INTRODUCTION

With the holiday season in full swing, now is the time to enjoy being with your family celebrating traditions old and new! The December issue of Oregon Parenting Together will talk about how to make the most of this special time of year with your family.

IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY TRADITIONS

What are your favorite family traditions or holidays? Did these traditions come from your own childhood or are they new traditions you have created in recent years? Whether they are cultural, religious, or personal, families celebrate holidays and traditions in their own special way. Take time to talk with your child about the holidays that are important to your family and your own family traditions. Explain to children what you believe and why as well as where your traditions came from. These different events, or traditions, are a great way to strengthen family bonds and for families to feel a sense of belonging to a large social group. Studies show that family traditions help people understand their own identity, how they fit in the family, and their role in society. Additionally, it has been found that traditions are a great way to promote cultural practices and aid in development. It is also important that traditions are able to adapt each year to fit the needs of a changing family. We hope you enjoy this season with your family by participating in family and community traditions whether old or new.

This series of newsletters is inspired and created just for parents. If you have suggestions, comments or ideas for future newsletters please share on our Facebook (Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative) or Twitter page (@OPECParentingEd).

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FAMILY MEALTIMES

Holiday celebrations often center around family meals. Spending quality time around the table can feel extra special around holiday times and special occasions. Those feelings of closeness can be extended throughout the year by taking time to eat meals together whenever possible as a family. Meal times are a great way for families to reconnect with one other and bond. While sitting around the table, ask about one another’s day. What happened today? Did anything happen that made you feel happy? Sad? Excited? Disappointed? Is there anything you are looking forward to tomorrow? Studies have shown many benefits to regularly eating meals together as a family. Those benefits include: higher academic achievement, increased levels of self-esteem, lower rates of eating disorders, lower risk of teen pregnancy, lower risk of abusing drugs, and a greater sense of resiliency. Lives can be hectic, but taking the time to eat together as a family is a great way to slow down and enjoy one another’s company! For more information on the benefits of eating together as a family, check out the resources on the right.

FUN WITH YOUR KIDS
Start a New Tradition!

Give your child a chance to shape your family traditions by trying something new this year! Talk with your children to see if there is anything new they would like to try this year. Use their idea to start a new family tradition. By having your children involved in creating new traditions, they will feel like they are an important part of the family.

Find your local parenting resources at:
http://orparenting.org/

REFERENCES

- Wolin, Steven, Linda Bennett "Family Rituals" Family Process 23, no. 3 (1984): 401-420