



December 2017

Play and Learn at Eastpoint
1005 Northpoint Blvd.-Suite 701 ~ Baltimore, Maryland 21224
Phone: 410-282-2057 ~ Fax: 410-282-6056 ~ Email: EPDirector@playcenters.org
Visit us at www.playandlearnmaryland.org ~ Tax ID: 52-1259566



From the Director

Seasons Greetings! Let the winter and holiday festivities begin at Play and Learn with plenty of learning, laughter, and wonder. Throughout the month of December, we will be collecting donations for some special children in our community. More information will be distributed soon.

During the week of December 4th, we will decorate the center with beautiful snowflakes, seasonal decorations, and wishes for the new year. The children will also create snowflakes to be hung at home!

On Tuesday, December 12th, we will be making holiday cards for family members. Children will create their own decorations based around the seasons and write a simple note to a loved one. The children will also be able to make cards for one another.

After some helpful feedback from our staff and families, we will be changing the date of our Annual Holiday Party. The new date will be Thursday, December 14th, beginning at 4:00 p.m. We will have light refreshments, a visit from Santa, and a gift-giving event between the children. We will continue our Holiday Gift Basket Raffle this year as well. Please get in touch with your child's teachers to learn more about any classroom parties or special gift giving activities within each classroom.

In an effort to get an idea about who will need care during the weeks of December 18th and December 26th, you will see a special sign-up sheet in your child's classroom, where you can give us a general idea of your plans for those weeks. The center will be open for the regular hours during that time, with the exception of Christmas Day and New Year's Day, but this information regarding your child's expected attendance will assist us in making staffing decisions for those special weeks.

On Thursday, December 28th, Play and Learn will celebrate the end of the year by snuggling up with warm cocoa, snacks, and a good book. A relaxing center-wide reading day will happen along with Pajama Day.

BRRR!! It is getting cold outside! During the winter months, please make sure to provide your child with warm clothes, a heavy coat, mittens or gloves, and a hat for outdoor play and learning. The children will continue to go outdoors twice daily as long as the temperature is above 32 degrees and weather conditions permit. In addition, please be sure your child's bin contains at least two sets of well-fitting, seasonally appropriate clothing.

As a reminder, Play and Learn will make every effort to open the center and to remain open during inclement weather; however, there may be times when weather conditions necessitate a change in our normal operating hours. For specifics, please refer to the *Emergency Closing Policy* for this Play and Learn location. This form was provided to you in your enrollment packet and is also available on-line at www.playandlearnmaryland.org. Play Centers sends email notifications and cell phone text message alerts to families who have signed up for those communications and who keep this information current. More information on these options is available from Mr. Peyton. In addition, you may call your child's center for the program's opening/closing status. Parents/Guardians are reminded to establish alternative child care arrangements in advance in the event of delays and/or closings.

Warmest Holiday Wishes!

Mr. Peyton, Ms. Paula, and Superstar Staff

From the AR Department -

Questions about your account? Please contact our
Preschool AR Coordinator
at 410.307.1425, M-Th, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!

**Play and Learn will be CLOSED on
Monday, December 25th, and Monday, January 1st.**



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Page 2 - Parents' Corner

Holiday Cheer

Teaching your children about the real meaning of the holidays. By: David Lowenstein, PH.D.

<http://www.parentguidenews.com/Articles/HolidayCheer/>

Most Americans agree that the holidays have become too commercial and too hectic. We rush around, trying to make sure everything is accomplished. We get sucked into the gift buying trap. What we do never seems to please everyone or be quite good enough, causing us to lose the joy of the season in the process. One day you may look around and realize that the true meaning of the holidays has been missed. You're missing it and, more importantly, your kids are missing it. But no matter how old your children are, it's never too late to develop new traditions and find ways to emphasize what the holidays are all about to your family.

Set an Example

It's up to you as a parent to instill the importance of the holidays in your own family. Whether you place emphasis on the religious significance of the holiday, spending time together or giving to charity, your children take cues from you. If they see you rushing around, madly trying to buy presents for everyone, missing out on the joy of the season, they will note the significance of this. Conversely, if you slow down and make sure to spend time enjoying the things you'd like to emphasize, this will send a strong message to your kids about what's important.

Promote Family Togetherness

Spending time together as a family will reinforce that it's important to be with your loved ones. One way to do this is to get your kids involved in the holiday preparation process - have them wrap presents, clean the house for guests, bake cookies, plan activities. This will help them establish an important role for themselves in the family holiday preparations for years to come. Create your own family traditions that don't focus on gift-giving. Plan special outings, make holiday cards together for nursing home residents, or pop popcorn and play board games. Spending time together as a family will reinforce that it's important to be with your loved ones. One way to do this is to get your kids involved in the holiday preparation process - have them wrap presents, clean the house for guests, bake cookies, plan activities. This will help them establish an important role for themselves in the family holiday preparations for years to come. Create your own family traditions that don't focus on gift-giving. Plan special outings, make holiday cards together for nursing home residents, or pop popcorn and play board games.

Perform Acts of Charity

Engaging in charitable activities is one of the most powerful things you can do to remind your children of the purpose of celebrating the holidays. Serve meals together at a local soup kitchen or shelter. Collect toys for a toy drive. "Adopt" a needy family and buy food and gifts for them. Ask your children to donate old toys they no longer use to a local organization. Suggest that your children visit with an elderly neighbor or take care of a friend's home while they are traveling during the season. Some families make it a practice to purchase a certain number of gifts each year from organizations that support various charitable causes. Whatever you do together to help others, no matter how big or how small, is certain to bring joy to both you and your children.

Learn About Different Religions and Cultures

America is a melting pot of different religions, cultures and traditions, so learn about how others celebrate the holidays. What do different traditions mean for different cultures, what is the history, how do they celebrate? There are many terrific children's books that explain the history and significance of different holidays. Take time with your children to learn about different customs together and discuss how they are similar to yours and how they vary. Remind your children that virtually every holiday celebrates gratitude, good will and peace, no matter what culture.

Encourage Giving

We are programmed to ask our children to make out their gift lists. This year, why not have your children make up a list of gifts they are planning to give to others? You can help them finance the gifts, but they don't have to be things that cost money - perhaps a handmade card, a plate of cookies, or a helping hand to a neighbor. This will reinforce the idea of giving during this season, not just receiving.

Manage Gift Expectations

If you want to begin to scale back on gift-giving and emphasize other important aspects of the holidays, make sure you let your family know ahead of time so you can set expectations. Sit them down and explain to them that you'd like the holidays to be a bit different this year and why. Let them know how excited you are to be making changes and invite them to help you find other ways to celebrate the holidays. If they know what to expect, they will accept and even embrace your new way of doing things.

Make special efforts with family

Spending time with family is very important. But appreciating your family is perhaps more so. Ask your children to think about ways they can show their siblings and the rest of the family how much they appreciate them. Make a game of it, challenging your children to do one nice thing for someone in the family each day during the season. Over dinner, vote on whose "act of kindness" was the most helpful, funniest or most creative. This is a great way to encourage your family to be kind to one another, and often it becomes a habit that lasts all year long! If you've found yourself in recent years a bit let down after the holidays, wondering what exactly was missing, it's time to reevaluate. Too often, the anxiety of the holidays far outshines the true reasons why we celebrate them. This year, consider what the holidays mean to you and what you want them to mean to your children. Then take steps to emphasize these things during the season and for the entire year. You'll be happy to find that your family's religion, charity, good will, togetherness and love for each other will create more lasting memories than elaborate feasts and breakable toys.