

PINAL COUNTY

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Cooperative Extension, the outreach arm of the University of Arizona, brings the University to the people.

The faculty and staff in the Pinal County Extension office are part of a non-formal education network bringing research-based information into communities to help people improve their lives.

Cooperative Extension is committed to delivering high-quality, relevant educational programs and information to Pinal County citizens and communities.

As our current newsletter is being finalized, we are experiencing an unprecedented time. Just like many other companies, small businesses, and organizations we are doing our best to continue to deliver high quality, research-based education to you and your family.

- I want to assure you that despite the circumstances our entire team has the necessary technology, connectivity, and support to work effectively remotely.
- We stay closely connected via email, phone, and Zoom conferencing.
- We are transitioning much of our programming to remote technology.
- We are encouraging our team members to closely monitor their health and well-being.

As always, we hope you are finding our resources and educational opportunities to be of great benefit to you and your family.

In this newsletter you will find contact information for all our programs. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have a question or would like to know more about how you can participate in our remote program delivery such as our "Seed to Supper", financial literacy, positive discipline, or nutrition education classes or how to conduct a developmental screening for your little one.

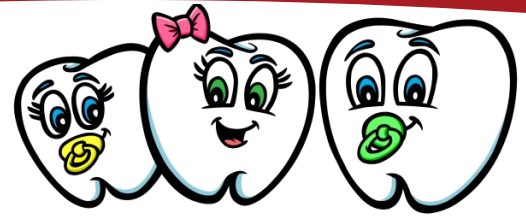
Please follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/PinalCountyCooperativeExtension/ where our team is posting updated information on all of our program offerings. In addition, I hope you will check out the new resource page where Extension professionals from across the state are creating content in response to questions being asked and providing links to information that you may find useful during this time <https://extension.arizona.edu/coronavirus-resources>.

All of us are wishing good health to you and your loved ones.

Cathy L. Martinez
Cathy L. Martinez
County Extension Director



FIRST SMILES




TOOTH—FRIENDLY SNACKS

Submitted By Greeta Mills, RDH Med, Oral Health Professional

When chatting with preschoolers about teeth and tooth brushing, the discussion quickly turns to the “sugar bugs that live in our mouth and make holes in our teeth, called cavities.”

Bacteria that live in our mouth eat what we eat and drink. When we eat foods that are high in sugar and starch, the bacteria break it down and produce acid. The acid that is produced by the “sugar bugs” attacks the teeth, causing cavities. The more often we eat and drink these foods, the more often acid is produced, increasing our risk for cavities.

Here are a few tooth-friendly snack suggestions.

- **Apples and other fresh fruit** give you a sweet taste without the risk of cavities. They are crunchy and contain a lot of water which helps stimulate your saliva. This will help clean the teeth of the acids while you are chewing. Fresh fruit doesn't get stuck in the grooves in the teeth like dried fruit does. Even though dried fruit is still fruit, the water has been removed which means that the sugar content is very high. One cup of raisins has about as much sugar as three cups of marshmallows! It is much better to eat grapes than raisins if you are looking for a tooth-friendly snack.
- 
- **Celery and Carrots** also contain a lot of water and make good crunchy snacks. Plus, there's a spot in the celery for cream cheese, peanut butter or hummus to make an even better snack.
 - **Cheese sticks and cubes** make great tooth-healthy snacks as well. Cheese helps to reduce the acidity of the mouth and the calcium and protein help make the tooth stronger. “Sugar bugs” are not very fond of cheese.
 - **Yogurt** can be a good tooth-friendly snack as well, if it is the plain yogurt. Some of the sweetened yogurts have as much sugar as a can of soda. Try adding chopped or sliced fresh fruit to your plain yogurt to keep it a tooth-friendly snack.
 - **Plain water** is best for teeth. It helps rinse the acid from your mouth, and doesn't add the sugar that juice, sports drinks, and soda will.



GROWING HEALTHY HOUSEPLANTS

Submitted By Rick Gibson, Cooperative Extension Agent, Agriculture

Almost everyone enjoys a nicely arranged display of indoor houseplants, but not everyone believes that they have the skill to keep them alive. Some people have a green thumb and can grow just about anything. Others seem to kill whatever they put their hands on. I personally reject the notion that it takes a special knack to grow healthy plants, indoors or out, and instead believe that if we know and follow the rules of basic plant care that anyone can grow just about anything.

Take for example, a simple Schefflera. The Schefflera is a common houseplant that will live for years inside a home or office. It is fast-growing, has dark green leaves, and displays a relatively thick canopy that is still open enough to let light through a window to brighten a room. It is not too fussy about conditions and many people find it an easy plant to grow. However, it does need a fertile, well drained soil that does not dry out so fast that the plant goes into shock between irrigations. In addition, it does not like sloppy wet soils, a shortage of nitrogen, and a lot of salt polluting its root system. If we give it what it needs, it should do just fine.

Philodendron is another relatively easy plant to grow indoors. It too is a hardy, fast growing leafy plant that is pretty common in many homes and offices. For old movie buffs, perhaps you will remember the long, long, philodendron that curled around Katherine Hepburn's office in the movie Desk Set. When she received a "pink slip" from the head office, she mistakenly believed that she and the other reference librarians were to be replaced by a computer. Some of you will remember that she enlisted all of her staff to help her carefully remove her plant from its perch and carefully tuck its long stems into a box for safekeeping. Now that was a fine specimen of a philodendron.

Philodendrons need a rich, well-drained soil and a regular, light fertilization with nitrogen. Given these conditions, and the right amount of water, they can live for long periods of time without a lot of fuss. If you want long philodendron vines curling around your office, like that of Ms. Hepburn, you can do it, if you give it the right care.

We could say the same about any number of house plants. On the other hand some, like African violet, orchid, and cyclamen, are a little fussier and require specialized and intricate care. If your track record of growing any houseplant is not good, you might want to steer clear from these more difficult-to-grow plants until you get some experience by growing some of the less demanding species.

So, what are some of the basics in good plant care? For indoor plants there are five key elements: water, light, temperature, soil, and nutrition.

Water is probably the most important aspect of houseplant care. Without water, plants will surely die, no matter how well adapted they are to the indoor environment. All plants have a preferred water requirement and successful caretakers understand that when they need it, they need it. When they don't they don't. Overwatering can present real challenges, especially if the roots become waterlogged and diseased. Under watering and overwatering are both sure-fire ways to kill a plant. We should learn how much water a particular plant needs, and how often it



Continued from page 3

should be irrigated, and then match those requirements. Some people use a moisture meter to test soil water content. I just stick my finger into the potting soil to the middle knuckle and feel whether the soil feels slightly moist or bone dry. Both methods of testing soil moisture levels work well.

Light is the next important factor. All plants have a light requirement. Some prefer full sun, some can get by on medium light, and some prefer no direct sunlight at all. Many houseplants are lost each year because a plant wanting medium light is put into a dark corner of the house, and vice versa.

One way to make sure the plant is getting enough light is to read the label that comes on most plants and then follow the directions. If they prefer a lot of light, consider placing them in a south-facing or west-facing window. If they like moderate light, an east window usually will do quite well. Low light requirements can often be met by placing the plant in a north-facing window or in a place without a light source.

Temperature is another critical factor in good houseplant growth and development. Yes, you guessed it. Every plant has a temperature requirement just as it has a water and light requirement. Some plants are fussy about cold and heat, and it is important to avoid putting a sensitive plant in a spot where they could get chilled or overheated. For example, a south-facing window with a lot of direct sunlight could cause a cold-loving plant to overheat. During the winter time, cold air coming off a window sometimes damages a tropical, heat-loving plant.

All potted plants need good drainage. They just do not like to have wet feet all the time. Good drainage is a function of the type of potting mix in which the plants are growing. It is important to choose a soil that holds water well, but allows excess water to drain out the bottom of the container. Many potting soils will mix 50 percent compost or some other type of organic matter with 50 percent sand, perlite, or vermiculite.

Growing a plant in a container will severely restrict the root system and require it to grow in a volume of soil that is much smaller than normal. Because its foraging area is much restricted, the roots will have less room to pick up nutrients. For this reason, plants in containers will need to be regularly fertilized with a balanced and complete fertilizer, that is, a fertilizer that has all three of its descriptive numbers with a value higher than zero.

The three numbers on a container of fertilizer stand for the percent nutrient in the mix. The first number is the percent nitrogen, the second is the percent phosphorus, and the third number is the percent potassium. Container plants need all three. A regular fertilization with a good, all purpose fertilizer will work wonders on most houseplants.

What are the signs that something is not right with a plant? The symptom that most often gives us the first clue is leaves turning yellow and falling from the plant. A sick leaf, especially more than one, usually means that one of the above conditions is not right. A little exploring will help identify the problem. Once we know the problem, we can then take corrective action. I contend that anyone can grow a nice, healthy houseplant if they give it the right growing conditions. With a little determination, attention to detail, and a desire to succeed, a home or office can be a perfect place to grow an indoor plant.

VISION & HEARING SCREENING



IS MY CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT ON TRACK?

Submitted By Tamara McCarville, Instructional Specialist

When should my baby hold his head up? My baby is 10 months old and not crawling, is that normal? My 3-year-old only uses one word sentences. What should I do if I think my child is experiencing delays in his growth and development? ***There is help!***

Help for Infants and Toddlers Children ages birth to 2 years 10 1/2 months are screened through the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) to determine if early intervention services are needed. Early intervention brings professionals, working in partnership with parents and families of children with special needs, together to support infants' or toddlers' growth, development, and learning. If you have questions about your child's development an AzEIP specialist will talk with you about your concerns and observe your child. If your child is found eligible, a plan will be designed to include strategies, activities, and supports to achieve desired outcomes related to your child's needs. Make an online referral at www.azdes.gov/azeip. For more information, call (602) 532-9960. Contact AzEIP if you have concerns about how your child:

- Plays & interacts with others
- Learns
- Communicates
- Moves
- Sees
- Hears

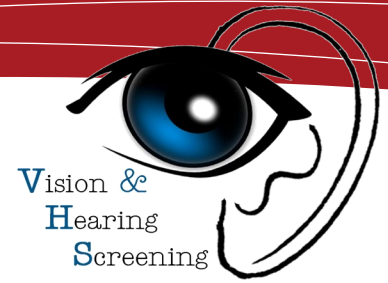
Help for Preschool and School-Aged Children. Your local school district, or the charter school your child attends (for school-aged students), screens children ages 2 years 10 1/2 months through 21 years. Public schools use an informal screening process to check your child's development and academic progress. Contact your local school district or the charter school your child attends. For children attending private schools, contact the principal at the school district in which the private school is located. Contact your school district if you have concerns about:

- Vision and Hearing
- Motor Control or Coordination
- Behavior or Social Skills
- Speech or Communication Skills
- Cognitive or Academic Skills

A referral for early intervention or special education services can come from a parent, guardian, foster parent, family member, teacher, counselor, or the student who AZ FIND finds learning difficult.

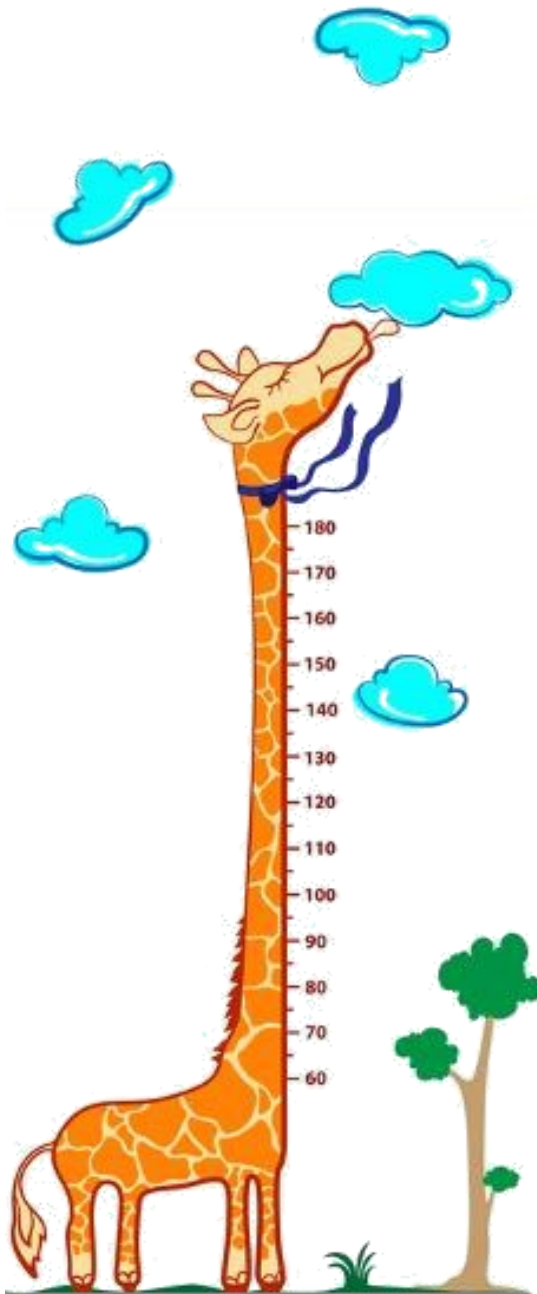
Using input from the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics, WebMD compiled a rough timeline of milestones in the above areas. Remember, a child can stray from this timeline and still be within the range of normal, but it's best to discuss any concerns with your pediatrician.

VISION & HEARING SCREENING



TIMELINE OF CHILDHOOD MILESTONES

Submitted By Tamara McCarville, Instructional Specialist



2 Months	Smiles at the sound of your voice Follows you with their eyes as you move around a room
3 Months	Raises head and chest when lying on stomach Grasps objects Smiles at other people
4 Months	Babbles Laughs Tries to imitate sounds Holds head steady
6 Months	Rolls from back to stomach and stomach to back Moves objects from hand to hand
7 Months	Responds to own name Finds partially hidden objects
9 Months	Sits without support, crawls, babbles "mama" and "dada"
12 Months	Walks with or without support Says at least one word Enjoys imitating people
18 Months	Walks independently Drinks from a cup Says at least 15 words Points to body parts
2 Years	Runs and jumps Speaks in two-word sentences Follows simple instructions Begins make-believe play
3 Years	Climbs well Speaks in multiword sentences Sorts objects by shape and color
4 Years	Gets along with people outside the family Draws circles and squares Rides a tricycle
5 Years	Tells name and address Jumps, hops, and skips Gets dressed Counts 10 or more objects

The University of Arizona, Cooperative Extension offers free vision, hearing, and developmental screenings from 1 month to 5 years. Call (520) 836-4651 or complete an online screening at <https://asgonline.com/family/c426ba>



STAY ACTIVE AT HOME

Submitted By Taylor Hedges, Program Coordinator

The CDC and the US government recommend practicing social distancing. There are many questions surrounding this recommendation. The most popular suggestion thus far is something called *Social Distancing*.

According to the dictionary *Social Distancing* is the practice of maintaining a greater than usual physical distance from other people or of avoiding direct contact with people or objects in public places during the outbreak of a contagious disease in order to minimize exposure and reduce the transmission of infection.

Policies that require many individuals to begin working from home and/or completing schoolwork from home can begin to be implemented as a result of practicing social distancing. This may cause some anxiety for people surrounding what they will do to stay active at home. Exercise can provide a great stress reliever for families and individuals. There are many ways for families and individuals to practice social distancing while also maintaining a physical activity routine.

Here are 5 tips to remain physically active while practicing social distancing:

- Avoid sitting in front of the TV or computer for extended periods. Take a 5-minute stretch or activity break at least once per hour.
- Go on walks. Walking has been shown to reduce stress and increase mood. Even taking a short walk down the block and back.
- Search YouTube for free exercise resources such as Yoga, Zumba, Stretching, and so much more!
- The chores count, too! Clean the house, wash the car, or mow the lawn with a push mower. Know that these activities count toward your goal of at least 150 minutes each week.
- Check out <https://www.azhealthzone.org/be-active> for more nutrition and physical activity tips!



MAC FARM—AG VENTURES



AG VENTURES—COMMUNITY PRIDE

Submitted By Victor Jimenez, 4-H Youth Development Agent

A big thank you goes out to the **Maricopa Trailblazers 4-H Club** in Maricopa, under the leadership of Janine Spencer. Her club of youth and adults made the effort to help with the MAC Farm agricultural maze by spreading 1000 square feet of wood chips in the walkway that the maze encompasses.

Scott's Miracle Grow Company in the Maricopa area generously donated several hundred bags of material to help make this effort possible. The agricultural maze is being developed to teach about Arizona agriculture to the thousands of youth that learn, and have fun learning as they interact in the MAC Farm Ag-Venture experience.

Please encourage schools in your area to participate in this worthwhile educational program by contacting Vic Jimenez at 480-620-8633. It's All Happening at the Farm !



FINANCIAL LITERACY



WHAT DOES SMART IN SMART GOALS MEAN?

Submitted By Sybil Peters, Instructional Specialist

While this tool/activity is taken from the Financial Literacy class series, it can be used to make Parenting Goals.

- S =** THE DEGREE TO WHICH A GOAL IS **SPECIFIC**; LESS SPECIFIC GOALS ARE MERELY DREAMS WE HAVE.
- M =** HOW WILL YOU **MEASURE** IF YOU HAVE SUCCESSFULLY MET YOUR GOAL?
- A =** HOW WILL YOU ATTEMPT TO MAKE YOUR GOAL **ACTIONABLE**? HOW CLEAR ARE THE ACTIONS YOU NEED TO TAKE TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL?
- R =** IS YOUR GOAL **RELEVANT** TO YOUR CURRENT NEEDS AND SITUATION?
- T =** SIMPLY BY INCLUDING AN ELEMENT OF **TIME** WE CAN DETERMINE HOW MUCH TO DO WITHIN THE TIMEFRAME

GOALS ARE **DYNAMIC** BECAUSE LIFE IS; WE CONTINUALLY NEED TO **EVALUATE** AND **REVISE** OUR GOALS OVER TIME.

“Parents create the environments and experiences in which learning happens, which makes them the first teachers their children will ever have.”

My Financial Goal Is: _____

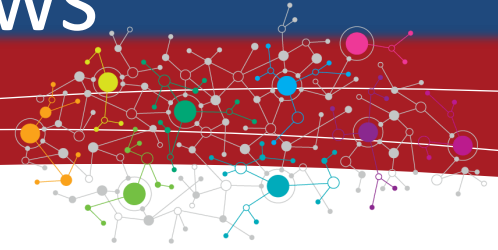
- | | | |
|----------|-------|-----------------------------------|
| S | _____ | (Specific as possible!) |
| M | _____ | (How is my success Measurable?) |
| A | _____ | (Action steps needed!) |
| R | _____ | (How is it Relevant to my needs?) |
| T | _____ | (Timeframe for completion!) |

To find out when/where the next series of classes is happening or for more information, please contact:

Sybil Peters, Instructional Specialist

820 East Cottonwood Lane, #C, Casa Grande, AZ 85122

Phone: (520) 836-5221 / E-mail: sybilpeters@email.arizona.edu



2020 CENSUS IS UNDERWAY, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR ME?

Submitted By Chris Crockett, Multimedia Assistant

The United States Census is constitutionally mandated and conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Every ten years the Census collects population and demographic information in the US. The information collected in the census is used to inform lawmakers where federal funding is most needed. It also determines how many seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives. Having this information is a vital tool for lawmakers and as such participation in the census is required by law.

It's also important during this time to be vigilant against false census questionnaires. The census will ask questions pertaining to the age, sex, and number of people living in your home. The census does NOT ask you questions about your social security number, bank account info, money, donations or anything related to political party affiliation.

To see some of the important benefits of the census in more detail you take a look at the US Census Community Benefits Toolkit .

Responding to the census can be done by mail, by telephone or online.

You can visit the US Census site at <https://2020census.gov/en.html> for more information or get started with your response right away!





GET MOVING TODAY!

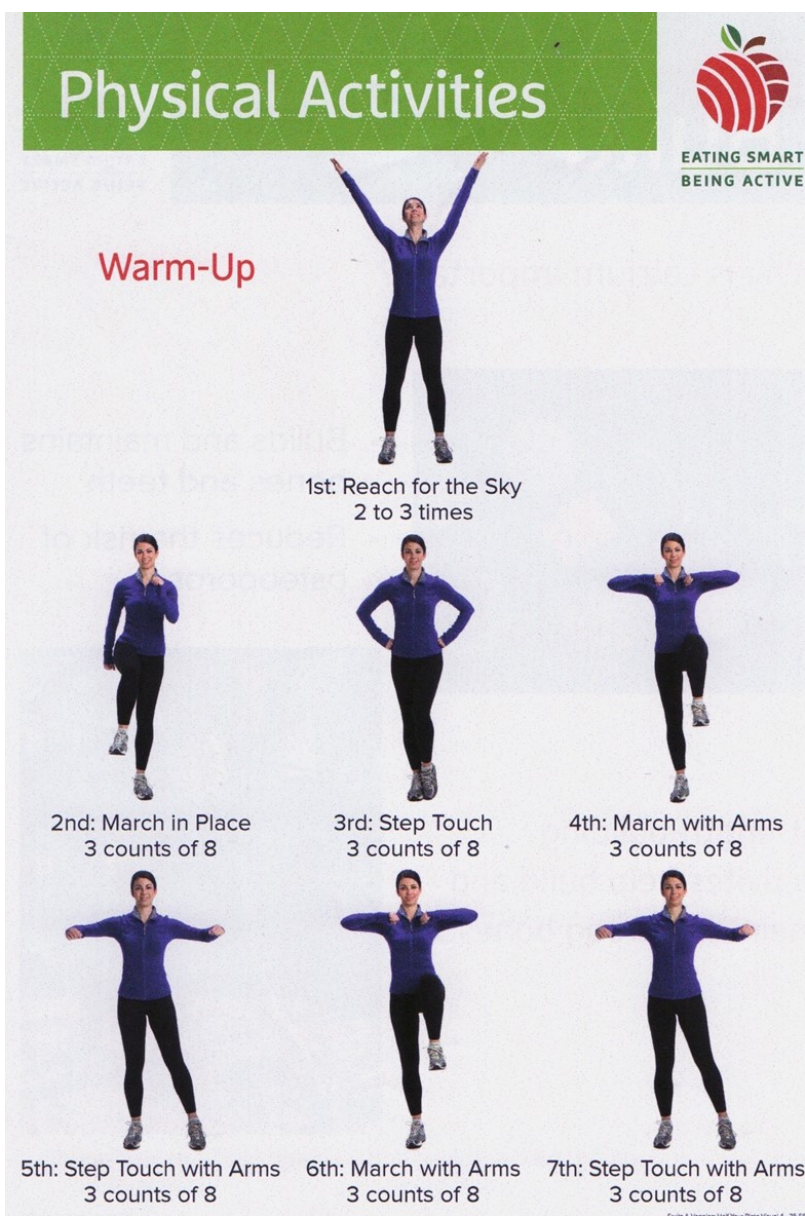
Submitted By Nubia Lara, Extension Program Assistant

Let's take a deep breath together. Inhale slowly through your nose and let your abdomen expand fully. Now exhale out slowly through your mouth. Deep breathing produces relaxation and is a good way to reduce stress. Physical activity stimulates the production of endorphins, chemicals in the brain that are the body's natural painkillers and mood elevators. Overall being physically active can improve your well-being by maintaining positive mental health. Exercising outdoors or indoors is a personal preference. Be aware of your body's limitations, know your limit. Stay hydrated with water before, during and after any type of physical activity.

Walking is a quick-stepping secret to dropping weight and staying fit for life. It does not require a gym membership or expensive equipment. You can swing your arms to build upper body strength while focusing on longer strides instead of taking more steps. This helps cover more ground while burning more fat. Whether you're going for a stroll, brisk walk, or power walk you can improve your health by doing more of it. This activity can be tracked through a phone app, fit bit device or simply by the amount of time you spend walking.

Some days, it is just difficult to stay motivated when the weather is not inviting. We can still get physical in the comfort of our own home. The following are ways you can exercise at home at no cost: jump rope, stair stepping, dancing, lunges, cleaning, high knees, jumping jacks, and squats. How much physical activity is needed? For adults you should be moderately active at least thirty minutes, five days a week. While strength and balance activities should be done two days a week. For children you should be active for 60 minutes every day.

So, what are you waiting for, let's get up and Get Moving today!



FIND US. LIKE US. FOLLOW US.

Facebook Pages:

- [Pinal County Garden and Landscape Program](#)
- [Maricopa Master Gardeners](#)
- [Pinal County 4-H](#)
- [Child Care Health Consultation for Pinal County, AZ](#)
- [Sensory & Developmental Screening](#)

Webpage: [CALS, Pinal County](#)

Twitter: [@RickGibson4](#)

Blog: [ricksgardenspot.blogspot.com](#)



Cathy L. Martinez, Cooperative Extension County Director
Richard D. Gibson, Regional Director
Blase Evancho, Field Crops Systems Assistant in Extension
Victor Jimenez, 4-H Youth Development Agent

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bee1@cals.arizona.edu
vicjimenez@yahoo.com

4-H provides educational opportunities for youth to become capable and contributing members of a global community. Children, ages 5-19, learn about healthy lifestyles, animals, plant sciences, and leadership.
Contact: Maria Melendez at (520) 836-5221, or mmelende@cals.arizona.edu

AZ Health Zone is a program designed to influence healthy eating and active living in a positive way that promotes health and reduces disease among all people living in Arizona.
Contact: Kevin Bawden at (520) 836-5221, x216 or kbawden@email.arizona.edu

Child Care Health Consultations (CCHC) develops relationships with childcare facilities to provide training to staff that will improve their knowledge and practice in the childcare setting.
Contact: Janet Jepsen at (520) 836-4651, x234 or janetj@cals.arizona.edu

Choose Health Action Teen (CHAT) is designed to recruit teens to teach younger children the benefits of healthy eating and active living. Teens also participate in community service events.
Contact: Esmeralda Castillo at (520) 836-5221, x244 or ecastill@cals.arizona.edu

Developmental Screening Program reaches out to families with children, ages 0-5, to screen for early developmental milestones such as gross and fine motor skills, communication, personal-social skills, and problem-solving capacities.
Contact: Esther Turner at (520) 836-5221, x238 or eturner@cals.arizona.edu

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is a nutrition education class designed to assist limited resource families in eating smart and being active and in acquiring the knowledge, skills, and behavioral changes necessary to contribute to their personal development and the improvement of the total family diet, nutritional and physical well-being.
Contact: Esmeralda Castillo at (520) 836-5221, x244 or ecastill@cals.arizona.edu

Field Crops Systems uses research and education efforts to work to improve field crop productivity and global food and fiber supply, farm economic viability, and protecting the environment.
Contact: Blase Evancho at (520) 836-5221, x215 or bee1@cals.arizona.edu

First Smiles is an oral health program that provides preventative oral health education, oral screening, referral to dentists for children birth to age five and pregnant women; and fluoride varnishing for children with emergent teeth up to age five.
Contact: Greeta Mills at (520) 836-4651, x235 or gmills@email.arizona.edu

MAC (Maricopa Agricultural Center) Farm Ag-Ventures educational programs include a combination of videos, educational presenters, hands-on learning experiences and tractor-trailer rides around their 2,200 acre farm for a close-up view of what makes a working farm operate.
Contact: Victor Jimenez at (520) 374-6216 or vicjimenez@yahoo.com

Master Gardener Program trains volunteers to provide up-to-date, locally tested practical information to those desiring to improve the quality and effectiveness of desert gardens and landscapes.
Contact: Rick Gibson at (520) 836-5221, x227 or gibsonrd@cals.arizona.edu

Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) is a program designed to teach educators how to better integrate water education, water conservation, and best management practices for water use into their curriculums.
Contact: Chuck Dugan at (520) 836-5221, x210 or cld1@email.arizona.edu

Sensory Screening Program provides free screenings of children, ages 0-5, for vision and hearing impairments that could affect developmental growth.
Contact: Esther Turner at (520) 836-5221, x238 or eturner@cals.arizona.edu

Soil Fertility Research and Education is a program that focuses on the development of research and education on soil testing, nutrient management, and fertilizer and animal waste best management practices.
Contact: Rick Gibson at (520) 836-5221, x227 or gibsonrd@cals.arizona.edu

Strengthening Families Program is a parenting and family strengthening program for families with children ages 3-5, that focuses on strengthening parental bonds with their children and learning more effective parenting skills.
Contact: Esther Turner at (520) 836-5221, x211 or eturner@cals.arizona.edu