



December 2017

Play and Learn at Odenton
1417 Odenton Road ~ Odenton, Maryland 21113
Phone: 410-305-0117 ~ Fax: 410-305-0166 ~ Email: ODDirector@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.

We thank all of our families who came and contributed to our Thanksgiving feast! It is always a joy to have everyone here to celebrate the holiday together. We hope everyone had a great time mingling and getting to know one another!

Play and Learn will be offering a FREE "Parents' Night Out" on Friday, December 8th, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m., as a thank you to our families. The children will enjoy a pizza dinner, a movie, and a fun craft. Please watch for the sign-up sheets in your child's classroom and return your child's permission slip no later than Monday, December 4th, if you are interested in your child participating in this event. If your child who attends Play and Learn at Odenton has an older sibling who is in Kindergarten to 5th Grade, he/she may also join us that evening. Please note that a Permission Slip and Emergency Form must be completed and returned, and a fee will be charged for each child not currently enrolled.

Our holiday parties are scheduled for Friday, December 15th. Please join us at 3:15 p.m. for some holiday fun! The older children will have a special musical surprise for the parents. We hope you all can make it!

As a fun and yummy treat, on Wednesday, December 20th we will be enjoying Cookie Day! The children will decorate their own sugar cookie to eat with snack that afternoon. Please be on the lookout for permission slips and sign-up sheets.

We are excited to be participating in a special holiday event for the third year. As part of the "Trim-a-Tree" program, we will be collecting new winter hats, gloves, scarves, or socks to donate to Sarah's House. The last day for dropping items off is Wednesday, December 20th. Thank you very much for your support of this community outreach initiative!

During the winter months, the children will continue to go outdoors twice daily as long as the temperature is above 32 degrees and weather conditions permit. Please dress your child for the most extreme weather expected each day. Layers can be removed, but not added if unavailable. In addition, the children should always be as prepared as possible for an emergency evacuation. This includes access to warm 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. More information on these options is available from Ms. Vicky. 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!

Ms. Vicky and Superstar 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.



December 2017

Play and Learn at Odenton
1417 Odenton Road ~ Odenton, Maryland 21113
Phone: 410-305-0117 ~ Fax: 410-305-0166 ~ Email: ODDirector@playcenters.org
Visit us at www.playandlearnmaryland.org ~ Tax ID: 52-1259566



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.