Celebrating Holidays with children in Foster Care

Conflicting loyalties and lost dreams often make the holidays a difficult time for children in foster care. Just as studies show that holidays are stressful time for most of us, these reactions are compounded for youth placed in your home. Here are some suggestions for the holiday.

How can my family make it easier for the children in foster care while they are in our home?


* Help children in foster care imagine what to expect in your home. Much of what we assume to be commonplace can be new to children you foster.

* Share religious meanings the holidays may have for your family. Talk about your family’s specific customs activities.

* Use this time of sharing to learn especially religious beliefs, customs, and activities of the children you foster.

* Try to incorporate at least some of their traditions into your traditions.

* Some parents try to keep the holidays low key in order to help minimize some of the stress.

How can we work with birth families during the holidays?

* Again, ask children about their experiences and try to incorporate some of their traditions. The children placed in your home may miss some activities that they experienced with their family or in previous placement.

* If possible, ask your child’s family members about their holiday traditions and customs. Ask about their beliefs and observances. Although you may feel stretched at the holidays, try to coordinate schedules with the birth families. This gives the children a chance to share what is familiar while experiencing new traditions.

* This is a good time for the youth in your home to make small gifts and send cards to their birth families and old neighbors and friends.

* This is a time when many children feel conflicted feelings about their birth families and worry about them. It is a good time to let the young person know that it is okay for them to be safe and cared for even if their family struggles. Reassure them if you can, about safety and care of their birth family.

To learn more about celebrating holidays with children in foster care go to: http://wifostercareandadoption.org
Fun Things to do with the kids!

Some suggestions for the children who are locked inside because of the cold weather and are bored with their Christmas toys!

Tootsie Rolls

2 T. butter 1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 c. corn syrup 3 c. powder sugar
2 sq. chocolate or 6 T. cocoa & 2 T. butter
3/4 c. powdered milk
Melts the first 3 ingredients together, then add and knead vanilla, powder sugar and powder milk. Shape and eat!

Peanut Butter Play Dough

1/2 c. creamy peanut butter 1/4 c. honey
1/2 c. dry powder milk
Mix above ingredients. Use raisins, chocolate chips and pretzels to make "creative critters".

Finger Paints (Not Food)

4 t. cornstarch 2 c. boiling water
3 T cold water food coloring
Dissolve cornstarch in 3 tablespoons cold water. Mix in boiling water and stir until clear. Cool and add a few drops of desired food coloring. Paint with fingers on paper.

Play Dough (Not Food)

1 c. flour 1/2 c. salt
Food coloring 1/4 c. water
Combine flour and salt. Add water and food coloring. Mix into dough. Add more water or flour according to consistency needed.

Play Snow (Not Food)

1/2 c. Suave conditioner 3 c. baking soda
Good for sensory activity. (Complements of Sandra Dollen, IFAPA Peer Liaison)

Rock Garden (Not Food)

Small rocks 1 inch or bigger 4 T. salt
Glass dish 4 T. bluing
4 T. water
Arrange rocks in glass dish. Mix salt, bluing, and water. Add 1 tablespoon to ammonia. Stir and pour over rocks. Garden can be peped up by carefully adding more ammonia. Set in a dry sunny place and watch it grow.

Q.: What did the salt say to the pepper?
A: Season’s greetings!

Q. Why does Scrooge love Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer?
A. Because every buck is dear to him.

As a little girl climber onto Santa’s lap, Santa asked the usual, “And what would you like for Christmas?”
The child stared at him opened mouther and horrified for a minute, then gasped, “Didn’t you get my E-mail?”

Happy Holidays!!