Introduction
As quickly as the department stores can clear out the
Halloween ghosts, and Thanksgiving decor, the store
aisles are immediately aglow with hues of red and
green for Christmas, Menorahs for Hanukkah, and
candles for Kwanzaa. Around the same time, local
coffee companies ditch their traditional paper cups for
more festive decor and, just like that, we know that
winter and the holiday season are upon us. We recognize these tell tale signs that the holidays are
approaching and they may remind us of our own holiday traditions. This month, we focus on holiday
traditions and why they are important for families.

Talking Traditions
For many families, the holidays are an opportunity to gather with family and friends. What does the
holiday season mean for you? To answer this question, many of us reflect on our past holiday traditions as
well as those traditions which continue from year to year. As parents, this time of year brings a unique
opportunity to share family values and create fun and lasting memories that your children may pass on to
their own families.

The Value of Sharing Family Traditions
Early on in the parenting journey, many parents come to realize that children thrive on routines. Whether
it is a night-time routine that includes bathtime, teeth brushing, reading together, and cuddles or an early
morning wake-up routine that includes dancing to a favorite song before breakfast; routines are important
for children. Routines provide structure and predictability to each day and having that structure benefits
children. The benefits of family traditions are similar to those of a daily routine because both are based in
predictability and expectation. In addition, sharing traditions can be a way to build family closeness and
share cultural traditions and values that are important to your family.

According to a series of recent studies, families who participate in sharing traditions tend to feel closer to
their families compared to those who did not. Additionally, the number of family traditions was related to
overall enjoyment of a holiday while the type of tradition was not. In other words, participating in
traditions of any kind makes a difference (but don’t overthink it - traditions can be simple and fun!). Here
are a few key elements that might make up a family tradition:

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Twitter (@OPECParentingEd) and our website: orparenting.org
Family Traditions:
- create positive feelings for those involved
- are repeated consistently
- are often passed down from older generations of the family
- can be part of your heritage or culture
- create memories
- are inclusive and create a bond between family members

In addition to sharing traditions with your child, talk with your child about where these traditions come from and why they are special to you!

Trending Traditions
Think about the traditions you already have as a family, as well as other traditions that might be fun to try. Remember, traditions do not have to be associated with a holiday, but holidays can be a good time of year to try a new family activity! The list below includes the latest and greatest in ‘trending traditions’:

- **Host a Food Contest**: pick a family favorite food and ask your children to create their own special version of it to share with the family. Make it a contest by picking a few categories such as ‘best decorated’ or ‘most delicious.’
- **Game Night**: Try playing a new board game or card game together or teach your child a favorite game from your own childhood.
- **Movie Madness**: Vote on a family favorite holiday movie. Each year, make time to watch the movie together as a family.
- **Holiday Light Tour**: Map out a neighborhood that is particularly festive during the holidays, and make it a tradition to drive or walk through the neighborhood together as a family.
- **Attitude of Gratitude**: Ask each family member to share something he or she is grateful for. Share with your child something you are grateful for first to be a role model.

Fun With Your Kid! Making Snowflakes Together

Materials: Paper, Scissors

Directions: Fold paper. Together with your child, use the scissors to cut different designs and patterns. For pattern ideas and detailed directions, visit this link: http://www.instructables.com/id/How-to-Make-6-Pointed-Paper-Snowflakes/

References
http://community.today.com/parentingteam/post/family-traditions-define-your-family
https://www.popsugar.com/moms/Family-Holiday-Traditions-Start-39202460