



December 2017



Play and Learn at Hunt Valley
11350 McCormick Road ~ EP 1, LL 1 ~ Hunt Valley, Maryland 21031
Phone: 410-785-7077 ~ Fax: 410-785-5768 ~ Email: HVDirector@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 December we will be focusing on a different winter holiday each week, beginning with Hanukkah, during the week of the 4th - 8th. We will be taste testing potato pancakes (latkes) and doing fun activities to learn more about how this holiday is celebrated. We will be learning about Christmas during the week of the 11th - 15th, as we make a Christmas trail mix, do festive activities, and sing songs to learn more about this fun holiday. Finally, we will celebrate learning about Kwanzaa during the week of the 18th - 22nd, as we enjoy tasting Benne cakes, reading books, and singing songs to learn more about this special holiday.

On Friday, December 8th, we will be visiting Santa in the downstairs area of Executive Plaza, courtesy of Hill Management. Permission slips will be made available soon for this activity.

On Wednesday, December 13th, we will have a center-wide dance party! Wear your best festive outfits and get ready to groove!

We will enjoy the first day of winter on Thursday, December 21st, with Pajama and Cocoa Day! Have your child wear his/her comfy pajamas for some cozy fun! The children will enjoy warm cocoa as a snack.

The children will be ringing in the New Year on Friday, December 29th, with an all-day New Year Celebration of songs, games, and crafts as well as a pizza party at noon! To add to the fun, please send your child in his/her pajamas for this event as well! Happy New Year!!

Please ensure that your child's extra clothes bin has plenty of cozy and warm clothes, just in case; and remember that we go outside as long as temperatures are above 32 degrees, so dress your child accordingly!

Happy Anniversary to Ms. Morgan who celebrates her one-year anniversary with Play and Learn this month. Join us in congratulating Ms. Morgan for her dedication to the children and to the company!

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 your child's 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. More information on these options is available from Ms. Morgan or Ms. Traci. In addition, you may call your child's center for the program's opening/closing status. Parents/Guardians should establish alternative child care arrangements in advance.

Warmest Holiday Wishes!

Ms. Morgan, Ms. Traci, and Super Star Staff

FROM ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE (AR)

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.