

December 2021

Early Head Start Gazette



Holiday Ideas for the Whole Family

1. Holiday Light Tour

Pile the kids in the car, put on some Holiday songs, and drive around to homes or neighborhoods known for their over-the-top holiday light displays.

2. Holiday Movies

Spending an afternoon or evening watching Holiday movies is a must! (You could also spread out your movie marathon over the course of a week.) Let each family member choose a favorite holiday flick to watch with the family.

3. Popcorn Garland

Make some homemade garlands for your family's doorways, or mantle. All you need is a needle and some thread or fishing line. Use popcorn some leftover popcorn from movie night and some cranberries, too. Younger kids can count out the berries or popcorn to make a cool alternating pattern, and parents or older

kids can do the threading.

4. Holiday Cookies

Children of all ages can get involved in the kitchen on "cookie day." Younger kids can add pre-measured ingredients, stir the bowl and decorate cooled cookies. Get the kids excited with these fun shapes like Snowmen, Stockings, Snowflakes and more.

6. Hot Chocolate Buffet

There is nothing like a steaming mug of hot chocolate on a cold December night. Up your game for the holiday season with a buffet of toppings for your cocoa.

7. Holiday Festivals

There will likely be free fun Holiday activities popping up all over the place as organizations recognize that children and families need some holiday cheer.

Happy Holidays and Best wishes for the New Year!

10 Ways for Families to Save Money

1. Move bank accounts to take advantage of perks and earn more interest

If you're paying a monthly fee for your checking or savings account, you would benefit from researching some of newest banking offers out there.

2. Utilize online bill pay with your bank. Save on the cost of stamps.

3. Always ask for fees to be waived.

4. Negotiate rates with your credit card company or complete a balance transfer.

If you're paying a lot of interest on your credit cards, it's important to know that you do have some power as long as you've been making your payments. Not only do you have the right to negotiate your current interest rate with your credit card issuer, but you have the right to transfer your balance to an entirely different card with a 0 APR.

5. Quit using credit cards.

6. Remove your credit card numbers from your online accounts.

7. Design your debt snowball and create a visual reminder of your debt.

To put your debt into terms that are easy to understand, make a giant progress bar that starts with the amount of debt you have and ends with zero. Each time you pay down a little bit, fill in a little more of that progress bar.

Baby, It's Cold Outside!

Regardless of what your mom may say, it is okay to take baby out in the cold as long as it is not uncomfortably chilly or windy and you do not gallivant all afternoon. Kids younger than 2 are more susceptible to hypothermia and frostbite, however, so be cautious. When in doubt, stay in, particularly if your child is under 6 months. "Young babies aren't able to regulate their temperature well and can lose heat quickly," warns pediatrician Jennifer Shu, M.D., coauthor of *Heading Home with Your Newborn*.

If you do venture out, dress your munchkin in layers. Tots 12 months and older require the same amount of clothing as you do, and younger babies need one extra layer, says Robert Bonner, M.D., a pediatrician at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children in Philadelphia. A hat is necessary, and be sure to protect your snow bunny's fingers and toes. He will need waterproof boots once he is [walking](#).

Watch out: If his lips have turned blue, or he has a pale nose, fingertips, or ears, he might be too cold. He might be too hot if the back of his neck feels warm or sweaty, his cheeks are flushed, or he has a bumpy rash on his chest or tummy. Also, beware if he starts acting fussy or lethargic. <http://www.parents.com/baby/health/sick-baby/baby--its-cold-outside/>



Keep this reminder in a place where you'll see it often, and keep filling it in regularly.

8. Consolidate your student loans.

9. Get on the automatic repayment plan for any student loans you have.

10. Learn about all of the benefits your company offers.

Spend some time with an HR person at work learning about all the benefits of your job. Such as a 401k plan, etc.



Announcements

December is Safe Toy and Gift Month. Children receive most of their toys this time of year. Unsafe or age-inappropriate toys can result in injury, blindness, and even death. There are an estimated 240,000 toy-related injuries treated in emergency rooms each year.

When purchasing toys or gifts for children:

Avoid toys with sharp or rigid points, spikes, or edges.

Buy toys that will withstand impact and not break into dangerous shards.

Avoid toys that shoot or include parts that fly off.

Avoid toys with small objects that can cause choking if the child is young.

Avoid magnets, balloons, and toys with cords if the child is young.

Get the right sized helmet and safety gear to go with bikes, skateboards, or any gifts that can be ridden.

Check for safety recalls and warnings at www.recalls.gov or www.cpsc.gov.

Consider access of older children's toys to other smaller children in the home.

As children, open gifts:

Inspect the gift for safety and ensure it is right for the child's ability as well as age.

Immediately discard plastic wrap and other toy packaging before they become dangerous to young children or pets.

Check that craft materials are non-toxic and toys made of fabric are labeled as flame resistant/retardant.

Before use, read all toy warning labels, safety precautions, and directions for use.

Take time to explain how to use the toy or gift to a child or to anyone who needs instruction.

Baby Acne

Most babies will experience a case of baby acne within the first 2 months. It occurs most commonly on the face and appears as red papules and pustules, like teenager acne. Lingering maternal hormones along with sebaceous oil and bacteria are thought to be the culprits of these baby acne flare-ups.

It is important to know that these flare-ups bother us parents more than our babies, so don't worry if you see it appearing on your precious baby's face. A baby acne episode usually lasts for 2 to 4 weeks and resolves on its own. Continue to gently wash your baby's face with a gentle soap. If you need the acne flare to be soothed quickly for a photo op, over the counter (OTC) 1% hydrocortisone can be used twice daily for 1 to 2 days. <https://www.babypibu.com/what-to-do-when-your-baby-develops-a-facial-rash/>



Ensure that children know how to wear safety gear and to only ride/skate in non-traffic areas, and not near stairs or pools.

After children play with toys:

Store toys away so they do not become tripping hazards or become available to younger children or pets. Inspect toys for wear and tear, for cracks or sharp edges that could cause lacerations, or for loose items that could become choking hazards.

Periodically check for safety recalls and warnings at www.recalls.gov or www.cpsc.gov, especially for older or hand-me-down toys.

One helpful tip is for all members of the family to be trained in CPR, this lifesaving training is useful in the event a child is choking or having difficulty breathing. Visit www.redcross.org to find a CPR classes near you.



Sweet Potatoes

Sweet potatoes are a Native American plant that was the main source of nourishment for early homesteaders and for soldiers during the Revolutionary War. These tuberous roots are among the most nutritious foods in the vegetable kingdom. They are packed with calcium, potassium, and vitamins A and C. This is why one colonial physician called them the "vegetable indispensable." Sweet potatoes are often confused with yams, but yams are large, starchy roots grown in Africa and Asia. Yams can grow up to 100 pounds and are

rarely available in American supermarkets. Nutritionally, sweet potatoes greatly outweigh yams. Because of the common use of the term "yam," it is acceptable to use this term when referring to sweet potatoes. Sweet potatoes contain an enzyme that converts most of its starches into sugars as the potato matures. This sweetness continues to increase during storage and when they are cooked.



Sweet Potato and Apple Mash

2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch round
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 medium Golden Delicious Apples, peeled and cored
1 medium onion, diced
2 teaspoons minced fresh rosemary
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon black pepper

Directions

1. Place the sweet potatoes in a medi-

um saucepan and cover with water. Bring to a simmer and cook until tender, about 20 minutes. Drain the potatoes, return them to the pot, cover, and keep warm.
2. Meanwhile, heat a 10-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat; once hot, add 1 tablespoon of the oil. Add the apples, onion, rosemary, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of the salt, and cook, stirring frequently, until the mixture is caramelized and the apples are tender, 10 to 15 minutes.

3. Add the apple mixture to the cooked sweet potatoes along with the remaining tablespoon of oil, remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon of salt, butter, and pepper, and coarsely mash with a potato masher or whisk. (The mixture should remain somewhat chunky.) Serve.