

Greetings Head Start Families,

Welcome to December! The magic of the holiday season is upon us and, as fun as it can be, it can also be overwhelming for young children. So, simplify, organize, and schedule! Your kids will be grateful — and so will you.

Keep routines

We love the holidays because they give us a break from the everyday, but that can also make them stressful, especially for kids who find routine comforting. Try to keep some things constant.

Remember they're kids

Some holiday traditions depend on kids being on their best behavior: lengthy services, parties with lots of strangers, elaborate meals that may not appeal to picky eaters. Try to keep those to a minimum and customize festivities for your kids' frustration level. Whatever your schedule, try to include physical activity and plenty of downtime. Your kids will be grateful — and so will you.

Discuss holiday plans well in advance

Let kids participate in decisions to the extent possible. Kids need some degree of predictability. Prolonged uncertainty, constantly changing plans or last-minute decisions can all increase stress.

Give kids some "downtime" & Make sure kids get plenty of sleep

Don't expect them to be "on" all the time. Leave room for some quiet activities, like listening to music, taking a walk, or reading a book. While it may be exciting to stay up late, lack of sleep often leads to increased irritability.

At school, we will be discovering that “Families are different. Each family’s way of celebrating works for them.” Use this season as an opportunity to discuss how some families may not participate in the same holiday traditions as others. Not everyone is the same and that’s okay!

Mark your calendars:

12/11	Welcome to Winter (FTO)	6:30-7:30
12/13	Family Play Lab Night	6:00-7:00
12/16	Gingerbread Jamboree	Day Event TBD
1/13	Family Play Lab Night	6:00-7:00

Your partner in education,

Jaclyn Valley

Director

December 2019

Dear Families,

Your child already has the most important toy he or she could want or need – YOU!
Other toys, however, can be very important for helping your child to learn through play.

Here are some things to think about when considering toys for your children.

IS THE TOY SAFE? Is it sturdy, with no small pieces to break off? Will it become a dangerous toy in the wrong hands?

WILL THE TOY LAST? We often buy disappointment for children when we give them toys that will break in a couple of days. All around them, children see that they live in a throw-away world. Let's give them some things that will last and upon which they can depend.

DOES THE TOY MEET A DEVELOPMENTAL NEED?

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT: Toys can aid in the physical development of children by encouraging coordination and the use of both large and small muscles. Toy suggestions: balls, toys that fit together, toys to push, pull or climb upon, music cds

MENTAL DEVELOPMENT: Toys can aid in the mental development of children by encouraging reasoning, problem-solving and creative thinking. Toy suggestions: puzzles; games; blocks.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: Toys can aid in the language development of children by helping them learn new words, and word sounds, and sentence structure. Toy suggestions: Books, alphabet toys, cds

SOCIAL (& IMAGINATION) DEVELOPMENT: Toys can aid in the social development of children, by giving them opportunities to understand how others feel and act. Toy suggestions: Dress-up clothes; puppets, doll houses.

CREATIVITY DEVELOPMENT: Toys can aid in helping your child learn creative expression and to become problem solvers. Toy suggestions: Open-ended art materials, play dough, dance costumes, musical instruments, blocks, music

DISCOVERY (CURIOSITY) DEVELOPMENT: Toys can lead to discovery and foster experimentation. Toy suggestions: Magnets, magnifying glasses, color viewers, toys for playing in water, mud or sand.

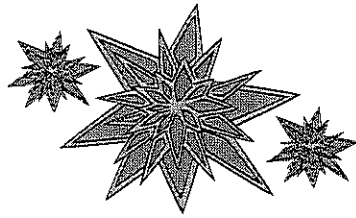
IS THE TOY APPROPRIATE FOR THE AGE OF THE CHILD?

A PRESCHOOLER (3-5) is still experimenting with the senses, coordination and self-expression, but now he has more social awareness of others. Toy suggestions: any of the previously mentioned toys, plus tricycles, large blocks, balance beams, flannelboards, magnetic boards, pencils, paint, scissors, paste, collage materials, pounding toys, real tools, nuts and bolts, puppets and a puppet stage, dolls and doll houses, play centers, sewing cards, puzzles, learning games, magnets, magnifying glasses, storybooks.

Children learn through play and the use of a variety of toys. But, nothing can replace interaction with YOU! Enjoy playing with your children.

Melissa Levasseur
Education/Disabilities Manager

From: www.preschoolexpress.com



Health and Nutrition News for December 2019

Happy Holidays Everyone!

During November I continued to track vision and hearing referrals that have been made. If you received a letter regarding your child's vision or hearing, please follow up with your pediatrician or myself **as soon as possible**.

Wednesday, December 18th is our first Health Service Advisory Committee meeting at 1:30pm. We will be discussing health policies and procedures such as flu vaccines, illnesses, nutrition etc. Invited are community representatives such as Enfield Public Schools nurse supervisor, CHC mobile dentist rep, WIC rep, teacher, parent, Dietician from Shop Rite etc.

Reminder:

I continue to send home reminder letters if your child is due for his/her **yearly physical**. Head Start requires a current yearly physical be on record. **If your child has an upcoming appointment, please let me know.** I will need a copy of the current physical after it is complete.

Lastly, if you received a second notice for the flu vaccine, I have not yet received documentation for your child. The flu vaccine is a required vaccine for your child to return to Head Start after the New Year. If you have any question or concerns regarding this matter, please contact me.

Jennifer Maier, RN

Health/Nutrition Manager

860-763-8858

Nutrition Nuggets™

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

December 2019

Enfield Head Start



BEST BITES

Bulk shopping = savings

Shopping from bulk bins almost always saves money. Let your child help you fill bags with foods like rice, beans, pasta, and nuts. *Idea:* Tell him how much you need (say, 2 lbs.), then have him estimate that amount and weigh it to check.

DID YOU KNOW?

Physical activity is good for your youngster's brain. It can improve her memory, mood, and ability to focus. Help her get at least 60 minutes of exercise each day, keeping in mind that it doesn't have to be all at once. She might walk to school, run around the playground at recess, and play catch with you after school.

Fruit with a message

Send your child off to school or sports practice with a snack that's healthy *and* inspiring. Use a marker or pen to write an encouraging message on a fruit he will peel, like

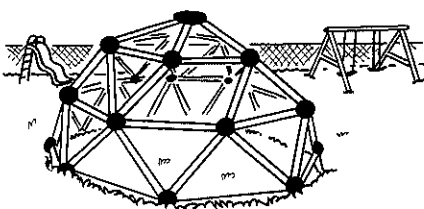
a clementine or banana.
Example: "I hope your day is a-peeling!"



Just for fun

Q: Where does Tarzan work out?

A: In the jungle gym!

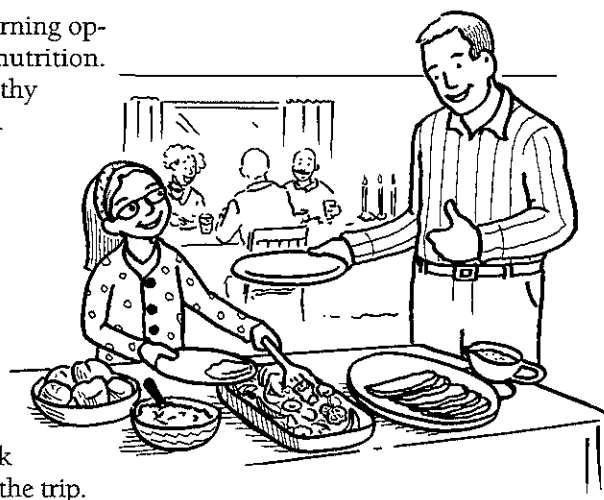


A healthier winter break

Special occasions can be learning opportunities when it comes to nutrition. Show your youngster that healthy choices are an important—and fun—part of any celebration with this advice.

Eat normally

Make sure your child has a healthy breakfast and lunch rather than "leaving room" for a big meal. She won't be starving by dinnertime, so she'll be less likely to overeat. If you're traveling, help her pack nutritious snacks to eat during the trip.



Add more nutrients

Look for ways to get more whole grains and vegetables into favorite dishes. Make macaroni and cheese with whole-wheat noodles, and stir in thinly sliced brussels sprouts or cubed sweet potatoes. For stuffing, use whole-grain bread, and add fruits and vegetables (chopped apples, diced onion, spinach).

Fill up on the good stuff

Encourage your youngster to put healthier options like turkey breast and salad greens on her plate first. Then, she could take small portions of richer foods like gravy or creamy casseroles. She'll learn to make good choices—and enjoy treats in moderation. ●

M-O-V-E your body

Scientist Isaac Newton was right: A body in motion tends to stay in motion! Set your child up for a lifetime of being active with these tips.

Multitask wisely. Your youngster could balance on an exercise ball at homework time. Or while folding laundry, he might shoot balled-up socks into drawers to score "baskets."

Opt for activity. Walk to the store or playground instead of driving. When you do take the car, park as far from the door as possible.

Vary the exercise. If your child plays baseball, he could swim or bike on other days. Or a gymnast might play badminton with friends on weekends.

Enjoy yourself. Your youngster is more likely to stay active if he's having fun. Instead of telling him to "exercise," suggest some "fun" like riding his scooter. ●



Kids in the kitchen

Cooking with your youngster will teach him valuable kitchen skills—and help him practice reading and math. Try these suggestions.

Read recipes. Ask your child to read a recipe aloud. Then, have him gather the ingredients and tools you'll need. Can he find dried oregano and a whisk? Next, follow the steps together. *Idea:* Build his vocabulary by explaining unfamiliar cooking words. ("Zest means to scrape off tiny bits of the lemon peel.")



Use math. Put your youngster in charge of kitchen math. He can find the correct measuring spoons and cups, measure wet and dry ingredients, and read a food thermometer. He'll also learn about conversions—for example, that 4 tbsp. = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup.

Tip: Get your child in the habit of putting dishes in the dishwasher as he works. That way, there won't be a big sticky mess to clean up at the end. ●

PARENT TO PARENT

"I'm just not good at sports"

My son Andy plays soccer on a neighborhood team, but he often said he wasn't "good" at it. I wasn't sure how to handle this, so I talked to his PE teacher about ways to build his confidence.



She said that pointing out what Andy does well could help him feel better about playing soccer. For instance, I mentioned how he runs fast on the field and is always encouraging his teammates. The PE teacher also suggested that we focus on how much fun soccer is rather than on whether he scores a goal.

I've been using the coach's advice, and Andy seems really proud of his speed. In fact, he recently told me that running is his favorite thing about soccer. ●

OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote healthy nutrition and physical activity for their children.

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ACTIVITY CORNER

Active indoor fun

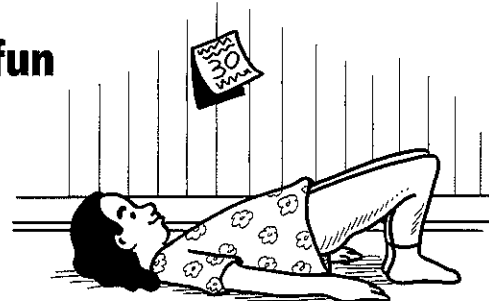
When it's raining or snowing too hard to play outside and your child is full of energy, what can you do? These ideas will keep her active and entertained indoors.

1. Fitness stations. Let your youngster write 10 activities on separate sticky notes.

Example: "Hold a bridge pose for 30 seconds." She can stick the notes around the house, then go to each station and follow the instructions.

2. Board game fitness. Play a board game where fitness has a starring role. Have your child make a key that lists a movement for each number rolled or color space landed on ("Green = Leap like a lizard").

3. Tic-tac-toe. Your youngster could draw a grid and write an activity in each square. ("Do 10 jumping jacks.") Players complete three in a row to win! ●



IN THE KITCHEN

Seasonal snacks

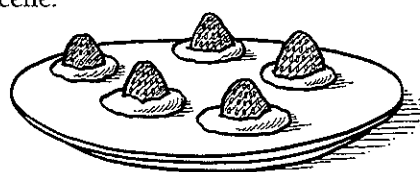
Put a wintry twist on healthy snacks. Here are a few your youngster can make herself.

Veggie scene

Arrange broccoli florets in a large tree shape on a plate. Use a celery stalk for a trunk, and spread low-fat ranch dressing under the tree for snow. Your youngster could add carrot sticks as sleds in her scene.

Snowman on a stick

Cut a banana into thirds and push them onto a skewer to make a snowman's



body and head. Your child might use raisins for the nose and eyes, and pretzel sticks for hands. *Tip:* Use sunflower seed butter to make everything stick.

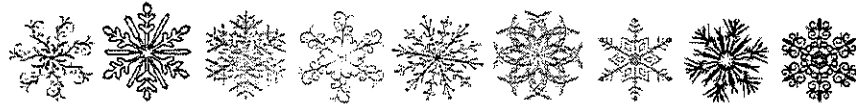
Winter hats

Mix $\frac{1}{2}$ cup low-fat cream cheese with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup nonfat Greek yogurt until smooth. Place spoonfuls of the mixture onto a plate to create hat brims.

Complete the hats by putting a strawberry (green removed) upside down on each brim. ●

December Family Support NEWS!

"Families are like snowflakeseach unique in their own way!"



-Maya Angelou

I have enjoyed getting to know all of you at the parent meetings and family engagement activities. There are many more to come this school year!! I look forward to enjoying them with you!

Please join us on Wednesday December 4th at 9:45 for our PTO Committee Meeting. **ALL PARENTS** are invited and encouraged to attend. Final plans for the Welcome to Winter Activity will be discussed. Our school wide Welcome To Winter Family Night will be on December 11th from 6:30-7:30. It's going to be such a fun night!

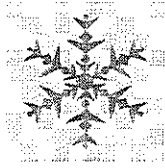
Join us on December 16th from 10:30-11:30am for our **GINGERBREAD JAMBOREE!** Please see your family advocate or teacher for more information

Family Advocates are working on their second home visits of the year this month. This is the time to discuss your action steps related to your family engagement and readiness goals. Remember you can always contact me or your family advocate if you have any questions or need a referral.

Just a quick reminder: Head Start will have an early release for professional development on Wednesday December 11th. We will also be closed for the winter vacation from December 21 through January 1st. Head start will reopen on Thursday January 2nd.

Have a safe and enjoyable Holiday Season with your family and friends.

Kelly Bowles
Family Support Manager



December in Room 1

During the month of December we will learn about hibernation and how animals are protected during the winter months. We will also learn about the changes of weather and the difference between snow, slush, ice and sleet. We will learn various poems and songs about winter. Our family activity will be making an animal to display in our winter scene at school.

We will also do a unit on clothing. We will learn about different types of clothes and what types of materials they are made from. A family letter will be sent home to explain the unit and ways to participate

Some of the books that we will be reading are:

The Gingerbread Baby by Jan Brett

The Mitten by Jan Brett

The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats

Bear Snores by Karma Wilson

Happy Birthday to Bryson who turns 4 on the 2nd.

Reminders:

- Please send your child to school in a winter coat, hat, and mittens each day as we try to get outside as often as possible

Mrs Guile

Miss Mitchell

Miss Wendy

December in Room 3



During the month of December, we will be reading gingerbread books and doing fun gingerbread activities to promote school readiness skills. We will compare many different versions of the gingerbread stories as well.

We will be sending home a new family project soon!! Please have fun with these, as we send them home to start conversations about what the children are learning about in class.

Please dress your child warmly. We like to go outside when possible! We are working on independence so please encourage your child to try to put their coats and gloves on themselves.

*Here are the names of some of our favorite winter books:

The Hat by Jan Brett

The Mitten by Jan Brett

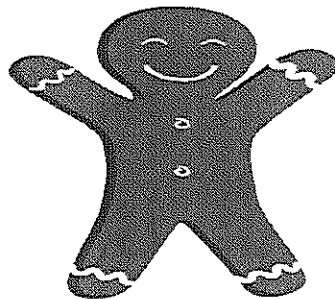
The Gingerbread Man by Karen Schmidt

The Gingerbread Girl by Lisa Campbell Ernst

Miss Brown

Miss Candice

Mr. Jake





Room 9

Mrs. Smith

Mrs. Young

Mrs. Regan

During December, our class will be exploring the senses. We will be doing many touch, smell, sight and listening activities and reading books about our senses. Feel free to send in any books you may have for your child to share.

Some books to read:

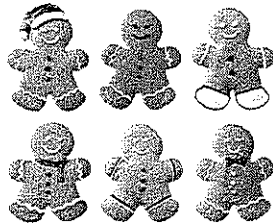
The Gingerbread Boy by Jan Brett

The Five Senses by Alike

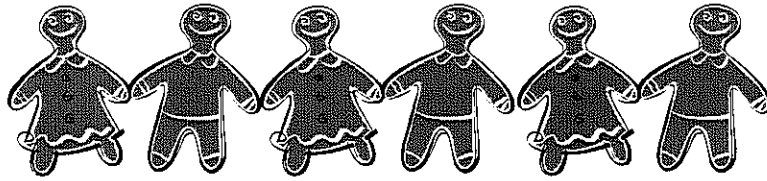
The Listening Walk by Paul Showers

You Can't Smell a Flower with Your Ear by
Joanna Cole

Gingerbread Friends by Jan Brett



We will be going outside weather permitting, please send in a winter coat, snowpants, mittens, a hat & boots.



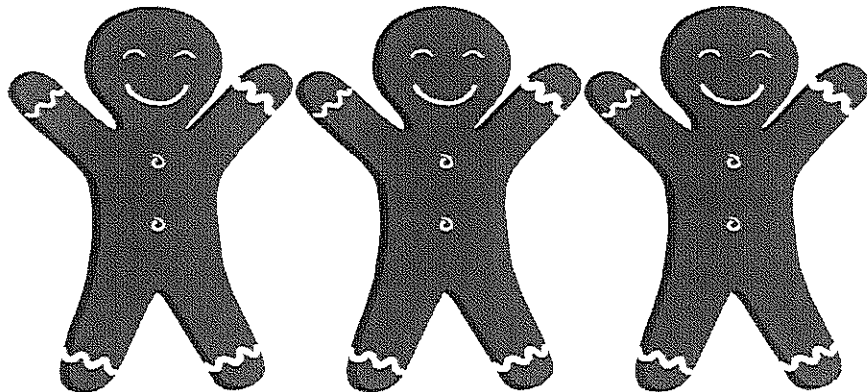
Room 10

During the month of December we will be talking about Gingerbread Men. We will read many variations of the story. The children will practice retelling the story during class. We will also work on counting gingerbread men, sequencing them by size, decorating them with collage materials and making gingerbread play dough.

We will also celebrate our differences by talking about everyone's family traditions. If any parent would like to come in and share their traditions, we would be excited to have you.

Please remember that we do go outside in the winter so please pack hats and mittens.

Ms. West, Miss Sandy and Miss Julie wish you the best of the season. We hope that you have a wonderful vacation and look forward to seeing you next year.





DECEMBER in Room 11



This month our focus will continue to be on families and traditions. Learning about how each of us celebrate holidays or how our families spend time together is important. We will be spending more time on patterns and sequencing this month. Story time is a great moment to ask “What do you think will happen next?” This helps children to learn how to predict as well as remember events in a certain order. Our poems this month will be The Chubby Little Snowman and Snow. Ask your children about the poems, they remember the words so well!

We will also be exploring different versions of the Gingerbread Stories: *Gingerbread Man*, *Gingerbread Cowboy*, *Gingerbread Girl*, *Gingerbread Baby* and *Gingerbread Fairy*

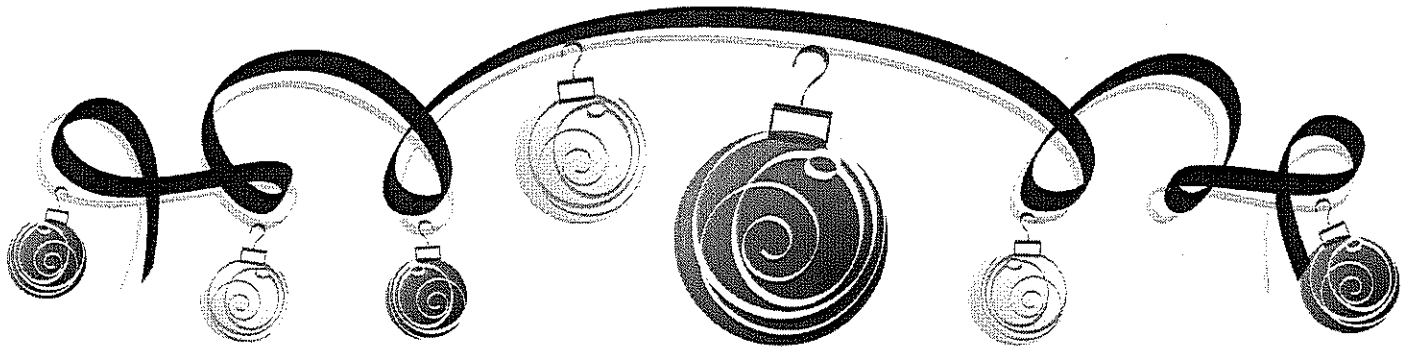
Favorite Books!

- ~ Love is a Family By Roma Downey
- ~ Dream Snow By Eric Carle

Reminders

- ~ Please send your children in appropriate footwear for outdoor play. (sneakers)
- ~ No outside food, beverages (including coffee) or candy is allowed into the building due to allergies of other children.
- ~ Please start sending hats and mittens with your children, we try to go outside everyday, and winter is practically here! (Please no scarves they can become a safety hazard.)

Mrs. Lampro Mrs. Nute Miss Claire



Room 12 December Newsletter

Bounce! A study about balls:

For the month of November, we focused on our Creative Curriculum study of balls. This theme was really about movement and properties of matter. It was exciting to see our students build a variety of ramps and tracks for their balls to roll down. We even dipped the balls in paint and rolled them down paper ramps so we could have a beautiful piece of art that reflected our study.

We answered questions like: What made the balls go the fastest/slowest? Do all balls float in water? What is the shape of a ball called?

We also learned a lot about size comparison (big, middle, and small) from our book "The Billy Goats Gruff". Our friends loved hearing and retelling this story, especially when the smelly, horrible old troll came out from under the bridge!

Second Step Connection: *Second Step is a social/emotional curriculum that we use to help teach children to identify their emotions and build empathy for others. You can play a game with your child to practice finding happy and sad clues on other people. Play while taking a walk or watching TV. Say: We're going to play Who's Happy, Who's Sad? When you see a happy clue on someone's face or body, tap your head. When you see a sad clue, tap your tummy. After playing the game say: Show me a happy clue we saw. Show me a sad clue we saw.*

Reminder! Our Gingerbread Jamboree will take place on December 16th from 10:30-11:30 in the Stowe Early Learning Center Gym. This event can hold two adult guests per student. We look forward to seeing you there!

