Dear University Park Elementary Parents and Community,

This past year has been quite a year, and yet we made it to the month of December. Although our traditions and celebrations may not look the same as other years, we are extremely grateful for the opportunity to serve your family in our humble little school. We started 2020 with lots of hope and excitement and then we faced a global pandemic. The challenges of having to do school so differently has not deterred us from the love and passion we have for educating our students. I am so proud of the way our students, our families and our staff have remained focused on learning and have continued to show so much care and compassion for each other.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff, students and parents for their continued support. We have been blessed with the support of many partners to help serve our families better. Our school is truly a community school and it is at this time of year when the closeness of friendship shines in our students’ faces.

The new year will bring new learning experiences, new challenges and new fun. I look forward to what lies ahead for us as a school community in 2021. I wish you all Peace, Joy, Hope and Happiness during this Holiday season and throughout the New Year.

Happy Holidays!
Ana Diaz, Principal

The 2020-2021 Parent Family Engagement Plan can be found on our school website: https://www.brevardschools.org/UniversityParkES

Attention:
December 16 and 17 regular dismissal days. Due to the changes in the district calendar, they will NOT be Early Release days.

Holidays During the Pandemic
Tips for reducing stress, helping kids cope, and making new traditions

By Caroline Miller

As we head into the holidays, families everywhere are struggling to make plans appropriate for the pandemic. We can’t tell you what the right (or safe) choices are for your family, but here are some tips to make the best of holidays during the pandemic, whatever your situation. We asked our experts for advice about ways to minimize stress and help everyone in the family feel as good as possible about this unusual holiday season.

Don’t wait to make plans

Discussions about this year’s holidays can be painful, but making plans ahead of time will make the days themselves much less stressful. “The more predictability we can create in this uncertain time, the better it is for kids,” notes Grace Berman, LCSW, a social worker at the Child Mind Institute. “By making decisions early, you can really help them be prepared for what’s going to happen.” She suggests outlining for kids what Thanksgiving or Hanukkah or whatever you celebrate is going to look like this year, and then helping them cope ahead with it — work through feelings they might have and come up with strategies to feel better. If you wait until the last minute to figure out plans, kids won’t have time to deal with any confusion or disappointment, which will make the holidays that much more stressful for the whole family.

Discuss rules in advance

Differences of opinion about how to gather safely may be a huge source of stress this holiday season. Safety measures for any kind of holiday gathering should be discussed clearly and decided in advance, advises Colin de Miranda, ASW, a social worker at the Child Mind Institute. “You need clear communication, maybe with everybody getting on a call beforehand and laying out who’s comfortable with what,” de Miranda says.

Stay the course

And what do you do when a guest who has agreed to a socially distanced visit comes in for the hug anyway? Time to refer to those ground rules. “You can say, ‘Remember, we discussed this, and so as much as I want to hug you right now or as much as I want to be able to see your face without that mask on, I have to ask you to stick to the rules we set,’” says Dr. Hameed. It can also be helpful give kids a script to use if someone isn’t respecting the rules: “My mom says I’m not allowed to give you a hug this year but we can wave.”

Give kids a voice

When framing this year as special and creating new activities and traditions, says Dr. Hameed, let kids have a role. What would make this feel special to your kids in positive ways, not just in the negative ways that we’re all aware of? What would they like to cook? What games do they want to play? Do they want to set aside time for favorite movies or listen to special music? “Being part of that decision-making process helps offset some of those negative feelings,” Dr. Hameed explains.

Let kids express disappointment

When children are upset about cancelled trips or not seeing cousins, it’s tempting to tell them that it’ll be fine, and that they’ll have just as much fun at home. But it’s important to validate their feelings by hearing them out. “You want to really pause and acknowledge that you’re disappointed, too, and let them know that it’s okay for them to feel disappointed,” says Berman.

This article has been shortened for the sake of this newsletter. You can find the entire article here.
University Park Students and Staff Believes in the “Power of YET!”

#UPESPowerofyet

University Park’s Super Pandas have the POWER...

Prepared
Ownership
Winning Attitude
Effort
Respectful

Partners in Education with:
- The Fountains
- First United Baptist
- Grace Church
- First United Methodist Church
- Valte
- Community Credit Union
- Lovebugs
- Domino’s
- Brilliant Smiles
- Church of Nazarene
- American Legion Post II7
- L3- Harris
- Vintage Buttons
- Wawa
- Central Baptist Women’s Ministry
- River Run Christian Church
- SAMS Club
- Douglas R. Beam Attorneys & Counselors

Literacy Limelight by Tehani Kisor, Reading Intervention Teacher

We hope you’ll find this information very helpful to you and your child. In the spirit of the holidays, we want to share a few inspirational tips on reading. Think: The Twelve Days of Christmas and now read The Twelve Days of Reading. . . .

On the First Day: Read Early On: You can’t start reading to your children too soon!! Children can absorb so much at a very young age. Read early and often. Read with expression and show the joy of reading!

On the Second Day: Be Patient: You teach your child many skills as they grow up, eating with a spoon, drinking from a cup, helping them dress themselves. You can never start teaching them about letters, words and books too early. You are patient when teaching them life skills, the reading process requires the same patience.

On the Third Day: Talk with Your Child: Reading is a language activity, and if you want to learn language, you need to hear it and do eventually, speak it. Spend time each day talking with your child, including their interests, feelings, favorite books or toys. Exposing them to language helps in their development of literacy skills.

On the Fourth Day: Read to Your Child: Reading to your child is a great way to advance their literacy skills. Start with books that have pictures and text. Do a picture walk through the book, ask your child what they think is happening on each page. Then read the book to them and have them see if their thoughts match what they heard.

On the Fifth Day: Have Them Tell You a Story: Encourage your child to tell you a story and write it down for them. Have them draw pictures to illustrate the story. Then read the story to your child. This will be a fun way to increase literacy skills.

On the Sixth Day: Be a Phonics Helper: If your child is just learning letters and sounds, play games with letters and the sounds, have them break apart words and then blend them together, and try changing simple words by changing the beginning, middle or ending letter. These games can be played at home, in the car, or anywhere!

On the Seventh Day: Make Reading Fun: Using items around the house: Gather old magazines, old greeting cards, or newspapers. Have your child cut out letters and practice saying the letter name and sound. Have them put letters together to make words and then sentences. They can glue or tape them to paper and make their own book to read. This will keep them busy and help their reading skills.

On the Eighth Day: Listen to Your Child Read: When your child brings books home from school or you get them from the library, have your child read to you. If they have trouble, help them by reading a page and then have them read the page to you. The more opportunities to read aloud, the more confident they will become!

On the Ninth Day: Ask Questions: As you and your child read together, ask questions about the book, ask them what they think will happen next, ask them how they feel about the characters in the book, and ask them how they might change what is happening in the book. If it is a non-fiction book, ask about the details, information and how something works from the story. You can never ask too many questions!

On the Tenth Day: Promote Writing: Reading and writing go together! It is important that your child begins writing early on. Provide crayons, markers, paper for your child to write with. You can start by writing him or her notes and then they can write back. Before you know it, your child will be a budding author!

On the Eleventh Day: Encourage Variety: Help your child choose books that are for fun, on their reading level and maybe a few beyond for you to read to them. Encourage them to choose different topics, fiction and non-fiction books, and change them up from time to time. Children like to pick their favorite story books, but exposing them to different types of literature and vocabulary will be most beneficial!

On the Twelve Day: Making Reading a Daily Adventure: It is so easy for us to get caught up with television, video games, and the computer. Develop a daily reading routine for your child. Even if it is only 15-20 minutes. This will be quality time spent with your child and the benefits will amaze you!!

As we enter the holiday season, you now have 12 days of wonderful ideas to help your child be a better reader!

Happy Holidays from University Park!}

Source:

All children are natural problem solvers! Here are two questions to ask when you are helping your child with math at home.

1. How did you get your answer? Avoid asking what is the answer? Instead ask them to explain their thinking. Children will sometimes arrive at an incorrect answer, but when given the opportunity to explain their solution, they can identify and correct their own mistakes.

2. How did you know that? Children often think if you ask them a question about their work then their answer is wrong. Asking children, “how did you do that?” encourages them to share their reasoning. It shows them that explaining is just a part of doing math.

POWER Trait for Month of November is “Respect”*

Treating someone with respect means you interact with them in a way that shows you care about their well-being and how they feel.

Students can model respect at school by:
- Using kind words to others.
- Being kind to oneself and others.
- Taking care of school property.

*Servicios de traducción disponibles a pedido. Pregunte al personal de la escuela.*

خدمات الترجمة متوفرة عند الطلب. من فضلك أسأل موظفي المدرسة.