

One Page Resource: Holiday Celebrations

Everyone loves a party-even preschoolers (okay, especially preschoolers), so how do we celebrate holidays and special occasions appropriately with this special age?

Facts:

- Holiday programs can put excess amounts of pressure on children.
- Many families celebrate each holiday differently (i.e. some families may reference Santa while others do not).
- A good way to get to know your children is to understand their families' traditions, celebrations and culture.
- Holiday celebrations can provide a window into cultural roots, spirituality, values, social and historical values and different perspectives of your children and their families. This can lead to a rich classroom and curriculum.

Consider your goals for the celebration. Are they...

- ...to bring family influences and holiday experiences and traditions to the classroom?
- ...exposure to other ways of celebrating?
- ...to provide for fun and a break of routine?
- ...to build a sense of community?
- ...to encourage critical thinking about bias?

Make sure that all holiday practices are DAP:

- Remember to talk about the holidays. You may or may not have a party for each holiday, however talking about what each holiday means or having a family member come in and explain how they celebrate makes them more relevant.
- Avoid centering classroom themes around a holiday. This can over-stimulate a child as well as exclude a child who may not celebrate that holiday. Additionally, it may inadvertently ignore other areas of interest.
- Avoid activities that scare children. For example puppets, costumes or paper dragons.
- Use open-ended holiday-related projects. For example, making homemade wrapping paper, a card-making center, or making clay candle holders. These types of activities are more calming and have a process oriented focus.
- Offer a variety of activities, some which focus on holidays, others which do not. This will help address all areas of development.
- Feel free to create your own classroom holidays or ways of celebrating, just be sure to be appropriate and inclusive!