children naturally kind? Research has shown that children can express kindness at a very young age. We have all seen the young toddler gently stroke a crying friend’s face, or the preschooler who tries to bring the baby a bottle. Kindness is genuine in most children and occurs as a result of sincere response, not because of adult expectations. Instead of expecting kindness, it is more important to inspire kindness. What inspires children to be kind?

Inspiring Kindness

Think of what inspires you to be kind. It probably is not being yelled at or made to feel bad, but rather being encouraged, witnessing acts of goodwill, or having understanding of others’ needs. When we are surrounded by others who show kindness, it motivates us to be kind, also. In order for children to act kind, they need to be completely cared for, nurtured, and loved. Their environment should be safe and one that promotes positive supportive experiences.

Setting the State for Kindness

The environments and experiences we prepare for young children can have a powerful effect on kindness. Creating a sense of community and family provides children with a nurturing atmosphere. When we feel part of a family, we want to care for that family



KIWI — JANUARY FRUIT OF THE MONTH

What Is It? Why Eat It?

The kiwi fruit is native to East Asia, where there are about 40 species of kiwi fruit—some bland, some sweet, some ‘peppery’, some cherry sized, some the size of a smaller grade commercial fruit. These vigorous climbers fruit heavily, and we can be sure humans have used the fruit for food from the time ancestral humans first moved into the kiwi fruits’ range.

On the outside, a kiwi fruit looks like a fuzzy brown egg—appropriate, since it is named after a fuzzy flightless brown bird. When you cut through its thin brown skin, which is covered with a downy fuzz, you reach velvety bright green flesh sprinkled with a ring of tiny, edible black seeds.

The taste of kiwi fruit, which varies from sweet to tart and has been compared with a combination of other fruits, such as strawberries, nectarines, and melons. Kiwi fruit blends well with other fruits and makes a striking garnish, but it is also highly satisfying (and nutritious) eaten on its own.

Nutritional Value

Ounce for ounce, it is higher in vitamin C than most fruits and is a decent source of potassium (vitamin C content decreases with storage.)

Kiwi fruit are one of the most ‘nutritionally dense’ foods—

- there is a higher concentration of vitamins and minerals per calorie than most other fruits
- One fruit delivers around 14% of an adults daily folate (B complex, folic acid) requirement
- The potassium content is fourth highest of any domestic fruit

Shopping

For the sweetest, fullest flavor, choose plump, fragrant kiwi fruit that yield to gentle pressure, like ripe peaches. Unripe fruit has a hard core and a tart astringent taste. If only firm kiwis are available, ripen them for a few days before eating them. Reject shriveled or mush fruits, or those with bruises or wet spots.

Storage

To ripen firm kiwis, leave them at room temperature, but away from heat or direct sunlight, for a few days to a week.

Hasten ripening by placing them in a paper bag with an apple, pear, or banana. Once a kiwi fruit is ripe, however store it far from other fruits, as it is very sensitive to the ethylene gas they emit, and tends to over-ripen even in the refrigerator.

Ripe kiwis should keep for about one to two weeks.

Preparation

Kiwi fruit can be peeled with a vegetable peeler or sharp paring knife (peeling is easier if the ends are cut off first.)

Kiwi skin seems to have a “grain” so it is almost impossible to peel it circularly, like you might an apple or orange. However if you peel from the top to the bottom in straight lines, even ripe kiwis will peel easily.

To eat the fruit with a spoon cut it in half crosswise or lengthwise and scoop out the flesh.

Fresh Kiwi Pie

- 1 cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 4 cups peeled and sliced kiwi (about 12)
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- Pastry for 2-crust (9 inch) pie
- 2 tablespoons butter/margarine

Stir together sugar, tapioca and nutmeg in mixing bowl. Add kiwi and lemon juice. Toss gently; let stand 15 minutes. Meanwhile prepare and roll out half the pastry.

Line 9-inch pie. Trim pastry to edge of pan. Turn kiwi mixture into pan. Dot with butter. Roll out remaining pastry and place over filling. Trim, seal, and flute edge. To prevent over-browning, cover edge of pie with foil.

Bake at 375 degrees for 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake until crust is golden brown (about 25-30 minutes longer).



IT'S TIME TO EAT!

This month is all about eating healthy foods to fuel your body in the best way possible. Everyone's body is different, but we all have to eat healthy foods in order to stay strong and well! "Eating healthy" is such a broad term, it can be hard to know what to do to make sure

that you and your family are getting the proper nutrition. Here are some tips for adults and kids that can help along the journey to eating well and being well!

For Adults	For Kids
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include fresh fruits and vegetables in your diet! Try some new recipes using different fruits and vegetables. • Avoid foods containing artificial flavors and colors (listed in "For Kids" section). They affect adults in the same way! • Try natural sweeteners in your recipes, or to sweeten coffee or tea. Honey and maple syrup are just as sweet, but better than sugar because they contain nutrients and are not processed with chemicals like sugar is. • Once you cut the chemicals and excess sugar out of your diet, you'll feel better and have more energy! • Try juicing! It's not hard, and it can be a fun and healthy way to get in more vegetables (e.g. juice one carrot, 2 celery stalks, and an apple). PS — Even picky kids might like it, too! • The most important thing you can do to affect your kid's long-term eating habits is to model healthy eating yourself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kids can be PICKY, so sometimes it can take 10 times or more of trying a new food before they'll really get used to it and eat it. Keep offering them those vegetables! • There are kid-friendly healthy foods out there, like whole grain mac and cheese, yogurt, and cut-up fruit pieces. • You can make a homemade cookie recipe healthier by substituting wheat germ for 1/3 of the flour and cutting the sugar by a quarter or even half. They won't know the difference! • Sadly, too many "kids' foods" offer a whole host of dangerous chemicals (used for coloring and flavoring) that can effect kids behavior and health. Watch for and AVOID these: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anything with a color followed by a number (e.g. Red 40, Yellow 5, etc.), 2. "MSG" (monosodium glutamate), and 3. "artificial flavor." • Check out The Sneaky Chef (Missy Lapine) at the library. It's an excellent way to hide healthy food in kids meals!



Your county
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An EEO/Affirmative Action employer, University of Wisconsin-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and ADA requirements.

If you need an interpreter, materials in alternate formats, or other accommodations to access any programs, activities, or services, please contact the program coordinator at 715-743-5121 as soon as possible (10 days is reasonable) preceding the scheduled event so that proper arrangements can be made in a timely fashion. YF

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

If you have access to the World Wide Web and like using computers, we invite you to download/ read "Young Families" Newsletter online at <http://clark.uwex.edu/>, click on Family Living and then scroll down to Parenting. This would help us decrease our ever-expanding printing costs.

If you decide to access you newsletter via the web please e-mail us (theresa.hediger@co.clark.wi.us) so we can remove your name from our snail mail list. Also, if the "Young Families" newsletter does not meet your informational needs and you no longer want to receive this newsletter please contact Theresa at the above address or by email.

We appreciate you help!

Julie Simek-Heggebo, Clark County Family Living Agent
julie.simek@ces.uwex.edu

Office hours Monday — Friday
8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

