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NOVEMBER 2008

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## **Holidays**

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# Making the Holiday Magic Educational

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**D**on't Let the Demands of the Holiday Season Make You Nuts: Capitalize on these memorable moments and make them most of your time together while teaching your child valuable lessons!

Every parent wants to know how they are supposed to focus on family time, get all of the children's school assignments completed, keep the house in order and focus on their work without losing their sanity in this process. Well, it's not easy and everyone in the family needs to work like a team member and do his or her part.

Here are some suggestions for families that make this task fun and help you teach the children along the way.

We all know how multi tasking has become a necessary part of our daily lives in our fast paced society and sometimes it works very efficiently in our favor. Other times we want to scream, "HELP!" We can't do everything so it is essential to prioritize and determine what is most important to your family. Families need to make lists and delegate responsibilities so that everyone feels part of the solution. Everyone in the family can play an important role in this process.

When you begin preparing meals, try to involve your whole family as much as possible in the planning. Help children think about the food pyramid when making

food choices. Involving the children makes them feel that their opinion is valued which builds positive self images and teaches them about nutrition along the way.

Make trips to the grocery store like going on a treasure hunt. Give each child their own list. They can write the list ahead of time in their best handwriting or type one on the computer in a colorful font. They can use clip art to insert pictures of products they will buy. Pair a younger sibling with an older sibling. Use pictures of foods glued on index cards to help non-readers know which food to locate. Write the name of the item under the picture in an orange or pink highlighter. This teaches the non-reader that the symbols we know as letters make words and words label objects. You are teaching beginning readers about the conventions of print.

When you are discussing meal planning, be sure to use colorful, descriptive language. For example: Let's pick a juicy tomato and some sweet mozzarella cheese to go with dinner tomorrow night. Ask older children to identify the adjectives or adverbs in the sentence. In long grocery lines, play "I spy" and describe things you can see for family members to guess what you are thinking about. This passes the time, takes your child's mind off of the tempting items around them and focuses his/her attention on finding your item. You are helping develop your child's vocabulary and also his/her observation skills. Interesting descriptive words help to form a picture in your child's mind. For example: I spy something round, smooth, orange, and sweet.

Make the most out of your weekly trips to the grocery store. You can suggest that your child bring a sketchbook along and draw pictures of what they see. Older children can make a comic strip about the grocery store trip. You are encouraging writing for a purpose and helping them develop creative writing skills.

When you have younger siblings attending older siblings sporting events, bring along a lap-size white board to work on short vowel sounds or spelling words. Your child can use an old sock for an eraser. Younger students can draw pictures of rhyming words like "cat and bat." You can begin a word game by writing a letter

*Continued on next page*

## HAPPY THANKSGIVING



Thanksgiving is time to reflect on the things for which we're truly grateful. At Edward Jones, we're thankful to serve our clients and our community. During this holiday season and every day, we wish you all the very best.

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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

*Holiday Magic cont'd*

on the white board. Next, pass the marker to your child and have them write a letter. Then you write a letter and, then your child writes a letter and so on. The first person to spell a word is the winner. Soccer practice will be over before you know it.

White boards serve as a great study tool for students of all ages and can be brought almost anywhere. They are great learning tools that can be used for passing time in the waiting room of a doctor's office too.

Start planning early for holiday family functions. If you are hosting Thanksgiving at your house this year, have your children help make the menu, the place cards, and even the center pieces. Be sure to allow your child to provide input and ask them what family traditions they would like to start. Older children may have some unique ideas. You can incorporate writing skills for children of all ages with these activities as

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**"Make trips to the grocery store like going on a treasure hunt."**

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well as provide spelling. Take your child's weekly spelling list and ask them to write a letter to Grand-mom or Aunt Sue using as many of the week's words as possible. This is another way to get ready for the weekly test and get a letter off to Aunt Sue or Grand-mom.

Help younger kids practice cutting skills by cutting pictures of foods from magazines that they would like to see on the Thanksgiving menu. While you make dinner, they are working on fine motor skills and feeling part of the meal planning process.


Volunteer whenever possible with some or all of the family if possible. Have children write a story about the experience. Ask them to tell you why they think volunteering is a rewarding experience. Young children can dictate a story and illustrate it. Staple five sheets of white paper together and have children create a book about their experience. Older students can write about their experience in a journal and read it a younger sibling. What better way to teach children to be thankful for all that they have than to help others in need.

Begin thinking about ways your family can help others this holiday season before

the season is upon you so that you can make the most of these experiences. For example, Tell your child/children that each week you are going to put two items in the cart that your family will be donating to needy families in our county. Let your child decorate a special bag or box and begin this collection in a prominent place in the home. Let them watch as the foods accumulate. Then, when the boy scouts ring your doorbell for the Thanksgiving food drive, you are ready.

Everyone has different demands placed upon them during the holidays. The most

important thing to remember is that no matter how long your to do list becomes or how involved you become in the flurry of activity around you, make time for quiet in your home. Gather your spouse and your children together and curl up with a great book. Make family reading time a priority every night to unwind peacefully. Be sure to eat well, get plenty of exercise, fresh air and sunshine every day. Give lots of hugs and smile often. Our family time is the most important gift we share every day.

Wishing you all a memorable and educational Holiday season! 

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