

# FCS NEWS & NOTES

Cooperative Extension Service  
 Muhlenberg County  
 3690 State Route 1380  
 Central City, KY 42330-5512  
 (270) 338-3124  
[extension.ca.uky.edu](http://extension.ca.uky.edu)



**Don't forget to call us at (270) 338-3124 to sign up for upcoming events!**

**January 27:** Inspiring Grandchildren to Become Grand Cooks Homemaker Lesson at 10 AM and 12 PM via Zoom. Handouts for this lesson are included with this newsletter for mailbox members. You may watch on Zoom at these links:  
 10 AM link- <https://uky.zoom.us/j/87675074700>  
 12 PM link- <https://uky.zoom.us/j/88612152513>

**January 29, 30, 31:** Quilt Jacket Class at 9 AM each day at the Extension Office.

**January 31:** Board Game Night at 5:30 PM at the Extension Office.

**February 4:** Stitched Together at 5 PM at the Extension Office. In February they'll be creating a fabric sewing box. Bring your sewing machine (if you have one) and basic sewing supplies, plus two fat quarters that correspond in color. If you do not have a sewing machine, you may borrow one at the office. The group will be the first Tuesday of every month from 5 to 7 PM.

**February 6:** Annual Day Planning meeting at 10 AM at the Extension Office.

**February 11:** I Love Muhlenberg Tour. The group will meet at Thistle Cottage at 9:15 AM, then they will tour the Muhlenberg Music Museum, before finishing the day at The Studio: Art for All where they will paint a ceramic plate or canvas. You must provide your own transportation and pay for your painting at The Studio. **Deadline to sign up is February 4.**

**February 13:** Block of the Month Quilting Group meeting at 9 AM at the Extension Office.

**February 15:** 4-H Penguin Plunge for the Food for Kids Backpack Program at 10 AM at the Central City Convention Center outdoor pool. Anyone raising at least \$160 (enough to sponsor one child for the school year) is invited to take the plunge. Donations to "4-H Backpack Program" can be mailed to the Extension Office year round.

**February 25:** Composition in Photography Homemaker Lesson at

10 AM at the Extension Office and at 12 PM via Zoom. Club lesson leaders may stop by the Extension Office to pick up handouts. Handouts will be mailed to mailbox members. You may watch via Zoom at these links:  
 10:00 AM link- <https://uky.zoom.us/j/84675648638>  
 12:00 PM link- <https://uky.zoom.us/j/87957516753>

**February 26:** Cooking through the Calendar at 12 PM at the Extension Office. February's recipe is Cauliflower Bites.

**February 28:** Laugh and Learn one-hour play date for parents and children ages 5 and under at 10 AM at the Extension Office.

**March 7:** Pure Home Series: Soy Candle Making at 10 AM / 5 PM at the Extension Office. Please contact us to sign up and let us know which time you'll be attending. Class is free. You'll go home with your own custom scented soy candle. Space is limited.

**March 9:** Daylight Savings Time Begins. Spring your clocks forward one hour. >>>>>>>



**March 13:** Block of the Month Quilting Group meeting at 9 AM at the Extension Office.

**March 13:** Annual Day Planning meeting at 10 AM at the Extension Office.

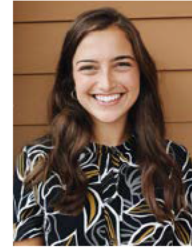
**March 20:** Homemaker Council meeting at 9:30 AM at the Extension Office.

**March 27:** Pure Home Series: Homemade Cleaners at 10 AM / 5 PM at the Extension Office. Please

contact us to sign up and let us know which time you'll be attending. Class is free. You'll go home with your own homemade all-purpose cleaner. Space is limited.

**March 28:** Laugh and Learn one-hour play date for parents and children ages 5 and under at 10 AM at the Extension Office. At this Laugh and Learn we're turning our space into a kid-friendly clinic where toddlers can learn, play, and have fun with doctors.

**April 8:** Pasta Class at 10 AM/5:30 PM at the Extension Office. Learn to create your own pasta noodles. Space is limited. Please contact us to sign up.



*Alex Kelly*  
**Alex Kelly**  
Muhlenberg County  
Extension Agent for  
Family & Consumer  
Sciences Education

## A Note from your Homemaker Council President

I've been working hard to gather historic information about the Homemakers in our county, going as far back as possible. I'm so grateful for the help of two wonderful ladies who are assisting me in sorting through records, but I really need your help too! **My deadline is February 20** and we've set up an additional section to collect the information needed. Thank you so much in advance for any help you can offer!

The information we're looking for:

- Any FCS agents and the years they served. I have information starting with Carolyn Ham, but I'm unsure of the exact years she was here—does anyone know?
- Names of members you remember.
- How long you've been a member.
- Trips you've taken or were offered by Homemakers.
- Activities the group has been involved in, such as collecting bottle tops for the Senior Citizen Center's bench, crocheting grocery bags into mats for people in need, Penguin Plunge, Extension Extravaganza, Ag Day, etc.
- Themes from Annual day before 2015, including the country featured, the speaker, and the year.
- Any clubs you remember from before 2010.
- Members who have been part of the group for over 50 years.
- Any mother/daughter members.
- Cancer survivors and the type of cancer they overcame.
- If you have photos from before 2017 that you're willing to share, please let me know so I can scan them.
- Names of individuals who have served as county president and the years they served.

You can reach me via:

Email: [REDACTED]

Call or text: [REDACTED]

Mail: [REDACTED]

Or drop off your notes at the Extension Office.

Again, thank you so much for your help in preserving this important history!

Tammy Dozer

## Coins for Change

The KEHA Coins for Change program supports international projects through both KEHA and the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW). Coins for change are used to purchase water buffalos for women farming in the Philippines.

*Submitted  
by Ann  
Whitmer,  
International  
Chair*



## Thought for the Day

"On your marks, get set, go."  
Bicycle Race  
Queen, 1978

## Contact Us



(270) 338-3124



Facebook Pages:

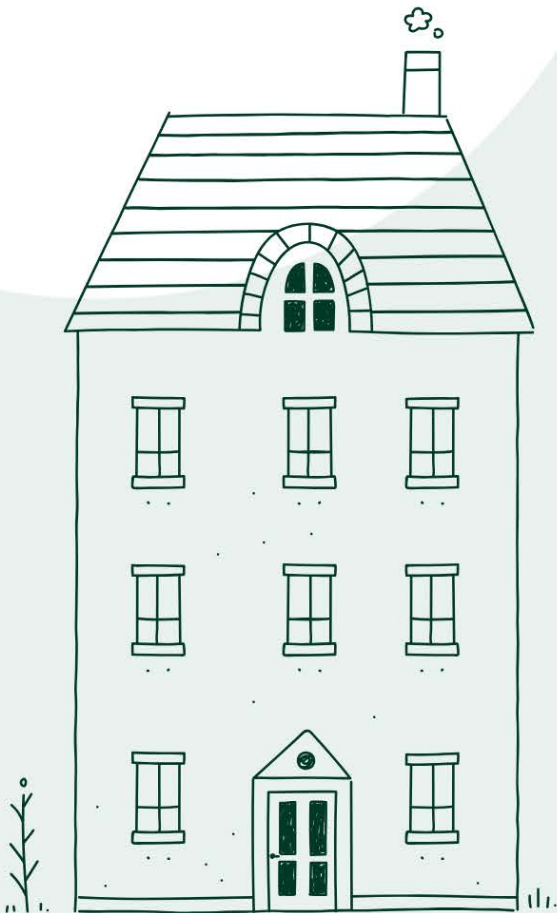
Muhlenberg  
County  
Cooperative  
Extension

Muhlenberg  
County  
Homemakers



# PURE HOME SERIES

CRAFTING SAFE, COST EFFECTIVE HOME  
PRODUCTS.



## HOMEMADE LAUNDRY DETERGENT

**JANUARY 27, 2025 10 AM / 6 PM**

Make and take your own laundry detergent.

## SOY CANDLE MAKING

**MARCH 7, 2025 10 AM / 5 PM**

Make and take your own custom scented candle.

## HOMEMADE CLEANERS

**MARCH 27, 2025 10 AM / 5 PM**

Make and take your own all-purpose cleaner.

## HOMEMADE BODY CARE

**APRIL 14, 2025 10 AM**

**APRIL 15, 2025 5 PM**

Make and take a body care product.

**PLEASE CONTACT US TO SIGN UP FOR  
EACH CLASS. SPACE IS LIMITED.**

**(270) 338-3124**

MUHLENBERG COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION 3690 STATE ROUTE 1380 CENTRAL CITY, KY 42330

### Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Family and Consumer Sciences  
4-H Youth Development  
Community and Economic Development

### MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.  
Lexington, KY 40506



Disabilities  
accommodated  
with prior notification.

# PASTA CLASS

APRIL 8  
10 AM  
5:30 PM

- FREE, HANDS-ON INSTRUCTION.
- LEARN THE ART OF MAKING FRESH, DELICIOUS PASTA NOODLES!
- TAKE HOME THE NOODLES YOU CREATE!

SIGN UP:

(270) 338-3124

SPACE IS LIMITED.

Muhlenberg County Cooperative Extension  
3690 State Route 1380 Central City, KY 42330

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University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.  
Lexington, KY 40506



Disabilities  
accommodated  
with prior notification.

# INSPIRING GRANDCHILDREN TO BECOME GRAND COOKS



## Courtney Luecking, PhD, MPH, RDN

Assistant Extension Professor for Dietetics and Human Nutrition

## Cathy Fellows

4-H Youth Development Agent, Boone County

### Introduction

Cooking calls for a variety of skills. Cooking involves planning and organization so that all dishes are ready at the same time. Cooking requires understanding how to safely handle food. It also involves judgment about when food has been cooked enough or how to adapt recipes. Cooking allows for creativity of combining flavors and textures. It also builds technical skills like slicing, dicing, and mixing.

Getting children involved with cooking supports their development in many ways. Cooking helps children develop fine and gross motor skills. It inspires creativity and problem solving. Cooking can also help children practice following directions and gain independence. Language and literacy can develop through talking and reading about what they are cooking. Cooking increases children's confidence and can increase their willingness to try and ultimately eat more fruits and vegetables. Learning cooking skills at an early age has lasting impact on attitudes about cooking, skills, diet quality, and health in adulthood.

### Children need more time in the kitchen

Parents, usually mothers, are the primary source for teaching children how to cook. However, changes in culture, family structure, and food costs have led to changes in cooking at home. Between 1965 and



the early 2000s, cooking at home decreased. Even though cooking at home is on the rise, children are not usually helping.

Mothers report extra stress when children are in the kitchen because they feel a lack of control and that children are a distraction. They also report safety concerns and not wanting to clean up messes. In the past, school programs taught cooking skills, but fewer people report learning to cook in school. Research shows transportation, cost, and disability can prevent children from taking cooking classes outside of school. With fewer occasions to learn and practice cooking, there are concerns that cooking skills will be lost in younger generations.

### Grandparents can teach cooking skills

Grandparents have ever more important and varied roles in the lives of their grandchildren.

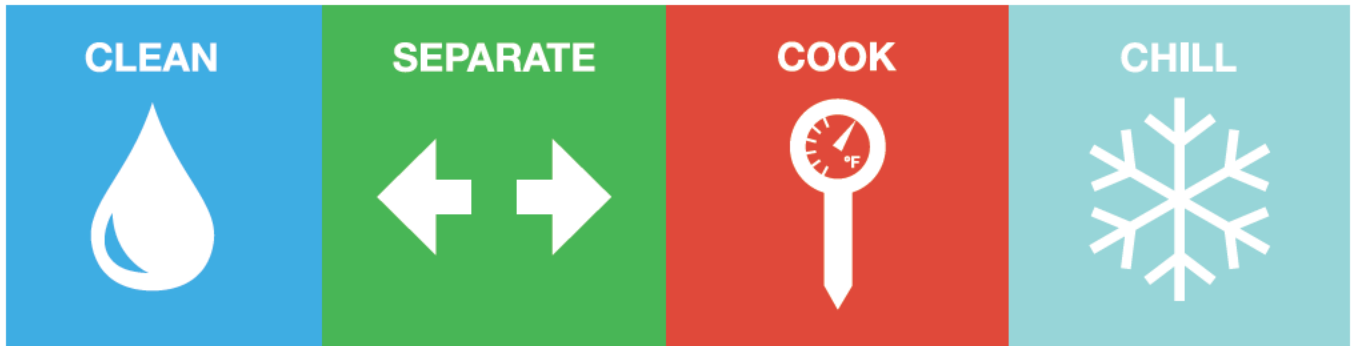


Figure 1. Food Safety Basics

- **CLEAN** - Wash hands and all work surfaces often.
- **SEPARATE** - Keep raw meat, eggs, seafood, and poultry separate from ready-to-eat foods.
- **COOK** - Cook food to the right temperature.
- **CHILL** - Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

(United States government, 2023)

It is common for grandparents to provide regular child care, live in multiple-generation households, or have custodial care. In Kentucky, approximately 58,000 children live with their grandparents. The increased presence of grandparents makes them an important resource for cooking skills. While grandmothers are more likely than grandfathers to report cooking for or with grandchildren, grandfathers have shown greater comfort with food preparation than grandchildren, particularly grilling. Grandparents do not need to be expert chefs. They just need to share time, patience, and experience with grandchildren.

### Benefits of cooking together

The shared experience of cooking benefits grandchildren and grandparents. Working together in the kitchen provides time for meaningful conversation and builds trust. Grandchildren and grandparents can learn more about one another. They can share knowledge and traditions from one generation to the next and create lasting memories. Learning about nutritious foods together can help families change routines in ways that support healthier eating habits.

Cooking together can strengthen relationships and enhance well-being. Grandchildren can learn about family history and benefit from receiving love, support, acceptance, patience, and wisdom. Grandparents can have boosts in brain function and protection against depression. Additionally, sharing cooking skills can provide opportunities that protect against social isolation and help maintain skills for longer independent living.

### Ideas for guiding grandchildren through the cooking process

Create ground rules around safety. Children need supervision. Start by checking with parents about safety concerns and boundaries in the kitchen. This ensures everyone is on the same page. Next, teach or review basic food safety rules throughout the cooking process. Figure 1 shows the four steps to food safety – clean, separate, cook, and chill. Grandparents are an important role model for showing and explaining food safety practices like correct hand-washing techniques and checking the temperature of food with a food thermometer. Encourage tasting while cooking but have rules

about no double dipping. Have everyone pull back long hair and wash their hands. Be sure to clean all work surface areas and work with children to clean up along the way. If children put fingers in their nose or mouth, remind them to wash their hands. Finally, keep in mind safety risks related to heat, sharp knives or peelers, and electric cooking utensils. Set expectations about tasks children can complete independently and those that require help or supervision.

Set them up for success. Children of all ages can help with food preparation, table setup, and cleanup. With very young children, the experience is all about senses and teaching safe kitchen practices. Over time, children will gain skills and independence. Table 1 shows a general idea of age-appropriate skills. This can be particularly helpful if it has been a while since grandparents were in the kitchen with grandchildren. Skills in Table 1 are organized by age group and build upon one another. A 6-year-old child can try everything listed on that level and above. Selecting tasks that match a child's skill level can build confidence and limit frustration. It is important to remember each child develops at their own pace.

Engage in conversation. Focus on listening as well as talking. Describe what you are doing. Talk about where the food or recipe came from. Ask children questions and help them problem solve. Teach them about safety in the kitchen. Share observations throughout each food preparation step. Telling stories can create and build strong bonds.

Work through the mess. It is important to remember, children need help learning new skills. One can expect some messy moments during the learning process. Doing things together over and over will supply the practice and guidance needed to master a skill. As cooking skills improve, there should be less mess. Learning how to clean up messes is also an important life skill for children to learn. The willingness and time to work through messes in the kitchen is an opportunity for grandparents to jump in and help parents.



Make it a habit. Any amount of cooking together is helpful, but more is better. Regular opportunities to prepare meals together allow children to learn and practice the variety of skills needed to confidently. Schedule and plan daily, weekly, or monthly times to cook with grandchildren. This can be in person, or with a little preparation, through a video call. Writing down notes about the recipes made together can create a record of memories of the process for favorite dishes. Consider a special notebook or shared electronic file to record who was present during the cooking process, changes made to the recipe, where the recipe came from, what was most enjoyable about making or eating the dish, and any other memorable moments of the cooking process.

### **Conclusion**

Children need more time and guidance in the kitchen to reap the lifelong benefits of knowing how to cook. Grandparents are a valuable resource for teaching cooking skills. The special moments that occur when cooking together can supply benefits for both grandparents and grandchildren. Sharing stories about family recipes exercises memory, gives children a sense of connection, and passes family heritage from generation to generation. Most of all, giving children time, space, and support to gain confidence in the kitchen yields priceless experiences that will last a lifetime.

**Resources**

For more information about how children benefit from time in the kitchen, check out this fact sheet from Utah State University Extension.

- Malan, C., Bevan, S., & Savoie-Roskos, M. R. (2022). The benefits of including kids in the kitchen [Fact sheet]. Utah State University Extension. [https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension\\_curall/2288/](https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension_curall/2288/)

For more information about food safety practices, check out this website.

<b>Table I. Suitable cooking skills by age</b>		
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Cooking Skills</b>	<b>Kitchen Skills</b>
Under 2 years	Very young children are not quite ready to help in the kitchen. They can play nearby with pots, pans, or storage containers as well as toy foods or kitchen sets. Talk about what is going on in the kitchen.	
2-3 years	Wash fruit and vegetables Knead and mix with hands Tear or break foods into pieces Use a rolling pin Use a cookie cutter Roll mixtures into a ball Squeeze lemons and limes	Put things in the trash
3-5 years	Add ingredients to a bowl Stir and mix Mash foods Cut, chop, or slice with plastic, kid-safe knives Spread butter with a butter knife Scrape batter down a bowl Brush oils on food with a pastry brush Cut green onions and herbs with blunt kitchen scissors Peel fruits and vegetables with peeler Deseed fruits and vegetables with a spoon	Put things away Fill drink cups Help set the table Move dirty dishes to the sink Wipe tables and countertops  Explore the garden
6-7 years	Measure ingredients (with help) Crack eggs in a bowl Shuck corn Snap green beans Grease pans Peel fruit with fingers Skewer foods Bread, flour, and dip foods Sprinkle ingredients Juice lemon, lime, or orange using a juicer	Make guided menu choices  Gather ingredients Load dishwasher Wash dishes  Help dig, plant, and harvest the garden  Help find items while grocery shopping



Age Group	Cooking Skills	Kitchen Skills
8-9 years	Weigh and measure ingredients Beat eggs Open cans with can opener Use food thermometer to check temperature of food Use an oven or microwave Pound foods with a kitchen mallet Pour from a container Drain canned foods Shake liquids in a closed container Use a hand mixer	Set the table Store and refrigerate leftovers  Help plan gardens
10 years or older	Follow a recipe Cut, slice, and chop with kitchen knives Simmer ingredients on stovetop Boil pasta Bake foods in the oven	Once children show they can follow kitchen safety rules, they can begin doing things on their own.  Become the expert of a family recipe so that it passes down generations

Table adapted from Dean and colleagues (2021) and Ellis (2022).

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