

Pre-School Pages



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

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CELEBRATE TOGETHER

Ho Ho Ho and Away We Go

If your family is planning to travel this holiday season you may already be dreading the stress of keeping the kids entertained. With a few helpful hints you can make your holiday vacation a success for everyone in the family.

Think safety first. Take your car in for a quick inspection (oil, antifreeze, brakes, tires) before you leave. Check the weather forecast a few days ahead to see whether you'll need extra supplies or travel time. Just in case, pull together some emergency essentials, including a small shovel, blankets, a flashlight, and bottled water. Make sure your cell phone is fully charged.

Beat rush hour. You can't avoid traffic jams caused by accidents or emergency roadwork, but you can plan your trip so you're not in big cities during the morning or evening rush. You might also consider leaving at night if you feel well rested and comfortable driving in the dark. There will be fewer cars on the road, and your kids will probably sleep most of the way.

Take breaks. Hit rest stops regularly to prevent your kids from getting stir-crazy or going into tantrum mode in the car. For every two hours on the road, children need at least 15 to 30 minutes to stretch their legs and run around.

Keep kids entertained. Let your children pack their own bag of toys, travel games, books, and so on. But bring a special surprise or two to pull out when they start getting bored -- maybe a toy they haven't seen in a while or a small gift you bought just for the trip. Give little ones their favorite lovey, and then read or tell them a story so they don't feel ignored. For older kids, encourage them to scout out license plates and road signs or have them track your route with a marker on a map. Books on tape or a portable DVD player also make great travel companions.

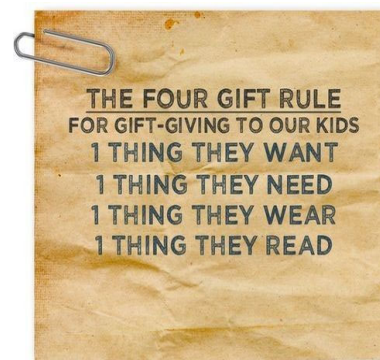
Source: <http://www.parents.com/fun>



DOLLARS AND SENSE

The Four Gift Holiday

Many of us struggle to make ends meet during the holiday season. If staying on budget this year seems impossible consider introducing your family to the four gift holiday concept. Children will have fun coming up with ideas that fit into each of the four categories and your wallet will appreciate your frugality. Source: www.bring-joy.com



LET'S EAT

Kids in the Kitchen

Do you have several places to go this year for the holiday season? Often it gets hectic preparing food to take to a gathering while getting the gifts wrapped and keeping up with the kids. This year consider getting the kids in the kitchen with you to help with holiday food preparation. It might be a little messier than you planned, but you have help and they are learning. It is a win-win situation. Give this fun recipe a try this year.

White Chocolate Holiday Bark

Ingredients:

- 1 cup sliced almonds
- 1/4 cup unsweetened coconut
- 1 cup oven-toasted rice cereal
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 1 1/2 pounds good-quality white chocolate, chopped
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil

Step 1

Preheat the oven to 325°. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper, and set aside.

Step 2

Spread the sliced almonds and the unsweetened coconut in an even layer on the baking sheet. Toast 5–8 minutes or until coconut just begins to brown. Remove baking sheet from the oven, and let cool.

Step 3

In a large bowl, combine almonds, coconut, rice cereal, and dried cranberries. Reserve about 1/4 cup of the mixture, and set aside.

Step 4

Place chopped white chocolate and 2 teaspoons vegetable oil in a large heatproof bowl, and set over a medium saucepan of simmering water. Stir with a spatula until the chocolate is completely melted.

Step 5

Remove the chocolate from heat, and fold in the almond mixture. Spread mixture evenly on parchment-lined baking sheet. Sprinkle on the reserved 1/4 cup topping. Refrigerate for about 15 minutes or until the chocolate has completely set. Break the bark into small pieces, and serve.

Source: www.health.com



MAKE IT

Salt Dough Ornaments

What you'll need:

- 1 cup salt
- 2 cups flour
- 3/4 cup water
- cookie cutters
- ribbon
- mod podge or a clear glaze spray (for sealing)

1. Begin by mixing the flour and salt together.

2. Add the water until it starts to form a dough.

3. If it feels a little dry, you can add more water. Add one tablespoon at a time. If it is too sticky, then add a little more flour.

4. Knead the dough until it forms a soft ball. You will need to knead for at least 5-10 minutes to get it to a good consistency. Roll it out to about 1/2 inch in thickness.

5. Cut out shapes using small and large Christmas cookie cutters.

6. Place the salt dough shapes on a parchment paper lined cookie sheet or non-stick baking pan and bake at 250° F for about 2-2.5 hours (Adults only). If the dough is not completely dried out, you can let it bake longer or turn the temperature of the oven slightly up. If you find the ornaments are still not dry, let them sit out on a cookie drying rack to air dry overnight. Paint the ornaments if you want. Hang with ribbon.



Sincerely,

Brooke HaganCamp

County Extension Agent for Family & Consumer Sciences Education