

Pre-School Pages



A newsletter for parents of pre-schoolers
 packed with food, facts & fun
 from your local county extension office

Cooperative Extension Services

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Play Time

Winter is a great time for families

The winter months are a great time to catch up on much needed family time. Yes, it's cold. No, you cannot get outdoors as much, but around your home you have plenty of indoor activities to do with your children that can create a meaningful family experience and lots of wonderful memories.

Spending time with their parents is very important to a child's well-being. Studies have shown families who spend time together have happier, healthier children who do better in school. Family time promotes positive emotional health in children, which is linked to a greater likelihood that they will avoid risky behaviors, such as drug use, and a lower risk for depression.

The possibilities for meaningful indoor family time are as limitless as your imagination. Here are some ideas to get you thinking.

Story time: While you can and should spend time reading to your children, there is so much more you can do with story time. Let your imagination run wild as you make up stories together. Make up a silly story to tell

your children or involve them in the creation of a silly story. You can also take turns sharing your favorite family stories or memories.

Kitchen time: Especially around the holidays, you can spend a lot of family time cooking in the kitchen. Whip up something sweet to share for an after-dinner treat. Have your children help you prepare food items that will be gifts for friends and family members. You'll also be teaching them valuable math and life skills.

Dance party: Dancing to music is a great way to improve everyone's mood and get your hearts pumping when outside physical activities are limited. Let everyone have a turn selecting a song. Remember to keep the music age-appropriate, especially with younger children.

Scavenger hunts: The premise of this game is to give children a list of objects to go find and retrieve. It is simple to create and can be as long or short as you wish. Start by making a list of items commonly found in or around your home. Continue to add items to the list that require creativity and/or adventure, such as "buried treasure" which you can define however you chose.

Source: <https://exclusives.ca.uky.edu/2021/fcs/winter-great-time-families>, David Weisenhorn, senior specialist for parenting and child development education



Life Savers

Dressing kids for outdoor winter play



Have you ever hesitated to take kids outside in the winter because you think it's too cold or that kids will get sick? The truth is cold weather does not cause kids to get sick. Instead, sickness is the result of the opportunity for viruses to spread when we spend more time with others indoors. The fresh air and open spaces outside can lower the risk of getting sick. Playing outside also gives kids more space to release energy and make noise that you don't want inside. These tips will help everyone dress for safe, outdoor winter play that benefits everyone.

- **Dress in layers.** This includes socks, snow boots, snow pants, a winter coat, hat, mittens, scarf, and shirts that can be tucked into pants. Children typically need one more layer than adults wear. Layers can be peeled off if they get too warm.
- **Keep the head and ears covered.** Hats and/or ear warmers help keep heat in and prevent frost bite.
- **Wear waterproof boots.** These will help keep feet warm and dry in cold, wet weather.
- **Mittens over gloves.** Mittens can keep hands warmer than gloves. Waterproof mittens will help keep water out and allow outdoor play to last longer.
- **Remove wet clothing immediately.** Having a change of dry clothes will help kids stay warm and safe.
- **Use the wind chill as a guide.** If the wind chill factor is above 32 degrees, it is safe to play outside. Check in with kids and watch for signs of getting chilled. If the wind chill is 20 degrees to 32 degrees, it is safe to play outside for short periods of time. Limit outdoor time to 20 to 30 minutes at a time, or less if children are cold. Younger children have less tolerance for cold,

so they may need to go in sooner. When the wind chill is below 20 degrees, it will be best for everyone to play indoors.

No matter the season, outdoor play provides social, emotional, and physical benefits. You do not have to spend a lot of time outside to get the benefits. As the old saying going, "There is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothes." Layer up and head out for a good time, even if it is for just a short while.

Reference: Winter safety tips for parents and children. (2002). *Paediatrics & child health*, 7(1), 33-51. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pch/7.1.33>

Source: Courtney Luecking, Extension Specialist for Nutrition and Health

Let's Eat



3-Ingredient Vanilla SNOW Ice Cream

Make a batch of rich and delicious Vanilla Snow Ice Cream with 2 ingredients and a big bowl of freshly fallen snow!

Ingredients

- 8-12 cups fresh, clean snow
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 10 oz. sweetened condensed milk

Instructions

1. Scoop clean, fresh snow into a large bowl.
2. Sprinkle vanilla over snow.
3. Drizzle condensed milk over all.
4. Fold all ingredients together, and stir until well-combined.
5. If necessary, add more snow until you're happy with the consistency of your ice cream.
6. Scoop into a bowl, and enjoy!
7. To freeze leftovers, pat remaining snow ice cream into a freezer-proof container with a lid.

Sincerely,

County Extension Agent for
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