

Juneau Parent Bulletin

December, 2023

Celebrating Traditions: An Important Part of a Child's Development

Celebrating traditions are not just fun, but an important part of a child's development. Many of us can think back to our childhood and recognize fun and special traditions we celebrated together with our families. Whether it was birthdays, Christmas, school holidays or other culturally celebrated events – these memories mark a special time in our childhood. It's never too early to start establishing rituals and traditions with your little ones. Here are some ways that creating traditions have an impact on your child:

BENEFITS OF CELEBRATING TRADITIONS

Whatever your culture, religion or family circumstances, celebrations and special events are an important part of childhood.



CREATES A SENSE OF BELONGING

Celebrating traditions fills your child with excitement and stability. Special days offer opportunities to help create a sense of belonging that's crucial to healthy social and emotional development.

DEVELOPS LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Singing special songs that are related to the celebration and talking about how your family celebrates are great ways to encourage language development. It's also a good opportunity to introduce new words to babies and young toddlers. For example, providing the words to the objects young babies might be looking at.

HELPS MARK THE PASSAGE OF TIME

For older children, seasonal celebrations can help develop time concepts. Phrases like "Christmas is in 5 more sleeps"; "Your birthday is after daddy's birthday"; "in the morning we will...then at night we can watch the fireworks" encourages this concept of time in growing brains.

DEVELOPS THINKING AND REASONING SKILLS

Logic and reasoning skills are the ability to think through problems and apply strategies to solve them. Involving your child in the planning for celebrations, making special decorations or preparing food is a great way to encourage this. Plus being included and 'helpful' develops your child's self-esteem and confidence too!



ENCOURAGES CULTURAL AWARENESS

Joining in on festivals and celebrations occurring locally can help your child and family feel more connected to your community. It also helps children develop an understanding of and respect for differences.

IDEAS FOR TRADITIONS THAT YOUR FAMILY MIGHT INCORPORATE DURING THE HOLIDAYS OR WINTER SEASON:

1. Make Gingerbread Houses
2. Holiday Lights Tour
3. Decorate Your Front Door (or Your Child's) Like a Present
4. Holiday Family Movie Night
5. Attend a Holiday Production
6. Donate Gently Used Toys
7. Make Cookies or Other Holiday Treats
8. Holiday Party Games
9. Holiday Books From the Library
10. Have a Family Slumber Party

For additional articles and ideas visit www.playgroupwa.com.au.

Snowy Day Crafts

Cotton Ball Snowman

Have fun making a Cotton Ball Snowman with your little ones, while you watch the snow fall outside. This craft is easy and fun for toddlers to make with items that you can usually find at home.

Supplies:

- * Shallow container (can use an empty lid)
- * Craft glue
- * Cotton balls
- * Craft paper
- * Snowman template (optional) - available for download [here](#)
- * Scissors (optional)

Snowman decoration ideas:

- * Sticks
- * Googly eyes
- * Stickers
- * Paper



Directions:

1. Print out the snowman template on craft paper or have your child make their own snowman without the template. Give your child a shallow container with some glue and have them dip the cotton balls in it and stick them on their snowman.
2. Have your child glue decorations onto their snowman.

Find the snowman template or other craft ideas at [A Little Pinch of Perfect!](#)

Bartlett Beginnings Opportunities

Bartlett Beginnings offers a variety of weekly and monthly support and play groups for families with babies.

- **Bartlett Baby-Parent Time**
Every Thursday from 12:00pm-1:30pm at Bartlett Regional Hospital
- **Parents of Toddler Group**
Every Monday from 11:00am-12:00pm at the Gymnastics Academy
- **Dads & Kiddos Play Group**
First Saturday of every month from 10:00am-12:00pm
- **Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support Group**
Last Wednesday of every month from 6:00pm-7:00pm via Zoom
- **"Real Talk" Mothers' Support Group**
Last Wednesday of every month from 7:00pm-8:00pm via Zoom

For more details and to register visit <https://www.bartletthospital.org/services/birth-center/birthing-classes-and-new-parent-groups/> or contact Sara Gress at 907-796-8975 or sgress@bartletthospital.org. You can also visit [Bartlett Baby & Toddler Group Facebook Page](#) to keep updated on upcoming and new group meetings.

Ready for Kindergarten - Prepared for Life

It is never too early to prepare your child for kindergarten. Here are six activities you can introduce to your child today: **Play, Read, Move, Talk, Explore, and Register**. For more information or questions, visit our [Kindergarten Readiness Page](#) or reach out to Elizabeth Speranza at Juneau AEYC at esperanza@aeyc-sea.org or 907-789-1235.

curiosity persistence self-regulation

Kids in the Kitchen

Pretzel Reindeer Bites

Check out this easy and healthy no bake holiday treat that you can easily make with your little one. These adorable Pretzel Reindeer Bites are easily assembled so that your little one can have fun rolling the energy balls and decorating them. They contain no sugar (except for optional eye candies), are a good source of fiber, and contain healthy fats and antioxidants.

Cooking with your toddler encourages more adventurous eaters and is fun and memorable.

Ingredients:

- * 1 cup pitted dates
- * 1 cup unsalted almonds
- * 1 cup unsalted cashews
- * 1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- * 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- * Pinch of salt
- * 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- * 1/2 teaspoon coconut oil
- * 1-2 tablespoons water (more if necessary)

To decorate (optional):

- * Pretzels for antlers
- * Pomegranate arils for nose
- * Candy eyeballs for eyes (substitute puffed brown rice cereal or chocolate chips)



Instructions:

1. Soak the dates in boiling water for 5 minutes to soften.
2. Combine the almonds, cashews, cocoa, cinnamon and salt in the food processor. Process until crumbly.
3. Add the dates, vanilla, and coconut oil. Process until mixture is combined. If mixture still seems dry, add one tablespoon of water at a time until mixture adheres together. Place in the fridge for about 10 minutes to harden up slightly.
4. Meanwhile, break the pretzels into pieces that resemble antlers.
5. Once the mixture has firmed up, remove from the fridge and form into approximately 1-1/2 inch balls.
6. Carefully poke the pretzels into each side of the reindeers' head. Decorate eyes and nose.
7. Store in fridge for one week or freezer for up to 3 months.



For more delicious recipe ideas visit www.hauteandhealthyliving.com.



Do you have a child under the age of 3? Are you looking for fun activities and ways to meet other parents? Then Parents As Teachers is for you! **This free home visiting program is open to all families in Juneau who are pregnant or parenting children under the age of 3.** Check out <https://www.aeyc-sea.org/parents-as-teachers.html> to learn more about the program and to sign up!

YOU Can Make a Difference in a Child's Life!

Your generous donations allow the Dolly Parton Imagination Library Program to provide free books to all participating children across SE Alaska. For \$30 a year, you can ensure that a child receives a free book in the mail every month for a whole year. Make your tax deductible donation today at <https://www.aeyc-sea.org/imagination-library.html>. A big thanks to volunteers Trish Custard and Cora Brunette for giving their time to enroll children!



Alerts about this bulletin are emailed to families whose children are enrolled in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.

Find this bulletin and many other family resources at www.AEYC-SEA.org.

The Juneau Parent Bulletin is created by SEAAEYC in coordination with the Juneau Partnerships for Families and Children. Find us and Like us on [Facebook!](https://www.facebook.com/SEAAEYC) SEAAEYC | 3200 Hospital Dr. Ste. 204, Juneau, AK | 907-789-1235 | www.aeyc-sea.org.

Community Events

Juneau Public Library

Weekly story time available to children of all ages.

Valley Library Storytime: Tuesdays @ 11:00am

Downtown Library Storytime: Tuesdays @ 3:30pm

Contact m.j.grande@juneau.org or 907-586-0435 at the [Juneau Public Library](http://www.juneaupubliclibrary.org) for more information.

Twin Group Play Session

AEYC is hosting a twin group play session for families of twins under the age of 3 on Thursday mornings, twice a month. Join us from 9:30am - 11:00am at the AEYC Playroom located at 3200 Hospital Dr, Suite 204 to share the joys and challenges of raising multiples.

Discovery Southeast Forest Preschool Program

Discovery Southeast is hosting a forest preschool program for children ages 3-6 from January to March. Program will meet at Auke Rec every Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00am - 12:00pm. Learn more and register at

www.discoverysoutheast.org.

CCFR Santa Run 2023

Capital City Fire and Rescue and Santa will be visiting the Mendenhall Valley on December 8th and Downtown Juneau and Douglas on December 16th. For specific times and parade routes, visit [CCFR's Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ccfr).



Free Family Fun Night at the Turf

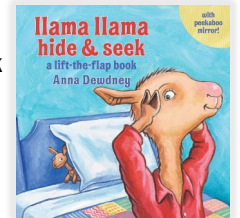
Join the fun at Dimond Park Field House on December 8th from 5:00pm to 6:30pm. Enjoy meeting other families and letting your little ones run and play with a number of toys available. Sponsored by [CBJ Parks and Recreation](https://www.cbj.org).



Imagination Library: Books to Love

Llama Llama Hide & Seek

What is better than enjoying a fun family indoor game of hide and seek when the weather is not cooperating? Enjoy the **Llama Llama Hide & Seek** interactive book, which introduces your child to the popular game of hide and seek. This game helps children develop skills such as; counting, exploring areas to hide, physical movement, and even risk assessment. This is a great game to play with toys or with the whole family. The Imagination Library presents many book options that introduce new ways to play and engage with children that promotes cognitive and motor development.



Activities you can try after reading this book: Animal Hide & Seek

Create a simple game of hide & seek with you child's favorite toys. For this game you will need a few stuffed animals.

Rules:

1. Have your child turn around and close their eyes.
2. Count to 10 as you hide some of their favorite stuffed animals.
3. Have them open their eyes and find their stuffed animals.
4. Once they find one or them all, have them bring it back to you.
5. Repeat!

Find other fun activities at www.momentsenriched.com.



Be sure to visit www.aeyc-sea.org to get in touch with partner agencies and find out what services, classes, and resources they offer, or call 907-789-1235.