

Trade Secrets – Resources Family and Consumer Resources Educators Love to Share (They’re Not Really Secrets) by Marilyn Sullivan, Extension Educator

University of NH Cooperative Extension Family and Consumer Resources Educators who appear on the WMUR Positive Parenting segment each month work with and support NH families in many ways. They get their information from across the country from a lot of different sources and venues. Often, people are so pleased with the trustworthiness of the sources, they ask where and how they may access them as well. Even though we live in an age of information, there are still difficult questions focusing on family concerns such as raising kids, eating well, or stretching dollars, that people can’t find answers to. Extension Educators are always happy to share the tools of their trade...their trade secrets, if you will. Below are some of the Family and Consumer Resources Educators’ most indispensable and favorite resources that they use to help families make better decisions that improve their everyday quality of life. Of course, these are not really trade secrets, but research-based “tools” Extension educators rely on, and maybe you will find them indispensable too.

1. The **Living Well** book. One resource on our bookshelves is the **Living Well** book by the *National Extension Association for Family and Consumer Sciences*. It is a 270-page book that covers many current practices that help people live better, including tips and strategies that lead to healthier lifestyles, home and food safety information, suggestions that promote environmentally-friendly living, personal finance information, and economical and healthy recipes. The cost is \$25.00 plus shipping and handling.

2. **NH Consumer’s Sourcebook** and the **Consumer Action Handbook**. The **NH Consumer’s Sourcebook** comes from the Attorney General’s Office of Consumer Protection and helps consumers become aware of their rights and responsibilities for different products and services, and the consumer protections they have under New Hampshire laws. The 2006 is the current edition and will be updated. People may go directly on-line to get the most current guidelines on consumer topics: www.doj.nh.gov/consumer. The **Consumer Action Handbook** is from the Federal Citizen Information Center. It is a 172-page guide to becoming a savvy consumer, and includes information on buying a car, purchasing a home, preventing identity theft, shopping from home, creating a will, handling unsatisfactory transactions, and much, more. Both are free. Both of these books would be a good buy at \$10 or \$15 but they are freely available from the U.S. and NH governments.

3. **Cradle Crier** and **Toddler Tales** – a *Just in Time Parenting* newsletter sent free to your home. The 12-issue **Cradle Crier** series covers your baby's first year, while the six-issue **Toddler Tales** series covers the second year. These age-paced newsletters will arrive just when you need them. Research shows this is a method that is very useful to many parents. The series of newsletters is sent to you based on your child's age, so that you'll have specific information about your child's development as he or she grows. There are also useful tips about how you can encourage and support your child's development through the first two years of his or her life. You may view all of the newsletters on-line

or register to have either email formats sent to you or printed copies mailed to your home address by signing up at: <http://cecf1.unh.edu/cctt/index.cfm>.

4. **So Easy to Preserve.** This book contains the latest U.S. Department of Agriculture recommendations for safe food preservation. **So Easy to Preserve** is a 375-page book with over 185 tested recipes, along with step by step instructions and in-depth information for both the new and experienced food preserver. Chapters include *Preserving Food, Canning, Pickled Products, Jellied Fruit Products, Freezing and Drying*. The current 5th edition has 35 new tested recipes and processes, in addition to a new section with recommended procedures for home-canned salsas. The cost is \$18.00, which includes standard shipping fees.

5. **The Food Keeper.** This free brochure provides a guide to food quality of most foods under different home storage conditions: freezer, refrigeration, or pantry, and food safety tips for the consumer at home.

6. Websites:

www.uga.edu/nchfp/ - National Center for Home Food Preservation; this site provides the most current USDA recommendations for food preservation, including fact sheets, videos, powerpoint presentations for the self-learner and FAQs.

www.foodsafety.gov/ - This is a good website for all things related to food safety including food recalls. It is the federal gateway to food safety information.

www.extension.org/ - This site is known as **eXtension**. It provides research-based information for most topics; a person can ask a question of one of the experts if you can't find what you are looking for within the database.

www.cyfernet.org – Children, Youth, and Families Education and Resource Network is designed to be useful for anyone who needs comprehensive information about children, youth, or family topics.

<http://www.healnh.org> –HEAL NH (Healthy Eating Active Living) – This is an excellent resource for nutrition and physical activity-related information.

www.fsis.usda.gov - USDA/FSIS Food Safety Education – This website has research-based fact sheets on the topic of food safety; you may ask a question or view videos on food safety topics.

<http://www.nheitc.org/> - The NH Earned Income Tax Credit website lists asset building opportunities and free tax preparation sites in New Hampshire.

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