

HOLIDAY AND SPECIAL EVENTS POLICY

PURPOSE:

1. To avoid the imposition of staff or "mainstream" holiday traditions on the children and families enrolled in the program.
2. To prevent the exclusion of any child from participating in classroom activities.
3. To respect individual differences and choices while providing developmentally appropriate activities with respect to culture.
4. To ensure emergent and child-focused curriculum planning which includes input from children, parents, and staff.
5. To avoid the continuation of stereotypes.
6. To avoid celebration of culture only on special occasions.

POLICY:

1. Family Advocates need to include information on the celebration of holidays and special events during orientation to the Head Start program.
2. Education staff and Family Advocates will consult with parents about family culture and interests upon enrollment in the program.
3. Curriculum planning will include family activities which celebrate individual family interests and culture.
4. Parents and children will be invited to share their cultural and family interests.
5. Children will be encouraged, but not forced, to participate in planned activities.
6. Activities will not exclude children due to ability, religious, personal, or cultural reasons.
7. Education staff will plan alternatives to holiday celebrations such as: harvest, winter, families, I am special, spring, etc.
8. Discussion of celebration of holidays is appropriate in the classroom when presented in a personal context (when asking children what they have done recently, a child tells about a special event, e.g.) The teacher can elaborate and invite the other children to share their experiences.
9. Home visitors need to plan individualized home visits with the parent and include celebrations which are significant to the child's own family and community.
10. The home visitor needs to act as a guide for developmentally appropriate planning.
11. When planning special events (including parent center meetings) staff, parents, and children will:
 - a. Plan events with the attention span of young children in mind.
 - b. Ensure that elaborate or conforming costume or apparel will not be required.
 - c. Ensure that children will participate without being singled out for individual performance or assigned parts.
 - d. Provide only healthy, wholesome foods and refreshments which are prepared on site. Any questions about what constitutes wholesome foods can be directed to the Nutrition Services Director at (541) 564-6878.
 - e. Ensure that snacks for children meet USDA guidelines and are prepared in a state approved kitchen.

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