

THE TEDDY BEAR POST



A NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

It's That Time Of The Year Again...

Is your child's Christmas list longer than the Wall of China? Have your kids turned the 8 days of Chanukah into an episode of *The Price is Right*?

Are you wondering whatever happened to the reason holidays used to be so much fun? How come visiting grandma is not enough, we must also be armed with extravagant food, an armful of gifts and enough batteries to run a natural disaster shelter?

If you are tired of spending the month of December looking for parking at the local mall, perhaps you can take this opportunity to show your kids what it really means to come together as a family just for the sake of being together.

Since children learn from example, here are some ideas on how to turn the holidays into a less dramatic and more fulfilling experience to all involved.

First, be practical:

- Limit your child's requests to one gift for himself and one wish for someone else.
- Allow yourself to sit around and actually enjoy the time with your loved ones.
- Say no to events that will stress you out.
- Avoid taking small children to overcrowded spaces where they are most likely to have tantrums.

Then, be creative!

Sometimes, looking at something from a different perspective allows us to have renewed appreciation for it. Think of the many holiday icons we come across each year and play with their meanings:

- **Lights:** don't forget to tell your children how they light up your life.
- **Presents:** keep in mind that you are each other's greatest gifts.
- **Carols:** listen to each other with willingness.
- **Stockings:** sometimes the smallest gestures bring the biggest smiles.
- **Santa:** allow magic into your lives.
- **Decorations:** remind each other that everything looks better when you are together.
- **Candles:** keep the flames of friendship and faith alive by tending to each carefully.

Whatever your family traditions are, remember to keep in mind that December comes and goes every year. Gift wrappings are thrown out, cards are misplaced, decorations go back into storage, and toys are forgotten.

Your memories are the only long lasting evidences of the good times you had as a family. Make a holiday scrapbook with your kids. Help them write in their own words what the holidays were like for them. Write thank you notes together.

Carry your new definitions with you throughout the year and remember to kiss your children every night. They may be on the naughty list some days but so are we!



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"A PARENT ASKS"

Q: My wife has been deployed and won't be home for another 8 months. What can I do to help my children get through this period, especially during the holiday season?



A: Children enjoy predictability. Whether a parent is deployed, on a business trip or otherwise separated from their children for long periods of time it is imperative that the children are still able to feel a reasonable amount of certainty on their daily lives.

- A calendar is a great resource: children can count down how many days until they see mom again; they can also jot down what they did each day and review it with mom when she calls or upon her return.
- Journal: this is a great way for children to express their feelings. Allow them to choose whether they want to share it with you or not. It works particularly well with older kids but little ones can also draw or dictate.
- Try to keep up the same traditions you have created as a family.
- Visit other family members and friends who love your children.
- Make a special gift or cards for the absent parent, even if they won't be delivered for a while.
- Don't try to overcompensate for the absent parent, love and discipline your children as you always have.

SAFETY WORKS!

Buckle up!

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of children ages two to 14. Proper use of child safety seats can considerably help reduce fatal injuries **Always use a child safety seat.** Start with your new baby's ride home from the hospital, and don't deviate no matter how inconvenient it may see at times.

Pick the right child safety seat. Make sure you are using the correct type of seat for your child's age and weight. Very young children should ride in a rear-facing seat. As children age and grow larger a forward-facing seat should be used. Finally, for children over 40 lbs a booster seat is the appropriate choice.

Ask the experts. Learn how to correctly install and use your child safety seat by calling you local hospital or health insurance and asking about special classes and free inspections.

Check out resources. For more information, call 1-866-SEAT-CHECK or go to the NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) web site.

Be a good example and buckle up! Your children are watching you!



SUGGESTED READING

Some excellent books available at the State Libraries:

A Paper Hug

By Stephanie Skolmoski

Night Catch

By Brenda Ehrmantraut

Holidays Around the World Series

Kwanzaa *By Carolyn B. Otto*

Chinese New Year *By Carolyn B. Otto*

Christmas *By Deborah Heiligman*

Hanukkah *By Deborah Heiligman*

A Kid's Guide to

African-American History

By Nancy Sanders

To Love Me Bird

By Joyce Dunbar



The Parent Line:

Free statewide phone line for parents and others caring for children. Call for support, encouragement, information, and ideas about handling behavior or about community resources.



Mon- Fri, 8:00am- 6:00pm and Sat, 9:00am-1:00pm.

Oahu: **526-1222.**

Neighbor Islands toll-free:

1-800-816-1222

Special Dates to Remember



December 4th

National Cookie Day

January 15th

Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday

January 29th

Puzzle Day

February

Black History Month

February 14th

Valentine's Day

Something easy and yummy to do with the kids:

No Bake Chocolate Cookies

Ingredients:

- 2 cups white sugar
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 cup margarine
- 3 cups rolled oats
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 cup flaked coconut

Directions:

In a saucepan over medium heat, combine sugar, milk, and margarine. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally, then boil for 4 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in the oats, vanilla, cocoa and coconut. Spoon onto waxed paper and allow to cool for at least an hour. Store in an airtight container.

