



## Early Childhood Services Newsletter St. Johns County School District

### Sharing Family Holiday Traditions with Children

Family traditions are important to many families and serve as a way to create stability and a sense of belonging for children. Family traditions may be tied to holidays, birthdays or monthly events. These traditions help children learn important cultural and social values. Children feel secure and develop a sense of stability when each birthday or holiday has specific activities or special food that is important to the family. It is especially important to carry on traditions at times when lots of changes are going on in the lives of family members. Children develop a sense of identity when they begin to understand the "family identity" that is often at the core of family traditions. If you don't have any family traditions, start simple by baking your child's favorite cookies or reading a holiday book.

### Family Friendly Free Events

- **Wednesday, December 6th, Luminary Night.** Visitors are invited to enter the Light House grounds at 81 Lighthouse Ave., for a free evening of children's holiday crafts, warm refreshments and live music from 7-9 p.m. For more information visit [www.visitstaugustine.com](http://www.visitstaugustine.com)
- **Saturday, December 9th, Hastings Hometown Christmas Parade** begins at 10 a.m. at the corner of Harris and Main streets, and travels south on Main Street to the Hastings Branch Library. Hastings Team Up organization will have light refreshments available. OneBlood bus will accept blood donations after the parade. Toy donations can be made at the Hastings Library for the Rotary Christmas Toy Drive to help local families. Barbecue will be available for purchase for a small donation. Photos with Santa, ornament-making, and decorating the Hastings Christmas tree will be among the special activities for children while other young people will be performing music.
- **Saturday, December 9th, Regatta of Lights.** This event reflects the maritime roots and rich nautical heritage of St. Augustine. All kinds of boats with all kinds of decorations glide along the bay front. To view the parade, visitors can sit along the bay front downtown by the seawall. Starts at 6pm.
- **Sunday, December 31st, Beach Blast Off.** St. Augustine Pier. This event features a kids zone, face painting, rides, photo booth, rock climbing wall, food vendors and live music starting at 5 p.m. with a free spectacular fire works display at 8:30 p.m. For more information visit [www.visitstaugustine.com](http://www.visitstaugustine.com)
- **Check out the St. Johns County Public Library web site [www.sjcpls.org](http://www.sjcpls.org)** for many free events after school, on the week ends and during Winter break. December events include: Reading to Rover-reading to certified therapy dogs, Toddler Spanish classes (ages 1.5 - 5 years old), Holiday stories presented by the St. Augustine Story Tellers, holiday crafts, card making, Gingerbread person decorating, Royal etiquette for little ladies and gentlemen and much, much more.

### Word Gap—Why Talking Matters

Children from low-income families hear approximately 600 words every hour, whereas children from higher-income families hear 2,000 words an hour. Throughout the course of three years, this accumulates into a **30 million word gap** between low income children and children from higher-income families. Children who have heard fewer words since birth, are likely to know fewer words and have a less diverse vocabulary. Language nutrition is healthy in any language! Talk with your child in the language you are most comfortable speaking. Read and tell stories in your home language. If you are not comfortable reading, point to the illustrations and tell your own story. For more information about Word Gap visit [www.talkwithmehbaby.org](http://www.talkwithmehbaby.org)

### December 2017

#### Dates to remember

- ☺ Thursday, December 21st early release.
- ☺ Friday, December 22nd starts holiday break.
- ☺ Monday, January 8th students return to school.

### Monday Fun-Day Free Preschool Series Events

*Presented by the St. Johns County School District Early Childhood Services Department. All sessions will be held, 5:30-6:30 pm, at the Yates Building, 47 Orange St.*

**Monday, December 4th -**  
Once Upon a Time: Bigger Than Books, story telling and story time.

**Monday, December 11th -**  
Cooking with Kids, a fun but simple parent and child cooking activity.

**Monday, December 18th**  
Once Upon a Mat, Children's yoga and separate parent activity.

**Thank you** to our newest Head Start Policy Council Chairperson Adam Hardy and Vice Chairperson Nicole Newton. We appreciate you volunteering your time to help us provide a quality program for our School District.

**Thank you** to Reiter Roofing that provided turkeys for our Monday Fun Day family style Thanksgiving dinner.

**Thank you** to Raymond Coleman of Sweet Smokey's BBQ for preparing the smoked turkeys for us.

