

# ***SOUTHEAST AREA EXTENSION SAYS*** **Managing in Tough Times**

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## HELPING CHILDREN IN TOUGH TIMES

When money becomes scarce, the whole family, from children to parents, can feel the pinch. We may have limited or no control over the causes of financial difficulties, but we control our responses. Discuss money problems in a way that lessens stress and anxiety in children. Talk to them about your family's situation in a way the child can understand. Do not keep the income loss a secret from children and other family members, despite the urge to spare them or "save face".

- Parents can turn tough times into learning situations. Help children realize that managing money in tough times requires communication, patience and hard work. Help children to understand that money problems do not need to rob the family of unity or happiness. Simple things that cost little or nothing can enrich family life. Sticking together is essential to getting through challenges.
- Show children the value of fun, inexpensive ways to enjoy time together, such as a picnic at the park, renting a video and making popcorn, riding bicycles as a family, volunteering on a service project or other family activities.
- Increase family communication and solidarity and help children feel some control in their lives. Take time to communicate regularly. Discuss financial concerns appropriately. Tell all family members that they are loved and appreciated.
- Involve all family members in making decisions about money. Working together to make money decisions helps families grow closer together in both tough times and good times. Children grow in understanding and self-worth when they contribute to solving financial problems. This may mean a teen getting a part-time job or children agreeing to limit their spending requests.
- Help children learn the difference between wants and needs. This is a basic money management skill we all need to learn. Even preschoolers can learn the difference between wants and needs. As you model this skill for your children, talk to them about it. "I sure want a new pair of boots, but my old ones are still wearable and I need the money for X".



**Southeast Area**  
*Extension*

### **County Extension Offices**

#### **Baca County**

772 Colorado St.  
Springfield, CO 81073  
719-523-6971

#### **Bent County**

1499 Amb. Thompson Blvd.  
Las Animas, CO 81054  
719-456-0764

#### **Cheyenne County**

425 S. 7<sup>th</sup> W.  
P. O. Box 395  
Cheyenne Wells, CO 80810  
719-767-5716

#### **Crowley County**

603 North Main St.  
Courthouse Annex  
Ordway, CO 81063  
719-267-4444, ext. 7

#### **Kiowa County**

1305 Goff  
P. O. Box 97  
Eads, CO 81036  
719-438-5321

#### **Otero County**

411 N. 10<sup>th</sup>  
P. O. Box 190  
Rocky Ford, CO 81067  
719-254-7608

#### **Prowers County**

1001 S. Main  
Lamar, CO 81052  
719-336-7734

- Encourage children to help in ways that are appropriate to their age. Children can help during tough times by saving money they earn, limiting their spending choices or requests, or contributing income from a part-time job to help with family needs. Do not put burdens on children to give economic support, but discuss options and allow them to contribute in ways that are meaningful.
- While it's a hard way to learn, managing in tough times can teach children resilience, self-worth and money management skills. Use this time as an opportunity for growth for all.

For more information, contact your local Extension Office: Baca County 719-523-6971, Bent County 719-456-0764, Cheyenne County 719-767-5716, Crowley County 719-267-5243, Kiowa County 719-438-5321, Otero County 719-254-7608, Prowers County 719-336-7734. Or find us on the web at: <http://sea.extension.colostate.edu/>. CSU Extension offers up-to-date, unbiased, research-based information to families in Southeast Colorado. CSU Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.

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