



**CENTRE COUNTY PREVENTION COALITION**  
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**August 24, 2010 – Five Lessons Every Kid Should Learn from Home**

Laura Runyan is a Family and Consumer Sciences teacher in the Bald Eagle Area School District. This weekly column, published on Wednesdays, is a collaboration of Centre County *Communities That Care* serving Bald Eagle, Bellefonte, Penns Valley, and Philipsburg-Osceola Area School Districts, and Care Partnership: Centre Region *Communities That Care* serving the State College Area School District.

Since recently becoming a parent myself, there are an overwhelming amount of things I want to pass on to my daughter. I know many of the lessons I'll teach her will be incidental – she'll learn by watching my husband and me. With that said, the first lesson every kid should learn from home is to be kind to others. I'm disappointed when I hear moms and dads disrespecting each other in front of their children. How can kids be expected to respect others and treat them kindly if parents aren't using their own relationships as a model for their children?

I gathered feedback from friends to see what else they'd like to pass on to their kids. Unanimously, they said, "financial responsibility." Your kids need to see you living within your means. Prioritize your spending and don't go into debt for things you don't really need. Let your kids see you paying bills every month. If you pay bills online, talk about it frequently in front of your children. Growing up, I remember seeing my mom take the bills from the mailbox into the house to promptly write checks to pay each bill. By watching and listening, I learned that cable TV, garbage collection, telephone, and other services we used had a price – and my mom made sure they were paid in full, on time.

Your child also needs to be equipped with some basic cooking skills before they leave the house. If you're lacking in this area, there are plenty of resources available for you to help your child. Go online together and find top rated recipes on websites like [www.foodnetwork.com](http://www.foodnetwork.com) or [www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com), then experiment by making the recipe together. Have your child spend time with a grandparent, aunt, or uncle who enjoys cooking. Encourage your kids to sign up for a foods class in school. When your child prepares food in your home, compliment them and they'll be more likely to cook for your again, getting better each time.

Regardless of who prepares the food, strive to have family meals at the dinner table. Turn off the TV, put the cell phone out of reach, have your child remove the iPod from their ear, and *talk* to one another. This will teach your child the invaluable lesson of interpersonal communication. If your child gains this skill, he/she will be well adjusted in school, in relationships outside of your home, and eventually, in the work place.

Finally, have your kids do some laundry before they leave the house. An acquaintance of mine was laughing about a simple laundry error made early in his marriage. One day, all the underwear in his drawer had somehow gone from white to pink. He learned first hand the importance of separating the white clothes from the dark clothes.

Remember that your kids are always watching you. Work hard to model these lessons for your child, knowing that they will add confidence, character, and connection to your family life.

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