

# What's up?



JCCDC Newsletter for Parents, Providers, Community Partners & Staff



## A Note from the Director

Tena Sales, HS/EHS Director



The month of November can mean a multitude of things for children and adults. It is time to be thankful and to give thanks. Here at JCCDC, we are thankful that you entrust us with providing Head Start/Early Head Start services to your

family. We especially thank all parents who participated in our parent meeting on Tuesday, October 17, 2023.

We talked about Fall Health and Safety and continued to learn about Head Start's Policy Council. Parents were excited to learn about the many leadership positions within the Policy Council and some went on to complete the candidates interest form. There is still time for you to be a part of the 2023-2024 Policy Council. Contact Tena Sales at 205-379-6065 or Phillip Merriweather at 205- 379-6064 to complete your interest form today. Elections will be held on Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup> during our Thanksgiving luncheon at the Boutwell Auditorium. You can contact your Family Engagement Specialist to sign up for the luncheon.

Our agency, classrooms, and sites will observe Veteran's Day on Friday, November 10, 2023.

Thanksgiving holidays will be observed on Wednesday, November 22 – Friday, November 24.

*Happy Holidays!*



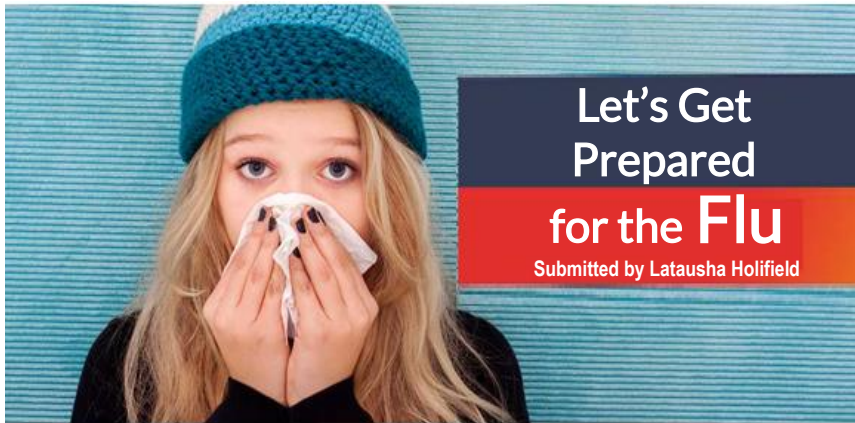
- November 4<sup>th</sup> is Book Lovers Day
- November 7<sup>th</sup> is Election Day
- November 11<sup>th</sup> is Veteran's Day
- November 14<sup>th</sup> is Young Readers Day
- November 23<sup>rd</sup> is Thanksgiving Day



- December 7<sup>th</sup> is National Letter Writing Day
- December 10<sup>th</sup> is Human Rights Day
- December 14<sup>th</sup> is Ice Cream Day
- December 25<sup>th</sup> is Christmas Day
- December 26<sup>th</sup> - Kwanzaa begins



- Kamilah Moss 11/19
- Valerie Square 12/4
- Carla Adams 12/18
- LaShanta Osberry 12/18
- Cynthia Thomas 12/27



The 2023-2024 flu season is underway which means it is time for families to start thinking about getting the flu vaccine and how to keep everyone healthy. Flu viruses usually cause the most illness during the colder months of the year. In the United States, flu season is from October to March.

### **What can we expect this flu season?**

The Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention is anticipating that we will have an increase in the flu this year because we really did not have much of a flu season last year. This is the first year where we really don't have any masking in place. The CDC is comparing this year to 2019 and anticipating an increase in flu cases.

### **What are flu symptoms in children?**

Fever, general fatigue, sometimes children will have runny noses, cough, all the things you will think of with a typical cold, but mainly fever and fatigue.

### **When is the best time to get the annual flu vaccine?**

It is recommended getting the flu vaccine before the end of October to ensure you are protected during the height of the flu season.

### **How important is it for parents to make sure they are getting the flu vaccine for their children?**

It is known that flu vaccines work. Flu vaccines have been available for years, so we know that being vaccinated as a whole works, so providing extra protection for our kids is so important. Just like any other vaccination, we want to make sure we are giving them the extra to try to prevent becoming positive for the flu.

### **What can parents do to keep their family healthy during the flu season?**

First, handwashing is the number one thing that we can do to make sure we are protected. Cover your cough, stay home from work or school when you are sick, stay away from people who are sick, and watch for signs and symptoms. Good hygiene is necessary because we usually contaminate ourselves by putting our hands on our face and nose. The flu, RSV, COVID-19, and other viruses are spread by droplets, which are then spread by contaminated hands.

### **How do you treat a child's flu at home, and when should you bring your child to see their pediatrician?**

Parents should seek help from a medical professional when fever is not controlled by Tylenol, when the child is not eating or drinking, or if the child is baby, having wet diapers at least six to eight times a day. It is not usually the flu that brings a patient to the emergency department; it is the complications of flu, which are dehydration, uncontrolled fever and/or pneumonia.

Families come in all shapes and sizes across the United States. Approximately 50 percent of American children will see their parents' divorce or separate, and 16 percent of children live in a home with a step-parent, step-sibling, or half-sibling.

Does this sound like your family? If so, you know that co-parenting requires a great deal of cooperation, communication, and planning. In addition to the typical logistical challenges that come with being a parent, co-parenting involves coordinating schedules and navigating additional relationship dynamics. Further, blended families—those where parents have children from previous relationships, but all the members come together as one unit—may include different cultural or religious backgrounds, parenting styles, and conflicting personalities.

Proactive planning, positive communication, and staying focused on what's best for the children can go a long way in preventing unnecessary stress and conflict. Successful co-parenting can

help parents ensure that they maintain strong relationships with their children, which has been linked to decreased behavior issues and increased self-esteem. Here are some practical co-parenting tips and strategies fathers can use to support co-parenting and supporting their children and families.



## TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

- **Try to keep the lines of communication open.** Whether between parents, parent and child, parent and caregiver, or caregiver and child, open communication is crucial to negotiating family roles and rules, strengthening relationships, and managing expectations. Effective communication between parents also helps ensure that they are consistent in parenting their child.
- **Help children plan ahead.** Whether visiting family or going to a different caregiver's home, planning ahead with your child can ensure a smoother transition for you both. Make a packing list, understand how the handoff or visit will work, and share the plan with your child.
- **Keep routines consistent.** Whether it's navigating who has the children during the holidays or school breaks, switching between households, or spending time with a step-parent or other relative, maintaining consistency can go a long way to help your child feel safe and secure.
- **Make the most of your time together.** Many parents don't have unlimited time to spend with their children. Making the most of the time you *do* have together is what counts. Put away your phone, minimize distractions, and focus on using the time to strengthen your relationship.

Submitted by Nakendra Massey



Teaching kids about gratitude is essential to their emotional and social development. Use the kids' gratitude activities below to help you get started. Gratitude helps children appreciate what they have, fosters empathy, and promotes positive relationships. Fostering a grateful attitude can greatly impact children's

quality of life and the level of happiness they are able to experience. Below is a list of ways to teach kids about gratitude.

### 1. LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Children learn by observing the behavior of adults and caregivers. Demonstrate gratitude in your everyday life by expressing thanks and appreciation for what you have and the kindness you receive from others.

### 2. COUNT BLESSINGS

Encourage children to take a moment to stop and count their blessings when good things happen in their lives. Or invite them to list three things they are grateful for each day. This practice helps them focus on the positive aspects of their lives.

### 3. SAY "THANK YOU"

Encourage children to say "thank you" when someone does something kind for them, such as giving them a gift, helping them with a task, or even a simple act of kindness like sharing a toy.

### 4. AVOID COMPARISONS

Teach children not to compare what they have (or don't have) with others. Instead, encourage them to focus on their joy and appreciation for their unique blessings.

### 5. RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

Engage children in acts of kindness for others, such as making a thank-you card for a friend, helping a family member with chores, or sharing their toys with others.

### 6. DONATE AND VOLUNTEER

Involve children in charitable activities, like donating toys, clothes, or food to those in need or participating in community service events. This experience helps them understand the value of giving and empathy.

### 7. SHARE GRATITUDE

During family meals or bedtime, take a moment to share and express gratitude with one another. Have a gratitude circle where each family member shares something they are thankful for that day. This activity fosters a sense of connection and appreciation within the family.

### 8. HAVE COMPASSION AND BE PATIENT

Children might not fully grasp the concept of gratitude immediately. Be patient and encourage them gently to practice gratitude regularly.

Remember, teaching gratitude is an ongoing process. The best way to instill this value in children is to incorporate it into your daily rhythm or routine. The list of gratitude activities and gratitude crafts on the list below can help parents, teachers, and caregivers teach children how to express gratitude for life.



# No-bake Gingerbread Ornaments

Submitted by Virginia DeLoach

## What you need

- 1 standard (3.9 oz) Mott's container of **applesauce** (if you use homemade applesauce, then it is equal to ¼ cup + 1 tablespoon)
- 1 cup **cinnamon**
- ½ cup **craft glue** + more for decorating (optional)
- Holiday **cookie cutters**
- **Drinking straw** or something similar to make a hole for hanging
- **Ribbon or thread** for hanging



## What to do

- Mix applesauce with cinnamon.
- Stir in ½ cup glue and mix until the ball forms. At this point double-check; if the dough looks too dry and crumbly, don't worry, and don't try to add any liquids. Just mix it until it all sticks together.
- Let stand for 1 hour.
- Flatten half of the dough with a rolling pin to about ¼ inch thickness. If the dough is too sticky, then sprinkle the rolling pin or your hands with additional cinnamon. Or if the dough is too dry, then dip your hands in water or spritz the dough.
- Using a cookie cutter, cut out the shapes until you run out of dough. Repeat the same with the second half of the dough.
- Poke a hole in each gingerbread man for hanging.
- Air dry ornaments for 24 hours. We like to flip our gingerbread men multiple times during drying time just because we can't keep our hands off them. But if you only flip them once, do it somewhere in the middle. It will probably be enough.
- Decorate your gingerbread man, go over your design in your head so you have the final destination clear in your mind. Spread craft glue only over the area you wish to decorate. Immediately (while the glue is still wet), sprinkle glitter, push beads and buttons on, and tap off the excess. Alternatively, you can use white paint in place of glue. Let it dry.
- Add a pretty ribbon and hang it on a tree.

## NOTES

- **These ornaments are NOT edible!** They should keep for years if wrapped in tissue paper between seasons.
- You may use the cheapest brand of cinnamon you can find - some store-brand version may be inexpensive and the \$1 store has cheap cinnamon too.