

# PINAL COUNTY

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JULY—SEPTEMBER 2019

Volume 6, Issue 3

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Summer and Snakes	P.2
Teething Tips	P.3
Pine Combs 4-H Camp	P.4
Cotton Variety Trials	P.5
Hope Women's Center	P.6
EFNEP 50 Years	P.7
CDC Alert	P.8
Grill Safely	P.9
Mulching	P.10-11
Strengthening Families	P.12
Connect With Us	P.13

Main Office  
820 E. Cottonwood Lane, Bldg. C  
Casa Grande, AZ 85122  
Phone: (520) 836-5221  
Fax: (520) 836-1750

Satellite Office  
820 E. Cottonwood Lane, Bldg. E  
Casa Grande, AZ 85122  
Phone: (520) 836-4651  
Fax: (520) 836-4233

Maricopa Ag Center  
37860 W. Smith-Enke Road  
Maricopa, AZ 85139  
Phone: (520) 374-6263

Pinal County Extension Website  
<https://extension.arizona.edu/pinal>

The University of Arizona is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or genetic information in its programs and activities.

Persons with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation, such as a sign language interpreter, by contacting (Cooperative Extension, Pinal County, 820 East Cottonwood Lane, #C, Casa Grande, AZ 85122, 520.836.5221). Requests should be made as early as possible to allow time to arrange the accommodation.



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.

It's never too early or too late to think about your or your family's financial future. Cooperative Extension, in most states, offers a variety of different types of training in financial literacy and management. For those who like to learn online, there are two different courses I would recommend you consider, and both are available through eXtension – which is a nation-wide platform of information and education through which the many states collaborate to make such programs available.

The two courses I would encourage you to consider (both are free) are:

- Investing for Your Future – an 11-unit home study course for beginning investors with small dollar amounts to invest at any one time. This course is updated annually to include any changes to the tax code.
- Investing for Farm Families – an 8 lesson course that helps farm families plan for a financially stable future that meets long-term needs.

To sign up for either course (or to access the vast array of information available through eXtension), you will first need to open a free account at: <https://campus.extension.org/login>.

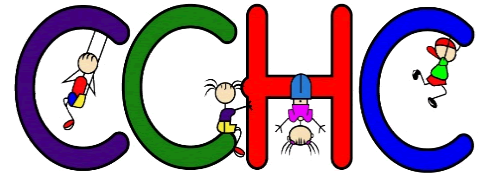
Lately, I have had quite a few conversations with individuals about solar. We have several publications that were written in the last couple of year to help folks have a better understanding of these systems. Among them are [Demystifying the Solar Module](#) and [Types of Solar Photovoltaic Systems](#).

With summer, it seems the questions coming into our office regarding food safety and storage also increase. Recent questions have included whether someone can leave canned goods in their park model trailers (AC off) over the summer (definitely not recommended), storage times for various types of food, and what the difference is between the Best Buy, Sell By, and Use By dates are on various packaging. Our Extension publication titled [Food Product Dating and Storage Times](#) can be a great resource for this type of information.

Cathy Martinez, County Extension Director



# CHILD CARE HEALTH CONSULTANTS



## SUMMER AND SNAKES

*Submitted By Janet Jepsen, Child Care Health Consultant*

The Arizona weather has been unusually beautiful. We have been so fortunate to have weeks upon weeks of lower temperatures, because of cool breezes, loads of cloud cover and refreshing rains. However, the down side of this extended spring weather is an increase in foliage, which feeds more rodents which in turn feeds more snakes. With the potential increase in the reptile population, the chances of encountering one of these slithering creatures also goes up.

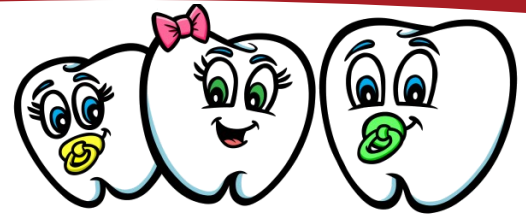
There are over 50 species of snakes that are native to Arizona. Approximately 20 different varieties reside in southern Arizona alone. Many are nonpoisonous but there are some that can be very deadly. Snakes can live on the ground, in the water or even up in the trees. Many that live on the ground actually live underground in burrows. They come out to feed and warm themselves in the sun. However, just like people, they seek shelter from the afternoon sun by hiding in cool, dark, shady areas. Due to the extreme Arizona heat, many snakes in this area are nocturnal, which means they are more active at night. If they are away from their burrows they may look for a place to sleep almost anywhere they can curl up in and feel safe (as depicted in the pictures to the right and below).



That is why, as parents and day care providers, it is so important for us to be vigilant in caring for the children in our charge. Be sure and check the backyard or play area for any signs of a snake. Check inside and underneath shoes, clothing or toys that may have been left outside over night. When encountering a snake take appropriate precautions. If you come upon a snake in the desert, the best way to proceed is to steer clear -- avoid it and leave it alone! If you find a snake at your home or in your yard keep everyone away from the snake and safe inside the building. Do not try to remove the snake on your own. Contact a professional to come and remove it for you.

Be safe this summer. Enjoy all the pleasures this warm weather brings. But just be cautious of the dangers lurking!!

# FIRST SMILES



## TEETHING TIPS

*Submitted By Greeta Mills, RHD Med, Oral Health Professional*



Your baby getting her first tooth is a milestone, right along with taking a first step!

Somewhere around five to six months of age, the first tooth erupts. Tooth eruption will last until around age 3, which means that on average, you can expect one new tooth every month during this time.

During teething, there are a lot of changes going on below the surface of the gums. Many of these changes can bring discomfort, inflammation, fever, sleep disturbances, and irritability. Most discomfort associated with getting a new tooth will last about eight days per tooth, four days before the tooth erupts and four days after.

Here are a few strategies to help while your baby is going through this process.

### Clean it

- Use water rather than your own mouth to clean anything that goes into your baby's mouth. Babies aren't born with the bacteria that cause cavities. They get them from us, the adults in their life. Some teething rings and pacifiers are dishwasher safe, some are not. Read the instructions that come on the package for directions on how to clean it.

### Keep it Safe—Choose safe teething toys. Here are some ideas:

- Make sure that liquid-filled teething toys are made of strong enough material that the baby can't chew a hole in it.
- Find teething toys/rings that don't have small pieces that could break off in your baby's mouth and cause choking. This includes the popular "amber" teething necklaces.
- Avoid putting a teething toy or pacifier on a cord or hang it around your baby's neck. It could get tangled around the neck and cause choking or strangling.

### Cool It

- Cold and pressure help with the pain of sore gums. Teething rings can be put in the refrigerator, but not the freezer. Frozen, firm, rubber teething rings can cause injury to the gums.
- Chill a wet washcloth for your baby to chew on. Use water only. Anything else will feed the bacteria that cause cavities.

### Don't Use It

- Commonly available teething gels are not recommended by the FDA, especially for use by children under 2 years old. They can cause stinging, burning, and discoloration of the gums.
- If your baby has a rare but serious blood disorder, using benzocaine which is found in most teething gels, can keep oxygen from getting to the cells of the body. This can cause serious health problems, including death.



# 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



## PINAL COUNTY—PINE COMBS 4-H CAMP

*Submitted by Misti Todd, Program Coordinator*

We had a great time in the cool pines of Williams, AZ (Senior Camp-June 3-7 / Junior Camp-June 10-14, 2019). We had six Senior Campers, 33 Junior Campers with six AMAZING counselors and a host of great volunteers who helped us make it a success!

4-H Camp is a learning experience everyone should have at least once in his or her lives. However, once is not enough! We are already planning for next year so get ready for an even better experience!

Check out our Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/pinalcounty4h/>)

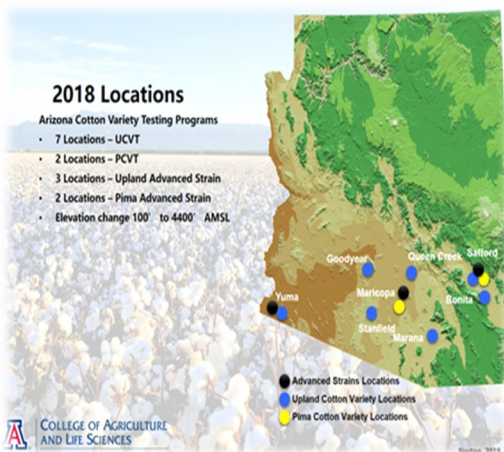


# FIELD CROPS

## COTTON VARIETY TRIALS

*Submitted by Blase Evancho, Assistant in Extension, Field Crops Systems*

Cotton Variety testing is one of the most important pieces of information that Cooperative Extension disseminates to its stakeholders in Central Arizona. With the large amount of cotton still planted in Pinal County, the information gives our growers some insight on yield and quality expectations of the revolving door of cotton varieties that seed companies offer for production.



Cooperative Extension has been providing cotton variety information to growers since at least 1965, when researchers were planting varieties with names like Coker 124 A and DPL 45, yielding 345 and 401 lbs of lint per acre respectively. Originally, the trials only represented certain areas of the state and commercially available cotton varieties, but have since gotten more robust and comprehensive to cover all cotton production areas as well as commercially available and experimental varieties of cotton. Today we annually have 7-8 testing locations on growers farms that test commercially available varieties of upland cotton called the Upland Cotton Variety Trial (UCVT) which regularly yield in the 1500-2000 pounds of lint per acre range. Of the 7 or 8 upland testing locations three are usually located in Pinal County with locations this year including Queen Creek, Stanfield and Coolidge. Other evaluations in the testing program include 1-2 locations in

the Pima Cotton Variety Trial (PCVT) and testing of experimental cotton varieties known as the Upland Advanced Strains and Pima Advanced Strains trials.

This bounty of yield and quality information provides a comprehensive Cotton Variety Testing Results booklet to growers each spring that gives them information to assist in producing the best crop possible on their farms. Understanding which varieties consistently perform well at multiple locations across the state, in multiple years, gives growers confidence that the varieties will continue to perform well in their production system.

To obtain a copy of the 2018 Cotton Variety Testing Results, please contact Blase Evancho at [bee1@email.arizona.edu](mailto:bee1@email.arizona.edu).

The entire cotton testing team would like to thank our incredible cooperators for working with us in producing this information, we couldn't do it without them





## HOPE WOMEN'S CENTER COMMUNITY GARDEN OF COOLIDGE

*Submitted by Jim Jepsen, Program Coordinator, Sr.*

### Help for today...



### Hope for tomorrow!

It has been three years since I last mentioned the hard working ladies at the Hope Women's Center in Coolidge, Arizona. These ladies remind me of a Federal Postal Worker. Come rain or shine the garden must come through. Depending on the day, the number of garden participants will range from five to twelve or more. As stated in a previous newsletter, I praised a crew of five ladies that are in the garden every Tuesday, no matter what. Over the years of teaching them and learning from them, I have grown to love and respect them in a professional way.

Sadly, one of these hard working ladies passed away this past January. Her name was Maria Urquijo, and I personally miss her very much. Maria was always there with a big broad smile and would strike a pose whenever a camera came out. She was always outspoken and had plenty to say about what was going on in the garden and just about everywhere else for that matter. Unfortunately for me, Maria spoke mainly Spanish, of which I know very little and I spoke mainly English, of which she knew very little. But, there was always someone around who could be an interpreter. One day at the garden Maria and I were both working on preparing the seed beds for tilling and planting. Soil amendments consisted of granular fertilizer, composted organic matter and manure. Maria wanted to know what kind of manure we were putting in the garden. I used my fingers on each side of my head and pawed at the ground to insinuate a bull. About the same time as that, I happened to remember the Spanish word for cow, vaca. "Vaca caca" I said to her, and the rest was history. She laughed as hard as could be and from that day on we became good garden buddies. Every week from then on Maria would come to the garden and help me learn Spanish. Not every word was a Spanish translation for an English garden term, but what the heck, everyone in Arizona needs to know a little bit of Spanish from our southern neighbors. Love to Maria and her family.

Back to the ladies at the Center, they have been so excited about all of the different things that they have been able to grow. They have learned much about warm season and cool season gardening, and I have conducted a few hands-on food demonstrations at the Center's kitchen using the fruits and vegetables that have been grown in their garden. The bounty from the fall garden was amazing. Corn, cabbage, lettuces, kohlrabi, broccoli, Brussels sprouts and a host of others were harvested and utilized. This spring, so far, has produced yet another bounty. From the trees on the property, the ladies have harvested apples, peaches and plums. From the in-ground and raised bed spring gardens, they have already harvested okra, squash varieties, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers and potatoes. They also harvested 30 plus pounds of elephant garlic, which one of the ladies taught us all how to braid together in order to hang them up to dry and use later.



The Hope Women's Community Garden has got to be one of the most successful gardens that we have in the AZ Health Zone program. From the garden, we have created a reliable source of food that is utilized within the Center and taken home to the families of the participants. By providing weekly gardening educational opportunities, the ladies who participate are awarded points that they can use to trade for every day necessities that have been graciously donated by members of the community to the Center's commerce store. This has not only created a sense of pride for these ladies, but it gives them a little more security to know that they are helping to provide just a little bit more for their families.

# EXPANDED FOOD & NUTRITION EDUCATION



## ARIZONA EFNEP CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF CHANGING LIVES!

*Submitted by Esmeralda Castillo, Program Coordinator*

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is a nation-wide community nutrition education program that helps limited-resource families acquire knowledge, skills, attitude and changed behavior necessary for nutritional well-being of the total family. EFNEP is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> year in Arizona!

EFNEP arose out of societal concern for the millions of Americans who were facing poverty, hunger and food insecurity in the 1960s. Between 1962 and 1967, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funded a pilot project in Alabama, Massachusetts, Missouri, Texas, and Rhode Island, as a five-year cooperative effort, to test ways to reach and teach nutrition to limited-resource audiences. Due to the pilot project's success, Congress allocated 10 million dollars for it in 1969 and the pilot project became widely known as EFNEP.

Today, EFNEP is active in all 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Micronesia and American Samoa. EFNEP is administered by USDA and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA) in cooperation with the State Cooperative Extension Services via 76 land grant universities, including the University of Arizona. EFNEP focuses on limited-resource families with an emphasis on parents and other adult caregivers who have primary responsibilities of feeding young children, as well as specialized programs for moms-to-be and new parents. The program also contains a youth component for ages 5 -19.

The passion and dedication of peer educators are important factors that contribute to the success of EFNEP. Since the program's inception, peer educators indigenous to the target audience, have gone above and beyond to reach and teach limited-resource families in their respective communities. Studies have shown EFNEP participation results in a reduction in government costs spent on health care, increases in fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity, as well as reductions in food storage and food preparation practices that cause foodborne illness. Participants also learn strategies to stretch their food dollars by comparing prices, planning meals and decreasing food waste. Peer educators cultivate a sense of personal success which motivates participants to finish high school, pursue a GED or training program and find employment.

Learning occurs through a series of free, hands-on nutrition education lessons. Taught by the peer educator, these lessons aim to increase the number of healthy children, youth and families. EFNEP follows a holistic approach which includes four core areas: diet quality and physical activity, food resource management, food safety, and food security, in a setting convenient to participants. At the end of the series, participants receive a certificate of completion from the University of Arizona. EFNEP graduates exemplify significant improvement of the total family diet, nutritional well-being and physical activity behavior.



For more information or to schedule an EFNEP class, contact Esmeralda Castillo, EFNEP Program Coordinator, at the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, Pinal County office located at 820 E. Cottonwood Lane #C, Casa Grande, AZ 85122 or call 836-5221 Ext. 244 or email [ecastill@cals.arizona.edu](mailto:ecastill@cals.arizona.edu).

# NETWORKING NEWS

## HEALTH ADVISORY: HEPATITIS A IN ARIZONA

*Submitted by Cathy Martinez, FCHS Agent*

The Arizona Department of Health Services emailed this notice to their email distribution list.

Arizona, along with many other states, is currently experiencing a statewide outbreak of hepatitis A affecting eight counties. There have been more than 350 cases, primarily among at-risk individuals, which includes illicit drug users, people experiencing homelessness or unstable housing, and those who have been recently incarcerated. A striking 80% of cases have been hospitalized.

Hepatitis A is highly contagious, but it is also effectively preventable. The best way to prevent hepatitis A infection is to get vaccinated. Vaccination is generally recommended for:

- people experiencing homelessness or unstable housing;
- people who use drugs;
- people who have recently been incarcerated; and
- men who have sex with men.

Hepatitis A is a contagious liver disease that results from infection with the hepatitis A virus. Symptoms include:

- fever;
- nausea and vomiting;
- abdominal pain; and
- yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice).

However, some people with hepatitis A do not have symptoms.

Hepatitis A is highly contagious and spreads when a person unknowingly ingests the virus from objects, food, or drinks contaminated by microscopic amounts of stool from an infected person. Hepatitis A can also spread from close personal contact with an infected person such as through sex or caring for someone who is ill. People who are infected can spread the virus for about three weeks before and after symptoms appear.

In addition to vaccination, proper hygiene and handwashing can help prevent the spread of the virus.

**If you would like to get the hepatitis A vaccine, or if you're not sure if you have had the vaccine, contact your health care provider or pharmacy. If you think you might have hepatitis A, contact your doctor.**

**For additional information on hepatitis A in Arizona, please visit [azhealth.gov/HepAOutbreak](https://azhealth.gov/HepAOutbreak).**



# NETWORKING NEWS

## GET READY TO GRILL SAFELY THIS SUMMER

*Submitted by Cathy Martinez, FCHS Agent*

Food poisoning peaks in the summer months, when warmer temperatures cause foodborne germs to flourish. Follow these steps for a safe and enjoyable grilling season.

- **Separate** raw meat from cooked meat.
- **Clean** your grill, grill brush and work surfaces before and after cooking.
- **Cook** to the right temperature, using a food thermometer to be sure.
- **Chill** leftovers within an hour of cooking, if it is above 90°F outside.

## Get Ready to Grill Safely

**Cook** Use a food thermometer to ensure meat is cooked hot enough to kill harmful germs. When smoking, keep temperature inside the smoker at **225°F** to **300°F** to keep meat at a safe temperature while it cooks.

<b>145°F</b>	beef, pork, lamb, veal (then let rest 3 minutes before serving)
<b>145°F</b>	fish
<b>160°F</b>	hamburgers and other ground meat
<b>165°F</b>	poultry

 [www.cdc.gov/foodsafety](http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety)





## MULCHING BENEFICIAL FOR PLANTS

*Submitted by Rick Gibson, Cooperative Extension Agent, Agriculture*

As we enter the hot weather season, let's once again review the importance and value of mulching around trees and shrubs. By definition, mulches are materials that are placed on top of the soil beneath garden and landscape plants to reduce water evaporation, add a little extra nitrogen fertilizer, prevent weed germination, minimize soil crusting, and buffer soil temperatures. By comparison, soil amendments are materials that are mixed into the soil to improve soil tilth. All too often we rely solely on soil amendments to help us through the growing season while neglecting the important benefits of a good surface mulch.

Probably the greatest single benefit provided by surface mulches is the reduction of water evaporation from the surface of the soil. Soil is formed by the erosion of parent rocks into small particles that support plant growth. The spaces between these particles are called pores. It is in these spaces or pores that irrigation water is stored.

Surface evaporation results when the sun heats up the soil and causes water molecules near the surface to evaporate and drift off into the air. Because water molecules tend to stick to each other, the evaporation of one molecule pulls the next one just below it into a position where it can be evaporated. In this manner, one by one, water droplets are lost from the soil. This upward movement of water towards the surface like juice in a straw is called capillary action. Capillary action will continue until the attraction of the soil particles for the water molecule equals or exceeds the attraction between the individual water molecules themselves and the water tension is broken. By this time, however, much water will be lost through evaporation. Placing a protective layer of mulch on top of the soil prevents the sun from heating and evaporating the water.

There are other benefits provided by mulches. The evaporation of water tends to build up salt layers at the soil surface. Salts are chemicals that dissolve easily in water. Think table salt in a soup. Most water supplies in Arizona have at least some salt dissolved in them. As water evaporates these salts are left behind.

The accumulation of salt at the soil surface can cause the soil to crust over, hinder the emergence of young seedlings at germination, and contaminate irrigation water as it is applied to the soil. Dissolved salts easily enter plants through the roots as they absorb water and, moved up to the leaves, cause salt burn symptoms. By reducing water evaporation, mulching minimizes or prevents these types of problems.

Another benefit is cooling of the soil underneath the mulch. As the mulch layer shields the soil from the sun's rays, it keeps the temperature of the soil around the roots at a level favorable for root and plant health.



A good surface mulch will help reduce weed problems when it is applied in a layer that is thick enough to smother germinating weed seeds. For most weedy plants that germinate, seed, and die in one year, this often means a mulch depth of at least two inches. When selecting a mulch, avoid those that may be contaminated with seeds or vegetative parts of weeds that could grow new plants. For highly aggressive perennial weeds, such as Bermudagrass and nutsedge, mulching may only work for a short period during the growing season.



*Continued from page 10*

Many plants are damaged each year because soils are allowed to become too dry. Because mulches slow evaporation, and prevent or slow the growth of weeds that steal water, mulches help buffer the severe fluctuations of soil moisture that can occur between irrigations. This means that more water is available for the desirable plants for a longer period of time with less waste.

Organic mulches laid on the soil begin to decompose as microorganisms in the soil begin to work at the soil-mulch interface. As these materials begin to break down, nitrogen is often released into the soil. As a plant food, the release of nitrogen is a good thing. It is a slow process, but it does help.

Okay, you say, with all of these benefits that come from mulching, how do I get started? It is important to select the correct mulch for the task at hand. It is also essential to think about the plant's water needs and how irrigation water will be applied through the mulch.

Many different materials can be used as mulches. Peat moss, composted leaves, straw, stones, and even plastic sheets or asphalt shingles can be used. Decorative bark, gravel, compost, redwood sawdust, peat moss, composted steer manure, and forest mulch products all have their place. For vegetable and flower beds, the organic mulches are most desirable, because these can be tilled into the soil as soil amendments at the end of the growing season.

Yard waste used for mulching should be well composted before it is applied. Composting breaks the raw plant materials down into a product that has uniform texture and color. This uniformity creates a pleasing visual perspective to the landscape that non-composted materials cannot provide. Composting also helps destroy weed seeds.

Pea gravel, cobblestones, or crushed rock mulches are popular in desert landscapes. These layers of decomposed granite, river gravels, and other inert materials act to prevent germination of weed seeds by serving as protective mulches to the underlying soil. While the stones do absorb heat, they tend to keep the soil cool underneath. Kick over a few stones during the summer and you will often find a scorpion underneath who knows that this is true.

Mulches used around trees and shrubs should begin a few inches from the trunk and spread outward towards the outer edge of the plants. Never apply mulch next to the trunks of trees and shrubs because crown rot disease, and other problems, can result. Keep an eye on the thickness of the mulch. As the layer settles over time, it will be important to keep adding new material.

Drip irrigation systems, both above ground and below ground, work well with mulches. The layout of the garden, the slope of the soil, and the source of water, are key factors determining the correct irrigation system to use. One benefit of above ground applications of water is the potential to leach nitrogen and organic acids from the decaying organic mulches into the soil where they nourish the plant, feed the microorganisms, and help improve the structure of the soil.

Mulches aid in maintaining favorable conditions of the soil around garden trees, shrubs, and bedding plants. By using mulches correctly, many of the common soil problems that are all too often seen in area gardens and landscapes can be avoided.



# STRENGTHENING FAMILIES



## Family, Fun and Free!

*Submitted by Esther Turner, Program Coordinator, Sr.*



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
**Cooperative Extension**  
Pinal County

### ABOUT THE **STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROGRAM (SFP)**

The **Strengthening Families Program** consist of three skills courses: Parenting, Children's Life Skills, and Family Skills. Skills Building Program for children ages 3-5 and their parents (14 sessions / 7 weeks). Parents and children have fun while learning valuable bonding techniques. Family style dinner at each class and Family Graduation Celebration. All parents or primary caregivers must register and attend classes. Child care available for children whose families are participants of the program.

### LOCATIONS & TIMES OF THE NEXT **SF PROGRAM**

#### Option A

Classes will be held every Monday—Starting August 12, 2019 at 5:30pm & continues through mid-November 2019  
Coolidge, AZ (Location TBD)

#### Option B

Classes will be held every Tuesday—Starting August 13, 2019 at 5:30pm & continues through mid-November 2019  
First Baptist Church, 13955 South Sunland Gin Road, Arizona City, AZ

### FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE **SF PROGRAM**

University of Arizona, Cooperative Extension, Pinal County  
820 East Cottonwood Lane, #C, Casa Grande, AZ 85122  
(520) 836-5221, x211 / [eturner@cals.arizona.edu](mailto:eturner@cals.arizona.edu)

SUPPORTED BY

 **FIRST THINGS FIRST**

# VISION & HEARING SCREENING



## SUMMER ACTIVITIES FROM A-Z

*Submitted by Jennie Treadway, Program Coordinator*

Summer is here, and for those of us living in Arizona that means things are about to get HOT! Here is a list of things you can do with your kids this summer to get out, or stay in, but most of all just have fun.

- A = Arts and crafts - Coloring, pasting, scissors and more. Enjoy making something fun and creative. You can also check out your local craft store for fun kids craft days.
- B = Bake - Make something yummy with your kids. Children love to help out in the kitchen, mix and stir up something fun to eat.
- C = Camping - Pitch a tent in your backyard or your living room. Your kids will have a blast either way.
- D = Dance Party - Turn up the music and just DANCE! Your kids will not care if you have two left feet.
- E = Eat and Play - Visit local fast food restaurants with playgrounds. You can relax while your kids play.
- F = Fort Building - Remember grabbing all the couch cushions and blankets in the house and designing a fort? Time to share that with your kids.
- G = Garden - Find a local garden in your community to volunteer at or explore foods that grow in a garden with your child.
- H = Home Improvement Kids Workshops - Check out your local store for projects and scheduling. If you cannot make it out of the house, find some simple jobs at home that your kids can help with.
- I = Ice Cream - Whether it be your local Ice Cream Truck or just some cool treats at home, nothing says summer more than Ice Cream.
- J = Jump - Jump rope, jump houses, jump parks...However you plan to do it - Just jump!
- K = Kites - Go fly a kite.
- L = Letters - Write letters to family or friends and mail them. If your child cannot write yet, let them draw a picture instead.
- M = Movies - Go out to the theater for their Summer Movie Programs or kick it on the couch with your kid's "go to" movie favorite. Don't forget movies in the park, as well.
- N = Nature walk - Explore nature at the park, neighborhood or your own backyard. Talk about what you find.
- O = Open Gym - Check out your local gymnastic studios to see if they have cheap open gym days or times.
- P = Picnic - Lay out a blanket and enjoy. Indoor or outdoor, eating on the floor is always an adventure.
- Q = Quiet Reading - Find time to read quietly alone or a quiet time to read to your child.
- R = Railroad Parks - There are several parks in Arizona that have trains that you can ride and explore.
- S = Summer Food Programs - Check out your local school districts to see if they are running the summer food programs. Most offer FREE breakfast and lunch for children, ages 1-18.
- T = Technology Free - Play some old games like Tic Tac Toe, Twister and Trouble. Clean out that game closet and play.
- U = Under the Stars - Enjoy some time kicking back and looking up at the night's sky. There are even a few apps to help you identify what you are looking at.
- V = Visit a local attraction. Your local libraries have **culture passes** to all sorts of fun places to explore.
- W = Water Day - Splash pad or backyard hose, kids always enjoy a day filled with water play.
- X = eXercise - Pop in that old Jane Fonda Tape or better yet find cool new ways to exercise with your kids. There are videos online or you can check out your local city Parks and Recreation.
- Y = You Choose - Let your kids choose what they want to do (within reason) - Kids have some great ideas and it might be fun to explore them.
- Z = Zoo - A day at the zoo, this is always a great activity to do with the kids. If you are not able to make it to the zoo, then make a day of acting like different zoo animals. Talk about what they eat, where they live and what they look and sound like.

The developmental and sensory screening team would like to make sure your kids have a fun-filled summer. Don't forget summer is also a great time to make sure your children are ready for preschool or school next year by checking their vision, hearing and developmental milestones. Call us today to schedule a FREE Screening for your child. Screenings are offered for children birth-5 (before they start kindergarten).

# 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

[clmartin@cals.arizona.edu](mailto:clmartin@cals.arizona.edu)  
[gibsonrd@cals.arizona.edu](mailto:gibsonrd@cals.arizona.edu)  
[bee1@cals.arizona.edu](mailto:bee1@cals.arizona.edu)  
[vicjimenez@yahoo.com](mailto: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: Misti Todd at (520) 836-5221, x213 or [mtodd@email.arizona.edu](mailto:mtodd@email.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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:eturner@cals.arizona.edu)