

Happy, Happy Holidays

Traditions

One of the most amazing things we can give to our children at special times of the year are traditions.



Toys come and go, interests change but what we do as families lasts into the future.

Traditions are what we look forward to year after year. They are what remind us of grandparents when they are gone. It is what will remind your children of you once you are gone. So if you

don't have any traditions yet, why not start one or two this year.

Some families always decorate for the holidays on the same day each year and they always want the same food on that day as they have in the past.

Some families make a trip to the seashore or the mountains yearly and often to the same location. That becomes part of what the family looks forward to as that time of the year approaches.

Other families write letters to our military overseas or send care packages even if they don't know someone personally who is serving our country.

Some families pick an angel from a Christmas tree so that another

family has a happy holiday too.

Many families have faith-based traditions which they take part in and they wouldn't feel right skipping those special times.

Still other families visit care facilities and talk with the lonely people living there. Cookies are also appreciated. Just check with those in charge first so you aren't disappointed.

As parents, it is up to you what you decide. Now as a grandmother, I can tell you that the traditions I share with my grandchildren are the ones I learned from my parents. I wouldn't want it any other way.

Happy Holidays!

KDO

For many of you, this is your first year at Shadow Rock and your child is now quite comfortable in his or her classroom. Some are starting to notice that not everyone goes home at 11:30 and they wonder what they are missing.

In January you might let them try KDO. The children eat together and then head for more

time on the playground. They never get enough of it. Some children split out at 12:30 for Kids' Kapers programming but most stay at KDO.

Most of the children leave at 1:30 which is the first pick up time for charges. At that point, some of our younger friends go down for a nap and the others stay outside or play in the Blue Room,

depending on the weather. We close at 3:30 and the school goes to bed until the next day.

If you would like to give KDO a try, just see the director to make sure space is available for an upcoming date. You pack a lunch for your child and we take it from there.

Special points of interest:

- > Dec. 21, Hanukkah begins at sunset
- > Shadow Rock closes at 11:30 for our Winter Break
- > Hanukkah ends Dec. 28
- > Shadow Rock resumes January 9

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Our Thanksgiving Feast

Thanks to all of you who attended our Thanksgiving feast. It is such a time for sharing and giving and the children really start to get the idea that the school is much larger than the classroom they attend.

Thanks to Nikki and her helpers who make sure everything is ready to go at 10:30 because, as we know, kids don't tend to sit at any table very long.

Thanks to the parent volunteers for helping get the food on the

tables and ready to go.

Thanks to each classroom who so thoughtfully prepared enough food for all of us to eat.

Thanks to the teachers who make sure their "table" looks extra special and festive. Also, thanks to the teachers for being a very large part of getting the food ready.

Thanks to Mr. Bill and his helpers who emptied the room of all the tables and chairs and mopped

the floor twice since we would be sitting there for our feast.

There is just so much to be thankful for at Shadow Rock Preschool and we must never take it for granted.

This is such a dedicated staff who care so much for your children and love and tend to them every day. From boo-boos to hugs, they watch over these precious little ones and we give thanks for each and every one.

**Do you know
how hard it is
for a child to
put on a jacket,
let alone zip it!
When it
happens they
feel very
grown up.**

THE JACKET I WEAR IN THE SNOW

As teachers, we always have our favorite books which we pull out every year knowing they will be enjoyed again and again.

For winter, a favorite is **THE JACKET I WEAR IN THE SNOW** by Shirley Neitzel. It is a

rebus book which means even the younger children can help read it by calling out the pictures which help tell the story. This is a book that grows with your child as they move from non-readers to readers and it is a joy.

A simple book we recommend for Hanukkah is **HANUKKAH LIGHTS, HANUKKAH NIGHTS** by Leslie Kimmelman. It is easy to understand without too much info. At the back is the history of Hanukkah for adults.

No Nut School



It is becoming harder and harder to protect our allergic children from nuts and nut products. Did you know that even food without nuts are usually produced in the same kitchens using nuts? That puts many of our children at risk.

If you are bringing a birthday snack to school, read the ingredients very carefully. If you are

using a food from one of the local bakeries, ask them if they use nuts or peanut oils in cooking.

For a few of our children, just touching the residue of a nut and then touching their face can create a dangerous situation.

Some of our teachers have epi-pens in their rooms because of

the real life threat that exists for a child in that room.

And of course, if you are using KDO, never, ever send a peanut butter sandwich or any other nuts as part of the lunch. Some lunchables have candy with peanuts in them. We are trying so hard to keep all our children safe. Please help us and do the same.

Smart Support

We are very pleased that our school is being served by a program called **Smart Support**. It is a mental health program which will benefit us all.

Mental health is:

- *Emotional well being
- *Flexibility—dealing with the inevitable ups and downs of life.
- *Balance—between being alone and with others, work and play, sleep and wakefulness.

*Being in touch with self and beliefs while being sensitive to what surrounds you.

*Combination of coping mechanism one uses in life to create sound decisions and interactions with one's environment.

*Ability to enjoy life and live up to full potential.

And in young children...

The development of social emotional well-being involves:

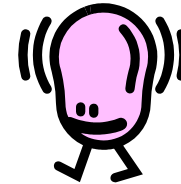
*Forming close and secure relationships with adults and peers.

*Experiencing, expressing and regulating emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways.

*Exploring the environment and learning.

...all within the context of family, school, community and culture.

We look forward to working with this group for the good of all of us.



Heard in the Halls

Two children were playing quietly on the floor in the Rainbow class when one turned to the other excitedly and said, "Hey, you are the same color as my friend!"

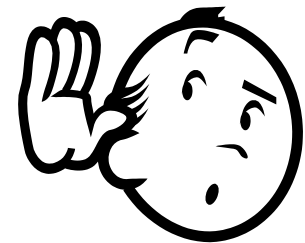
Recently, Mr. Jim was subbing in one of the rooms. After school a Ladybug came up to me and very earnestly whispered, "I think Santa Claus was in our room

today." Is that special or what!

As the Bees were lined up in the hall, one of the little boys saw Miss Heather brush one of their coats against the wall. It had some wet paint on it and he just matter of factly said, "Oh, Miss Heather, you painted the wall blue." Didn't phase the children at all showing that anything can

happen here and it is just accepted as being A-OK!

One of our Dragonfly friends came back from the break a little scared and it took some time to calm down. Another little girl went over to check on her. She said, "Come on, get yourself together."



3 Ways to Promote a Love of Language

1. Sing and chant rhymes while using hand motions that go along with the words. Hand motions often encourage even shy toddlers to chant and sing along.
2. Explain to your baby what you're doing as you engage in everyday activities such as cleaning, making lunch or folding clothes. This connects language to actions.
3. Point to and name body parts as you wash them in the tub to increase their vocabulary.



What Shall We Give the Children?

It seems certain that they will travel roads we never thought of, navigate strange seas, cross unimagined boundaries and glimpse horizons beyond our power to visualize. What can we give them to take along? For the wild shores of beyond, no toy or bauble will do. It must be something more, constructed of stouter fabric discovered among the cluttered aisles and tinsel bargain counters of experience, winnowed from what little we have learned. It must be devised out of responsibility and profound caring—a homemade present of selfless love. Everything changes but the landscape of the heart.

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This Economy Is Too Tough

It is a sad thing when a preschool teacher is forced to leave because of our economy to go elsewhere for the sake of her family. We totally understand, but it is a painful transition for the teaching partnership and the children. This has happened twice this year, which is a first in our 37 year history.

Debbie Markakis returned to her dental work because of family needs. She was a Blue Bird teacher and so

well loved.

Marie Carpenter's last day was December 2. She has been in a nursing program and just graduated. Peoria School District offered her a job immediately and while the pay is the same, she will also have benefits and we all understand that we all need the benefits to keep our families safe. Marie has been a 2's teacher with Miss Heather and Miss Carol and she will be so missed.

So Marie and Debbie, we wish you and your families the very best in the future and cannot help but admire you for doing the right thing for your families even as you leave your hearts with us.

Take care of yourselves, take care of your families and come visit often.

We are thankful for Jeane-Marie Cavanaugh and Amy Ishler for becoming the new teachers in those rooms.



We are so going to miss these teachers.