

Everyday and Everyway Talking about... December



December can be a month of celebration. Whether it's Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Ehed, Rhamadan, the winter solstice, or Santa Claus, there are as many ways to celebrate as there are families. Whatever the celebration, it will often mean gift giving, decorating, and special food. When you talk with your child during these special activities, they learn even more!

Try these activities, songs, books, and crafts to help your child learn. Speak, sing, and talk about books with your child in your own language.



Activities

Traditions

Talk about the traditions you have in your family. Take time to include your child in these traditions. Explain what each tradition means, and why it is important to your family.

Decorating the house

Let your child help you decorate.

- Help him put the unbreakable ornaments where he can reach - on the bottom of the tree.
- Talk about the ornaments as you hang them up – *Where did you get them? What do they look like? What colour are they? Who made them?*
- Use place words – *up, down, high, low, under, or beside.*
- Use new words – *branches, sap, needles, hooks, tinsel, garland, or twinkling lights.*
- Help your child make his own ornaments and hang them around the house.

Wrapping gifts

With your help she can get the tape ready, cut the ribbon, and write the names on the tags.

- Talk about how the tape is *sticky* and the ribbon is *shiny*.
- Talk about the size of the box and paper.
- Let her chose one of her crafts or toys to wrap and give away.

Concerts

Most communities, schools, or churches have holiday concerts for children. Look for one in your area.

- Talk about the things you see on the stage.
- Talk about the songs and instruments you hear.
- Talk about the play or story.
- Ask your child what they think will happen next.

Holiday lights

Take a walk or drive through your area and look at all the pretty lights and decorations.

- Talk about the different decorations – snowmen, angels, Santa, or candles.
- Talk about which lights you like best and why.
- Visit a local light display.





Songs and rhymes

Want to learn more songs and rhymes? Look for a parent-child music class in your area.

Are you sleeping?

(A Christmas version)

Are you sleeping?
No more peeking.
Or I'll tell, or I'll tell.
Santa Claus is coming,
Santa Claus is coming.
Hear his bells,
Hear his bells.

Traditional Christmas songs

- Away in a manger
- Jingle bells
- Frosty the snowman

Remember to . . .

- Follow your child's lead
- Add new words and ideas
- Repeat new words over and over



Books

Go to your local public library to find these and many more great books.

Merry Christmas, big hungry bear! by Don and Audrey Wood
Dream snow by Eric Carle
Frosty the snowman by Jack Rollings and Steve Nelson

Silver bells by Jay Livingston and Ray Evans
Counting Christmas by Karen Katz
My first Kwanzaa by Karen Katz
Santa's reindeer by Catherine Schoolbred
Christmas angel by Laura Dollin



Crafts

For more craft ideas go to www.wondertime.go.com

Shake and make stars

from www.wondertime.go.com

Materials needed

2-3 tablespoons of white glue
Sealable sandwich bags
Metal cookie cutter
Small paintbrush or wooden skewer
2 tablespoons or more of glitter
10 to 12 inches of ribbon or string
Waxed paper

Instructions

Squirt the glue into a sandwich bag.
Add a cookie cutter (we used a star), seal the bag, and have your child spread glue over every inch of the cookie cutter. Then use the paintbrush or skewer to get the glue into the tips, points, or hard-to-reach spots on the cookie cutter.
Put the glitter in a second bag and drop in the glue-covered cookie cutter. Seal the bag.
Have your child shake the bag until the cookie cutter is covered with glitter.
Remove the cookie cutter from the bag and set on waxed paper to dry completely, about a day.
Gently tap off any excess glitter. Tie a ribbon or string at the top and hang the ornament. Repeat with as many cookie cutters as you wish.

Soft sugar cookies

1 cup butter
1½ cups sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla flavouring
1 teaspoon almond flavouring
⅔ cup milk
4 cups flour
2½ teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt

Cream together butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Mix in eggs, vanilla, and almond flavouring. Add milk and mix well. Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt. Gradually add flour mixture and mix well. Shape dough into a ball and cover with plastic. Refrigerate overnight. Roll dough to desired thickness and cut with favourite cookie cutters. Bake in a 350°F oven for 8–10 minutes. Let cool and decorate with your favourite icing.

When making crafts . . .

How the craft looks when it's done is not as important as the fun your child has making it.

Go to www.parentlinkalberta.ca for more Talk Box ideas.