

As They Grow

An Early Learning Newsletter for Families of Preschool Children

UW
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Learning for life

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Holiday Time and Young Children

Holidays are a wonderful time to celebrate and strengthen family life. Working outside the home may mean that you may not have the time to create an elaborate holiday feast, nevertheless you can create magical memories without exhausting yourself in the process. Careful planning and setting priorities can help ease unrealistic expectations and unexpected pressure. Keep these thoughts in mind:

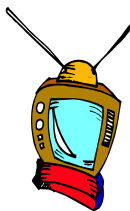
- ◇ Children don't always understand the concept of time. Let them mark off the days and celebrations on a calendar.
- ◇ Balance is the key to enjoying the holidays with children. Make sure the activities are right for their ages and include a time for rest during the event.
- ◇ Children need time to unwind after a big event. Plan time to allow everyone to calm down before bedtime.
- ◇ Children are naturally excited at the appearance of decorations, and the prospect of receiving gifts. Be patient with them. Don't expect them to be good for goodness sake.



Best wishes for healthy and happy holidays!

Holiday Television Programs

The holiday season brings a wide variety of television shows featuring flying reindeer, dancing snowmen, and magical monsters. Television gives many children their first extended view of their world and that view can be distorted. On the other hand, television can stimulate children's minds to process large amounts of new information.



In planning your family viewing this holiday season:

Be selective - Encourage children to watch programs that have the best potential for positive play. Take the time to look for these kinds of programs and watch the programs with your children.

Encourage children to talk - Talking about what they've seen turns passive TV watching into active language development. Books, folk tales, and games also can be used effectively to tie the TV world to family values. Such discussions can help the child to differentiate between reality and fantasy.

Play and Toys . . . a Child's Work

Play is essential for a child's learning. Toys are the tools of play. Toys should be safe, affordable and developmentally appropriate. Children do not need expensive toys.

Select toys that . . .

- a child can do many things with, not just one thing. Paints, balls, clay, or a cardboard box are good choices.
- put power and imagination in the child rather than the toy maker. A battery-powered robot required a lot of imagination by the toy maker, but a child cannot do many things with it. Imagine all the things a child could do with a stuffed animal, a doll, or a push car.
- encourage joint activities and cooperation. Children enjoy learning with others. Think of materials that prompt playing with others. Classic examples are a ball or Frisbee where it takes two to play.
- prepare your child for the future. What kind of world will that be? If men and women of the future will have similar roles in life, they will need experiences for a career, as well as a guidance to be a nurturing parent. Encourage both independence and nurturance in boys and girls, through play with an assortment of toys — dolls, trucks, balls, kitchen utensils, a medical kit, cars, etc.
- you can play along with your child. There is no substitute for loving, unconditional attention from parents. A child's self-esteem and level of mastery are enhanced when adults participate in play. Playing together can be fun!

Toys have enhanced play value when they . . .

- ▶ can be used in many ways.
- ▶ allow children to be in charge of the play.
- ▶ appeal to children at more than one age or level of development.
- ▶ are not linked to video games, TV, or movies.
- ▶ can be used with other toys for new and more complex play.
- ▶ will stand the test of time by continuing to be part of play as children develop new interests and skills.
- ▶ promote respectful non-stereotyped, non-violent interactions among children.
- ▶ help children develop skills important for further learning and a sense of mastery.



Parents are constantly faced with decisions about what toys to buy and what toys to avoid. The influence of high-powered marketing and popular culture interfere with thoughtful decision-making at the toy store. Parents need to promote children's dramatic and constructive play by making informed choices about toys, and by working with others at home, school, and in the community to promote positive play with toys.

Making Artificial Snow

- 1/3 c. instant laundry starch powder
- 2 T. soap flakes
- 1/2 c. cold water

Using a blender or beater, combine soap flakes and starch with water and beat until suds are stiff and dry. The snow can be used for winter decorations and is attractive when stenciled on glass.

Serving up Healthy Ho-Ho-Holiday Foods

Holidays and parties are times when encouraging a preschooler to eat healthfully can be more difficult. Holidays are occasions when "special" — often sweet or rich foods — are eaten. Think about ways you could encourage moderation.

Holidays are fun times of the year, and should be treated as such. Food can be a part of that fun, but the food served can be healthy as well. You can select foods lower in fat, sugar, and salt; or, you can modify traditional recipes. If Grandma's cookies or fudge wouldn't be the same if you changed anything, eating a smaller portion saves on fat and calories.



These practices are healthier for your preschooler and your family. They are also good for your child to see at this age, because children are beginning to learn about healthy food choices and eating habits.

This is a good time to involve your child in selecting and preparing food:

Look in cookbooks that feature foods lower in fat, sugar, and salt. Often they have recipes for party dishes, appetizers, desserts, and ethnic foods. Together at home or in the grocery store you can **talk** about why you are choosing certain foods.

You may find you can replace a traditional holiday activity that centers on food with one that makes a decoration or gift.

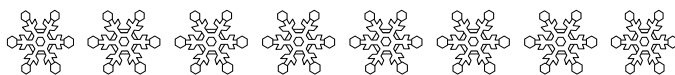
Holidays are a good time to **encourage active play**, indoors and out.

Making a piñata can be a fun project. Most libraries have books on how to make one, or you can buy one at import stores. Fill the piñata with little boxes of raisins, sugar-free gum, and small toys instead of candy.

Holiday Shopping with Children

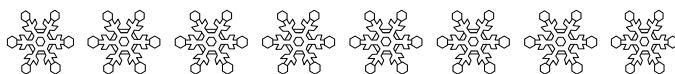
Shopping with children is often a challenge, especially during the holiday rush. Some tips to make the shopping trip more enjoyable/successful are:

- * Plan the trip limiting the number of stores you visit to two or three.
- * Limit the number of people for whom you purchase gifts to a very few and think about what you are looking for before you leave the house. Talk about gift ideas and budget with the children to eliminate inappropriate choices and prevent debates in the store.
- * Shop when stores are least likely to be busy so that children are not overwhelmed by crowds. (When you are short and can see mostly knees and almost nothing on the counters, shopping is not fun!)
- * Locate bathrooms BEFORE you need them.
- * Shop when children are at their best: fed and rested.
- * Include a light lunch or snack as part of the special time together.
- * Build in time to do what the children want, such as visit a special store or see Santa Claus.
- * If children are having a bad day—don't go shopping. If that is not an option, find someone to care for the children — swap time with a friend.

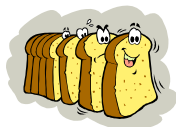


Fun in the Snow

- > Snow sculpting
- > Mke snow angels
- > Sledding
- > Make a fort
- > Catch snowflakes on your tongue
- > Eat icicles
- > Make snow cones
- > Shake snow off trees
- > Snow skating



HOLIDAY SANDWICHES



- 1 small banana, mashed
- 1/2 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1/2 cup raisins, chopped
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 48 slices of bread (whole-grain preferred)

Combine mashed banana, peanut butter, raisins, and honey in a bowl. Cut each slice of bread with a 4-inch holiday-themed cookie cutter. Spread 2 teaspoons peanut butter mixture on half of bread cutouts, top with remaining bread cutouts. Arrange on a plate, cover and chill. This makes 24 sandwiches. Each has about 100 calories, 3.5 grams of fat, and 140 mg. of sodium.

Another option: Use holiday cookie cutters with your child's favorite sandwich recipe.

UW-Extension Workshops for Parents/Caregivers

◇ Learning through Play!

Tues., Dec. 11, 6:15-8:15 p.m. — Ives Grove Office Complex, 14200 Washington Ave., Sturtevant
Bev Schumacher, Learning Props, L.L.C., will facilitate this workshop, where participants will explore how to make the classroom or home a fun, learning place for children to play. Attendees should expect to P-L-A-Y!
To participate, please bring an empty, clean egg carton, milk jug caps, and lids from juice concentrate.

To receive Registry Barcodes or verification of attendance, a \$5 check or money order to Racine County UW-Extension, 14200 Washington Avenue, Sturtevant, WI 53177 must be received by mail or in person on or before the registration deadline of Dec. 4, or \$10 due the night of seminar.

There is no fee for parents, grandparents, and those interested in issues related to young children, but to register, call: 262-886-8460 by Dec. 4. Questions? Contact, Barbara Stoffel-Emde 262-833-8732

◇ Touchpoints in Practice Early Care and Education (Childcare Providers Only) Fee is \$15, includes lunch.

Sat., Nov. 10, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. — Ives Grove Office Complex, 14200 Washington Avenue, Sturtevant
Touchpoints are “universal spurts of development and trying times that accompany them through childhood.” This workshop focuses on using “touchpoints” as windows to help parents understand their child's behavior and prevent future problems. Registration forms (see enclosed flyer) and checks payable to Racine County UW-Extension, 14200 Washington Ave., Sturtevant, WI 531177 **due by Wed., Nov. 7.** Questions? Contact Tina Ginner, 262-886-8492 or tina.ginner@ces.uwex.edu

◇ Touchpoints in Practice & Networking - 2008. 3 sessions (Family Service and Child Care Providers Only)

Friday, Jan. 25, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Touchpoints Approach-Rational \$15

Friday, Feb. 8, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Touchpoints Approach-Development-Prenatal to 3 yrs. \$15

Friday, Feb. 22, 8:30-10:30 a.m. Networking Session Continental breakfast; connect w/service providers \$5

Friday, Feb. 22, 10:45 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Touchpoints Approach-Development 3 to 6 yrs. \$10

Participants can opt to attend any or all of the training. To be “Touchpoint Approach Trained,” participants must attend at least 16.5 hours of training. Questions? Contact Bev Baker, 262-886-8462.

References:

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This newsletter is a publication of the University of Wisconsin-Extension Cooperative Extension, a Touchpoints Project site. Barbara Stoffel-Emde, Family & Community Educator, Racine County; Jenny Wehmeier, Family Living Agent, Walworth County

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