

The H-N REACH EarlyON at Home

FAMILY NEWSLETTER



Christmas Carols

Sang all together in unison, Christmas carols can raise the spirits! Here are some of the best for kids:

- Jingle Bells
- Away in a Manger
- Here Comes Santa Claus
- Deck the Halls
- Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer
- Frosty the Snowman
- We Wish You a Merry Christmas



PRESENCE OVER PRESENTS

The holidays are all about family time, the gift of giving, sharing meals and taking the time to relax and reflect - but it can take a toll on us both mentally and financially. Just think back to some of your early memories from the holidays - what do you recall? For me, it is the traditions with my parents, the laughter between siblings, the hugs from grandparents, and the joy and positivity in the air. For young children, despite what the holiday may bring to your family, your undivided attention means so much. Here are some ways to be more 'present' with your family this holiday season:

1. **Put your phone down.** Watch your child experience the holidays through your own eyes rather than from behind a phone screen. These are special memories that we often want to capture, but the screen may impede our ability to engage and be present. If your heart is set on capturing these moments, try setting up a spot where you can place your phone or camera to record the special moment, leaving your hands and mind available to connect with your child.
2. **Make new traditions.** For many of us, the holidays will look a little different this year. Try not to focus on what you aren't able to do, and highlight for your child something new that you can do! Try out a new recipe, go to a trail and forage for some home decor, read a book or watch a movie together.
3. **Make time for calm and quiet.** Quiet time is beneficial for the whole family, so remember to slow down and make time for rest. This will ensure that you have the mental and physical ability to be present with your family for these special memories.



Free sites to build into the excitement of the holidays:

- ReinderCam.com - watch Santa's reindeer on the days leading up to Christmas!
- Noradsanta.org - track Santa and see where he is in the world!
- www.portablenorthpole.com - send a video from Santa to someone on the nice list!



CHRISTMAS PICKLE???

When a co-worker first told me about the Christmas pickle, I wrinkled my nose and loudly exclaimed 'No way!!!!'. But it's a thing - who knew!! Some people believe that it's an old German tradition, others say it's because St. Nicholas rescued two boys in a pickle barrel, and the stories go on.

It does date back to the late 1800's though, and it may have just been made up by a salesman trying to sell German ceramic ornaments! It's all a mystery, but no matter where it comes from, this modern tradition goes as follows: on Christmas Eve, the parents sneak down to the tree and hide the Christmas Pickle somewhere on the tree, and the first person to find it the next morning is the first person to open a present!



FAMILY TRADITIONS

Family traditions bring meaning to our celebrations and help us bond with those we love. They nurture the family spirit of connection, giving us a sense of belonging and helping us celebrate generations of family. Whether you're celebrating family traditions from years past, or are creating new ones, here are a few our staff enjoy:

- "Our son gets a box delivered to him on Christmas Eve, and in the box is some PJ's, socks, some special hot chocolate, and a book to read!"
- "We decorate gingerbread houses - one for each child to decorate!"





Stress and the Holidays

Stress seems to be inevitable during the holiday season - financial stress, trying to get everything done on time, kids are all around, and expectations are high for everything (and don't forget there's a pandemic happening!). Take a deep breath and try these tips to help:

- Take a walk
- Skip the party (you need the extra sleep anyway!)
- Ignore the dust bunnies
- Shop online
- Drink decaf
- Keep up on healthy eating habits
- Get plenty of rest
- Keep hydrated

THE GIFT OF GIVING

Gifts are exciting, but can sometimes be the cause of excess stress during the season. We can help children by making special gifts for family and friends so they can discover that it's just as much fun to give as it is to receive. Homemade gifts create opportunities for children to be involved in the giving experience, and because they are personal in nature, they hold more meaning. When considering gifts for your children, remember that the gift of time is also valuable. Consider a family outing to the local hiking trails, a picnic in the park, family game or movie night. A fun activity for all ages could be working together to build a fort in the living room where you can read stories, drink hot chocolate and talk about all the great things that happened in 2020. It's been a tricky year, but by remembering the good things and focusing on that as a family, you can build resilience and perspective - and that's a great gift for years to come!



CELEBRATIONS OF LIGHT

Long ago, people found a way to light the darkness. They built fires to keep warm and cook their food. They lit torches, and learned to make candles and lanterns to see at night. Light was so important in their lives, that they came to use it in worship and in celebrations. Christmas is one Celebration of Light where we light the Christmas tree. Hanukkah is celebrated by lighting the Menorah over eight nights. In fact, there are many celebrations that take place throughout the world where light plays a significant role, marking and brightening special days.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Christmas morning is a busy time - try this recipe out and give yourself those extra few minutes to enjoy the celebrations!

French Toast Bake

7 eggs
2 1/2 cups milk
1 tsp vanilla
1 loaf of Challah bread (or egg bread) cubed (1 inch)

1/2 cup butter
1 cup brown sugar
2 tbsp maple syrup



1. Preheat oven to 350 F
2. Mix eggs and milk in a large bowl. Add vanilla.
3. Add cubed bread to the bowl and stir to make sure all bread pieces are covered. Let it sit for 30 minutes in the fridge.
4. Place mixture in a sprayed 9 x 13 L pan.
5. Combine melted butter with brown sugar and syrup. Drizzle over the egg mixture.
6. Bake at 350 F for 40 - 45 minutes (until it is puffy and brown). May need a little extra time depending on your oven!



Indoor Programs are here!!

Looking for ideas of what to do with the kids this in the new year?

Join us for our indoor programs at our: Caledonia, Simcoe, Dunnville and Houghton sites!

We are also offering a variety of outdoor and virtual programs as well! Check out our Facebook page for more info, or contact earlyon@hnreach.on.ca

We look forward to seeing you there!

WE ARE STILL HERE FOR YOU!

Yes, things have changed a lot over the past few months, but we are still here to help! Haldimand-Norfolk REACH is considered an essential service, and we are working to stay connected with everyone, and to help those in need during these turbulent times.

If you or your child are in crisis, our Child and Youth Crisis Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 1-866-327-3224

Feel free to find us on Facebook - we are the Haldimand-Norfolk REACH EarlyON Child and Family Centre! We're always posting schedules of activities, activity ideas, circle time videos and stories, and tips to stay healthy at home.

Have an idea you'd like to see us try? Email us at earlyon@hnreach.on.ca