



December 2019

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

Welcome to the Holiday Season! Let the winter and holiday festivities begin at Play and Learn with plenty of learning, laughter, and wonder.

To kick the season off, we will be partnering with Executive Plaza as they collect "Toys for Tots". We have been provided with a large "Toys for Tots" collection can, which has been placed in the front hallway of the center. Unwrapped gifts may be placed in the can and they will be collected at the end of the day on Thursday, December 5. We thank you in advance for your support of this special community outreach activity!

On Friday, December 6, we will be making our way to a very special visitor that will be coming to Executive Plaza. He is a jolly old elf who will have a special treat for all our little Play and Learn friends. We will be visiting with Santa from 12:00 noon - 3:00 p.m. Pictures will be taken by Executive Plaza and given to us as a keepsake of our special visit.

On Tuesday, December 17, at 10:00 a.m., the children will enjoy a performance of holiday stories by Bill Wood, Storyteller. Permission slips available soon.

Our first Parent Investigation Day will be held on Wednesday, December 18, at 5:00 p.m. Parent Investigation Days are a time for parents to join us for a fun activity that will spotlight the wonderful learning that is occurring through The InvestiGator Club curriculum. During this Parent Investigation Day, in conjunction with the "Under Construction" Unit, parents will work with their children to build holiday gingerbread houses. More information on this event will be forwarded as the event draws closer.

What better way to get into the holiday season than with song? Come and enjoy the sounds of the season as only the children at Hunt Valley can perform them. Our Holiday Program will take place on Friday, December 20, beginning at 4:00 p.m. Please stay after the program to enjoy conversation and cookies.

On Tuesday, December 31, the children will have a New Year's Eve celebration at the center. We will enjoy making festive party hats and a special snack, and we will dance (almost) into the "New Year"! The festivities will begin at 11:00 a.m. and we will ring in the "New Year" at 12:00 noon. Please join us for this fun event!

Warmest Holiday Wishes!

Ms. Noel and Super Star Staff

**Happy December Birthday to
Luca D., Elliot R., Elijah T., Joshua H., and Ms. Noel!**

NOTE: We will be CLOSED on Tuesday, 12/24, Christmas Eve, and Wednesday, 12/25, Christmas Day.

We will be closed on Wednesday, 1/1/2020, New Year's Day.



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Page 2 - Parents' Corner

The Importance of Sharing Holidays You Don't Celebrate in Preschool - by Makinya Ward (an excerpt)

When preschool teachers and parents teach children about holidays from a variety of cultures and beliefs, they are helping children to develop empathy and understanding for other people and ideas.

Holidays Teach Similarities

Most holiday celebrations in every culture focus on teaching traditions, history, and the reason a group of people cares for one another. Teaching children about the holidays of other cultures helps them to see that no matter what differences we all have, we also have many things in common, such as:

- **Family:** Most holiday celebrations are times when extended families gather together to enjoy special food, traditions and one another.
- **Respect:** Most cultures use holiday celebrations to honor their history and past. By explaining holidays to preschoolers, teachers and parents can help children to understand and respect the sacrifices of people in history.
- **Love:** Most celebrations include special foods, enjoyable activities and a special focus on children. Preschoolers can learn that all people have a great love for their children and enjoy doing fun activities together, even if they have different looks, beliefs and traditions.

Explaining Holidays Brings Understanding

Children notice differences and often wonder about them, but may not always ask questions. During a time of talking about holidays and celebrations of different cultures, teachers and parents have a chance to open up discussions about differences and give children a chance to develop an understanding of why people have different beliefs and practices. Some ways for children to learn about holidays in preschool or with parents are:

- **Meeting People:** Talking with adults and children who celebrate different holidays can be a wonderful way to understand not just the facts of a holiday but how it is practiced and what it means to the people who celebrate it. In a preschool classroom, children and their parents can share their own family holiday traditions and bring decorations or food to try.
- **Doing Activities:** Doing a craft, game or activity from a holiday celebration helps children explore and experience different holiday traditions in an age-appropriate way.
- **Attending Events:** Many groups invite others in the community to celebrate with them during their holidays. Consider taking your child to some of the local holiday celebrations such as a Chinese New Year Parade, a Christmas Eve Service at a Catholic or Protestant church, the daily menorah lighting at a local synagogue, etc.

Holidays Bring People Together

Even within cultural and religious groups, there are often many differences of opinion about practices or beliefs, just as there are sometimes disagreements among family members. However, holidays are times that people can unite around something bigger than themselves. Learning about holiday celebrations, especially ones celebrated by other students in their classroom, helps children to develop an appreciation and understanding for what is important to their friends, neighbors and other people they meet.

Explaining Holidays to Preschoolers Through Books

Parents can reinforce explaining holidays to preschoolers by reading multicultural holiday books. One benefit of reading holiday books to your children is that you will have the opportunity to explain your own beliefs and traditions and answer your child's questions. Better yet, you can learn along with your children if you don't know much about the holiday either.

Enjoy Learning with Your Child

Many adults have not had the opportunity to learn about the beliefs and cultures of other people, so take this opportunity to grow in understanding along with your child. Teaching children to value the cultural traditions of other people is an important part of raising a child with healthy emotions and social connections. Parents and preschool teachers can help children learn to be culturally sensitive by explaining holidays to preschoolers and helping them to learn why different people celebrate differently.

<https://www.kids-konnnect.com/blog/the-importance-of-sharing-holidays-you-dont-celebrate-in-preschool>