

PRESCHOOL PRESS



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the Early Childhood and Elementary Special Education Department

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In This Issue. .

In this issue of *Preschool Press* you will find articles for parents of preschool children on the following topics:

Stress... What Stress!

A Season for Sharing

Helping Skills Continue to
Grow over the Holidays!

Selecting Toys for Creative
Play

Special Education Community
Forum



About The *Preschool Press*

This publication is designed for preschool families in the Anchorage School District. It is mailed each month. E-mail subscriptions are also sent out so if you wish to receive this mailing, contact:

loutrel_barbara@asdk12.org or call 742-3868.

Past Copies of the *Preschool Press* can be found on www.asdk12.org/dept/step

Stress . . . What Stress!

The holiday season is often a very stressful time for families. This is true for children, as well as adults. In our rush, we sometimes forget that the anticipation, excitement and changes in daily routine can cause a great deal of stress and emotional upheaval for our children. Here are some simple strategies that can help to make the holiday season a little less stressful.

- **Use Visual Schedules:** *this time of year is a great time to make a visual calendar with your child. You can use pictures to show special events, like family members coming to visit or trips you will be taking out of town. Children can help to mark off a day from their calendar each day to see those special events getting closer each day.*
- **Rehearse Unfamiliar Activities:** *this time of year children are often exposed to new experiences, places or activities that may make them uncomfortable. To make them feel at ease, talk beforehand about where you are going and what is going to happen when you get there. Let them ask questions and do your best to answer.*
- **Give Choices:** *Children can often become uncertain and stressed when too many choices are given, or when they are simply told to "go play," especially during times of stress. Children often respond much better to 2 or 3 simple choices. Providing choices can also reduce the amount of activity jumping a child does.*
- **Keep Familiar Routines When Possible:** *Try to maintain some familiar routines in place, such as naptime, bedtime and mealtime.*
- **Ignore Small Behaviors While Pointing Out Positives:** *When children get tired, hungry, sick or overly excited they may whine, cry or have temper tantrums. These are the same times when it is easy to get upset by your child's behavior. During these hectic times, try to remember to stay calm when your child becomes whiny or breaks into a tantrum. At the first signs of a meltdown, take a moment to rest. Also, try to notice the good things your child is doing and comment on them.*

The Teddy Bear Post: www.theparentline.org

A Season for Sharing

From time to time, we will be discussing "Assets" that children need to grow into healthy adults. One such asset is "caring" in which a child is encouraged to help other people and share his/her possessions. It is never too early to involve your preschooler in sharing, and the holiday season is a wonderful time to partake in the many community opportunities to do so.

Giving

Bless your hungry neighbors with the gift of food this Thanksgiving!

Got Food?

Drop off your food by Nov. 13 at Food Bank of Alaska, 2121 Spar Ave. 272-3663. Or drop off on Nov. 19th by calling 272-3663 to find a distribution site.

WANTED: FOOD!

- cranberry sauce
- gravy mix
- canned vegetables
- dinner rolls
- canned sweet potatoes or yams
- stuffing mix
- pies
- cans of whipped cream
- pounds of butter or margarine
- aluminum roasting pans



Receiving

Need help providing a Thanksgiving meal for your family? You can get a turkey and all the fixings on:

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 3 PM TO 8 PM

Please go to one (and only one) of the following sites, depending on your zip code. BRING PROOF OF ADDRESS WITH YOU.

Crosspoint Church (Diamond and Minnesota, in the Burlington Coat Factory mall) - 99507, 99511, 99515, 99516, 99518, 99522, 99523, 99540, 99567

Faith Christian Community Church - Lakeside (4240 Wisconsin in Spenard) 99502, 99517, 99519

Central Lutheran Church (1420 Cordova at 14th) 99501 - addresses WEST of Gambell, 99503, 99510, 99513, 99520, 99524

Muldoon Community Assembly (7041 DeBarr Rd near Muldoon) 99504 - addresses NORTH of DeBarr Rd., 99509, 99521

St. Patrick's Church (2111 Muldoon Road) 99504 - addresses SOUTH of DeBarr Rd., 99505

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (2501 Maplewood, off Northern Lights near Lake Otis) 99501 - addresses EAST of Gambell, 99508 - addresses SOUTH of the Glenn Hwy.

Mt. View Community Center (315 N. Price, off Mt. View Drive) 99506, 99514, 99508 - addresses NORTH of the Glenn Hwy.

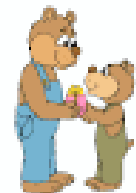
Eagle River Church of God (17108 Hanson Drive, Eagle River Loop and Old Glenn Hwy) 99567, 99577

Questions? Call Food Bank of Alaska, 272-3663.

Giving and Receiving During the Holidays

Whether you are wanting to get in the holiday spirit by giving to someone in need or if you know of someone who is in need, here are some community programs that coordinate these efforts. What a great way to let your preschooler learn about sharing with others.

- * "Gift-Giving From the Heart" is a program sponsored by many agencies (Salvation Army, Catholic Social Services, Lutheran Social Services, Food Bank, United Way, Toys for Tots, etc.) to help families in need during the holidays. Call to find out how you can help: 565-4438
- * "Neighbor to Neighbor" is sponsored by the Anchorage Daily News to help families in need. It runs from Thanksgiving to New Year. Call Ildi Geuss at 257-4278
- * Many malls and businesses set up giving trees/toys for tots/toys for teens that families can donate gifts to.
- * Many churches and faith based programs organize food, clothing, and gift drives.



Helping Skills Continue to Grow Over the Holidays



Pre-academic Skills:

- o Help your child to count cups, silverware, plates or napkins that can be set on the table.
- o Your child can help unload the dishwasher to help practice sorting, such as sorting silverware into silverware trays.
- o Unloading the dishwasher or putting away groceries also allows you to work on spatial language, such as putting the crackers on the bottom shelf or next to the cereal.
- o While playing with the kids or hanging ornaments, talk about putting them up high, down low, in front of or behind the tree. The same spatial concepts can be practiced while placing presents under the tree.
- o Help your child practice "wh" questions (who, what, where, and when) while reading stories. Try to choose books that are colorful and fun. To add an extra challenge, have your child tell you stories from the pictures in the book.
- o Talk about colors, sizes and numbers as you make craft items.
- o While cooking or making crafts or cards, have your child practice following two-step directions, such as tear the paper and then glue it down.

Let's Talk About Language:

- o **Holiday Cards:** help your child to make up stories about the pictures that are on the holiday cards you receive.
- o **Shopping:** have your child help to find specific things in the grocery or department store during holiday shopping. Children can practice finding things that are specific colors, shapes or sizes. You can talk about food categories such as vegetables and fruits.
- o **Photographs:** Make up stories about the pictures taken during holiday events. Talk about who is in the pictures, or what they are doing.
- o **Expanding Language:** For children who need help expanding the number of words they say, add one word to whatever your child says. If your child says "ball," you can say, "red ball." Don't forget to talk about the function of objects as well, such as talking about how the ball bounces or rolls.
- o **Encourage Asking:** During these times of stress, it is easy to anticipate your child's needs and meet those needs without your child ever having to ask. Children need the opportunity to express themselves, so try to remember to have your child ask for the things they want or need.
- o **Practice Labeling:** Look at pictures in catalogs or newspaper ads. Practice naming what the items are or talking about what you might do with that toy.

Gross Motor Skills:

- o If furniture needs to be moved to make room for holiday decorations, let your child help to carry items or move furniture. Pushing, pulling and lifting are all good gross motor opportunities.
- o Children can practice reaching, stretching and bending while helping to decorate the house for the holidays.
- o Take some time to bundle-up and head outside. Children can be encouraged to hop, skip and jump as they play outside in the snow or take a walk around the neighborhood looking for lights or outdoor decorations.

Fine Motor Skills:

- o Tear tape from a tape dispenser while wrapping presents.
- o Bake cookies or bread together. Children can help stir mixes in a bowl, knead dough, roll out dough, or push down cookie cutters.
- o Allow your child to cut soft fruits or vegetables with a plastic knife for salads or snacks.
- o Children can help spread cream cheese or peanut butter on bread or toast.
- o Making craft projects for family or friends can be fun, such as making playdough that you bake or dry. Paint them once they are hard.
- o Cards can be made by tearing or cutting paper that can be glued on construction paper cards. Scraps of paper, yarn, or macaroni can also be added to these collage-style cards.
- o Children can practice spreading frosting or squeezing frosting tubes as they help frost holiday cookies.



Selecting Toys for Creative Play

It can be said that a child's work is play. Following this thought, toys are an important part of this play. The most important consideration when selecting toys is the child's age and developmental level. Many times, toys selected by well wishing family and friends are inappropriate for the child's age or skill level. Toys that are too advanced for a child will probably be misused, and the likelihood of injury will increase. Keep these things in mind when selecting toys for your child. Here are some toys that would be appropriate for various age groups:

Ages 1 to 2 years

Children of this age are quite curious. Toys for this age group should be safe and able to withstand a toddler's manipulation. Some examples include:

- Cloth or plastic books with large pictures
- Kiddy cars
- Musical tops
- Nesting blocks
- Push-and-pull toys (without long cords)
- Stacking toys
- Toy telephones
- Simple musical instruments



Ages 2 to 5 years

Children this age like toys that imitate the activities of parents and older siblings. Some examples include:

- Books (short stories and action stories)
- Blackboard and chalk or dry erase boards with non-toxic dry erase markers
- Building blocks
- Crayons, non-toxic paints, clay
- Hammer and bench
- Housekeeping toys
- Tape recorders
- Puzzles with large pieces
- Dress-up clothes
- Transportation toys (tricycles, cars and wagons)
- Outdoor toys (sandbox, slides, swings and playhouse)
- Puppets, stuffed animals and dolls
- Toys animals, figures
- Simple board games encouraging color identification or simple counting
- Construction sets

Search for toy selection on the following sites:
What is a Safe Toy? www.adventisthealthcare.com
Play with a Purpose: Selecting Toys That Teach
www.cincinnatichildrens.org

Mark your Calendars

Special Education Community Forum

January 20, 2007

8:30-1:00 pm



Note the Change of Location: Clark Middle School

“Lighting Up the Winter Months”

Join us for a cup of coffee as you learn more about topics related to Special Needs Children: Mental Health Topics, FASD Kid Focus Program, Autism, Assistive Technology, etc. Our Keynote speaker is Diane Malbin, nationally acclaimed speaker in the area of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.

Free Childcare by calling 24 hours in advance: 742-3872

