



4-H School-Age Child Care
University of California Cooperative Extension

PARENT STYLES II

Tips for Busy Parents

CHOICES...CHOICES

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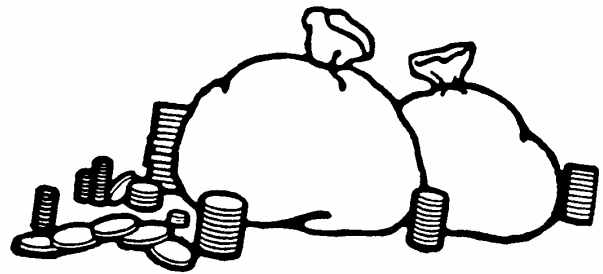
Children love to watch commercials on television. They are captivated by the action and the catchy jingles.

When a child sees something he or she wants advertised on television, it can be a perfect time to talk about how to make "choices" with money.

If your school-age children are like most, they probably have money to spend, at least occasionally. They can be taught to make choices with it. Giving your children a chance to see how easily money can "go", (especially when it's their money), is a very important lesson.

When children are five and six years old, they should only have to spend their money on "fun" items. Most experts believe that at these ages, children are too young to think about necessities. As they get older though, they can begin to spend their money on certain "special" items that they want, but don't necessarily need.

Teaching children to save money is also important. If children want to buy something costing more money than they have, show them how to save for it. A piggy



bank will work, but an interest-earning savings account is even better. When children finally do buy the item, they will feel a sense of accomplishment and reward.

Of course, talking about what is advertised on TV can be a lesson in itself. *What does this product do or not do? Is it safe for school-agers? Would you spend all your allowance on it?*

And, don't forget the all-important point, that we can't have everything we see on TV!

Resource: Adapted from the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension "Family Times" Program.

THE FAMILY TREASURE CHEST

School-age children have wonderful imaginations. However, unless they have some 'real-life' experiences making choices with money, they won't understand how much things actually cost. This activity will help your children learn about money and give you a chance to spend time together.



WHAT YOU NEED:

- ★ Cardboard box, jar or can
- ★ Pencil and paper

WHAT TO DO:

- ★ Make a family "*treasure chest*". Cut an opening in the top of any cardboard box, (oatmeal, shoebox, etc.). Or, attach a sleeve or sock with the toe cut out, to the opening of a jar or can. (The "*treasure chest*" can be decorated with felt, paper, or other items to make it look like a pirate's treasure chest). Label it **Family Treasure Chest**.
- ★ Ask your children what kinds of things they would like to do as a family. (Or, what item they would like to buy for the whole family to enjoy). Help them decide what those things will cost. Make a list, with cost estimates, and put it in the "*treasure chest*".
- ★ Ask each child how he or she can make and/or save money, to build up the **Family Treasure**. (Lemonade stand; recycling cans; part of each week's allowance; a percentage of birthday or other gift money, etc.). Promise to "match" the amount in the "*treasure chest*" each week.
- ★ Assign children to take turns counting the money, and deciding what to do or buy, from the list.

Then start saving for the next item or family outing!!

Adapted from: University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension "*Family Times*" Program.