Workshop 4

*Child care programs use mealtimes to teach pre-reading and math*

One of the easiest ways to predict a young child’s language ability and pre-reading ability is to observe the mealtime conversations of that child’s family.

“Families that have regular mealtimes, and share more around the meal table, have children with larger vocabularies who use more complex sentences,” according to Prof. Dave Riley of UW-Madison. He explains that “this is true, actually, of conversations held anytime during the day, but mealtime conversations are especially good predictors of pre-reading abilities in preschoolers. We think this is because mealtimes are an everyday event that becomes a routine, which makes them perfect for learning.”

The same is true for learning other topics too. Children learn to share, to take turns, and to control their impulsiveness (waiting until everyone is served before eating) around the meal table. “You’d be surprised how much mathematics children learn at the meal table,” says <NAME>, Family Living Agent for XXX County Extension. “When a two-year-old helps you by setting the table, this is where they really begin to understand the regularities of numbers, that the number of plates is the same as the number of people, that the number of cups will equal the number of plates, that you can subtract one if one person is missing.”

A workshop on how to use mealtimes to teach these kinds of lessons is being offered to the staff of local child care programs by <NAME> of XXX County Extension on <DATE>. The workshop is free and qualifies child care staff for continuing education (Registry) credits. For more information, contact the county Extension office at <TELE NUMBER> or <WEB URL>.

268 words.

Lead = 26 words.