

We are a group of parents in Linn County who want to be supports to other parents. We have difficult kids or kids with difficult behaviors, and have felt alone, misunderstood, isolated, confused, frustrated, and everything in between. Support to and from other parents has been a lifeline and reminded us that we do not have to be alone.

Comments, questions? Contact us by phone: 541-704-0221 or 541-730-8716 or e-mail: questions@parentingtogether.us. To submit articles or feedback, or to sign up to receive this newsletter via email, write to fseditors@gmail.com or talk to Crystal Rowell.

Getting Ready For The Holidays

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I recently read a blog post from Think:Kids that I would like to share. It is titled "Setting Realistic Expectations During The Holidays". The article gives a list of specifics to help our families experience less stress during the holiday season.

Some of the suggestions listed included;

- Keep your kiddo's delayed skills in mind – this will help us predict what situations might be difficult for them.
- If there is too much going on, consider

cutting back, or scheduling breaks

- Work together with your kiddo to talk about situations that might be difficult for them and come up with ideas about how to plan for them.

- Consider the things that your kiddo finds comforting, such as heavy blankets, hand manipulatives, or other sensory things

that calm them. Can they be brought or used during stressful activities?

- If possible, surround yourself with other adults that understand or are willing to learn a bout your kiddo's needs

• Keep a schedule in a visible place so that the whole family can see what to expect..

- Try to keep as much of your normal routine as possible

during the holiday break.

- Make sure that you as a parent have time to recharge your batteries. Stress is contagious.
- Keep a journal or make notes with your kiddo about what worked well for them this year to use again next year.

For more information and to read the article, visit <http://www.thinkkids.org/setting-realistic-expectations-during-the-holidays/>



Upcoming Winter Class Schedule

Albany—Thursdays, 12:30-2:30 and 5:45-7:45, First United Methodist Church, 1115 28th Ave. SW., beginning January 10th.

Lebanon—Tuesdays, 11:15-1:15. Church of the Nazarene 600 W. D Street, beginning January 8th.

Sweet Home— Tuesdays, 9:30-11:00, Freedom Hill Church 2470 Main St., beginning January 8th. *Facilitated by consumer April Wheeler

Children Activities available at some locations. Lebanon and Albany groups are facilitated by Debbi Barreras.

Questions? Please call 541-704-0221 or 541-730-8716 , or visit: www.parentingtogether.us



Things To Do With Kids Over Winter Break

With kids out of school, it may be difficult to figure out what to do, here are some suggestions;

- * Make paper snowflakes
- * Play a board game
- * Make up a story together
- * Make a furniture fort (you know with couch cushions and sheets)
- * Tell a story about

traditions you have.

- * Go for a scavenger hunt walk.
- * If it snows you could make a snowman
- * Go through their toys and donate ones they don't play with.
- * Clothing and blankets are also good to donate this time of year. Check your local area for collection

sites that keep the items local.

- * Volunteer at a soup kitchen
- * Visit the library
- * Visit a museum
- * Go to the park and play together
- * Teach them a song or make it up

together

- * Bake cookies and take to the local police or fire station to show your appreciation.



Homemade Hot Chocolate

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup baking cocoa
- Dash salt
- 1/3 cup hot water
- 4 cups milk
- 3/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Miniature marshmallows, sweetened whipped cream or cinnamon sticks, optional

Directions:

In a saucepan, combine sugar, cocoa and salt. Add water; bring to a boil. Cook and stir for 2 minutes. Stir in milk; heat to serving temperature



(do not boil). Remove from the heat; stir in vanilla. Whisk until frothy. Serve.

Suggestions:

For Swiss Mocha Cocoa: Add 2 to 2-1/2 teaspoons instant coffee with vanilla. For Canadian Cocoa: Add 1/2 teaspoon imitation maple flavoring with vanilla. For Slim-Trim Cocoa: Omit sugar. Combine cocoa, salt and water. Substitute fat-free milk. Proceed as above. Stir in vanilla with artificial sweetener equivalent to 1/2 cup sugar.

