

Our current and past family newsletters are posted to our website.

Check them out at <https://firststepscentralmn.org/for-families>

Family Traditions

<https://tinyurl.com/a73yekk8>

Traditions, or rituals, can bring meaning to celebrations and can create special bonds between people, including parents and their children. Traditions can help create positive experiences and memories by nurturing a family's connection and giving all members of the family a sense of belonging.

Traditions can be unique to each family. They might happen daily (like reading three books before each bedtime), weekly (having a special game night every Friday or eating pancakes for breakfast every Sunday), or annually (visiting an apple orchard in October or decorating a Christmas tree with ornaments and lights in December).

Brainstorm some traditions you would like to do with your own child/children below. These might be traditions you remember from your own childhood or new ones you would like to create. See the column to the right for some examples. Then decide how frequently you will do each tradition you'd like to create with your family and when you want to begin.

- _____
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Family Traditions Examples:

- Reading three books at bedtime
- Schedule weekly meal themes, like pancakes each Sunday breakfast or Tacos each Tuesday dinner
- Go on a family walk the same time each day or week
- Pick a new park to play at each week in the summer
- Plan a monthly game night with friends
- Cook a meal together as a family on your family's special holiday
- Make a new ornament each year. Hang them up each year to decorate a Christmas tree.
- Look through photos of your pregnancy or newborn pictures of your child on their birthday each year.
- Buy matching sets of pajamas each year and take a family photo together. Make a photo album of the pictures to look back at each year.
- Volunteer time for a local community clean up event, church festival, animal shelter, or other community resource.
- Rake an elderly neighbor or family member's yard each fall as a family.
- Eat dinner together at your table each night as a family.

The ABC's of Safe Sleep

The Minnesota Department of Health is encouraging parents to talk to caregivers, whether it be a grandparent or a babysitter, about the ABCs of safe sleep.

Minnesota data consistently has shown that unsafe sleep environments account for nearly all unexpected infant deaths in Minnesota. Every year, about 50 or more Minnesota babies die suddenly and unexpectedly, and nearly all those tragic deaths happen in an unsafe sleep environment. State health department analysis of the 100 sudden unexpected infant deaths in 2018 and 2019 found that 93% or 93 were sleep-related and happened in unsafe sleep environments.

A key takeaway for parents and other caregivers is to know the **ABCs** of safe sleep:

- **ALONE:** Infants should always sleep or nap alone.
- **BACK:** Always put a baby on their back to sleep or nap.
- **CRIB:** Babies should always sleep or nap in their own safety-approved crib or play yard without blankets or pillows.

Parents can consider sharing the following Safe Infant Sleep for Grandparents and Other Trusted Caregivers [video](https://tinyurl.com/jc7csb4z) found at <https://tinyurl.com/jc7csb4z>

Safe to Sleep Interactive Room: <https://safetosleep.nichd.nih.gov/>



STAFF PICKS FOR FAVORITE CHILDREN'S BOOKS:



Best toys for Toddlers from <https://pathways.org/toys-for-toddlers/>

- Real life limitations
 - kitchen sets, tool sets, dollhouses, animal farms, play doctor sets
- Push and pull toys
 - carts, wagons, pretend lawn mowers
- Water and sand tables
 - a simple plastic tote can work just as well
- Art materials
 - playdoh, washable markers and paints, crayons, pipe cleaners
- Balls
 - soft, made of lightweight rubber
- Books
 - books with thick, board like pages and illustrations
- Problem-solving toys
 - stacking toys, locking plastic blocks, simple puzzles
- Bubbles
 - good for gross and fine motor skills

Remember, safety first: <https://pathways.org/toy-safety-tips/>

Craft Corner

Hanukkah, or Chanukah: 11/28/21-12/6/21, means dedication in Hebrew, also known as The Festival of Lights, represents joy. a Jewish festival commemorating the recovery of Jerusalem and rededication of the Second Temple. Observed by lighting the candles of a candelabrum with nine branches, called a menorah. Other customs include signing Hanukkah songs, playing the game of dreidel and eating oil-based foods and dairy foods. The holiday greeting is "Hanukkah Sameach" (Happy Hanukkah) or "Chag Sameach" (Happy Holidays).



Supplies: Paper, paint, scissors, marker, glue
<https://tinyurl.com/3rftte9j>

Winter Solstice: 12/21/21, the official first day of winter, occurs in the northern half of Earth is tilted the furthest away from the Sun. This day has the shortest period of daylight.



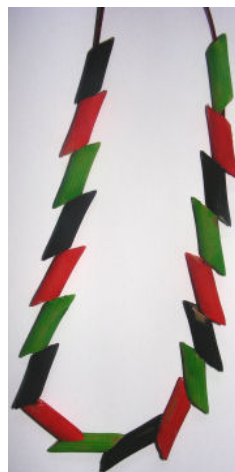
Supplies: Clear hair gel, glitter, ziplock bag, marshmallows
*Tip: Add other soft items such as pom poms or craft foam shapes
<https://tinyurl.com/3ebyt7d>

Christmas: 12/25/21, an annual festival central to the Christian liturgical year commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ. It is preceded by the season of Advent. Popular customs include gift giving, completing an Advent calendar or wreath, caroling, and decorating a tree. The holiday greeting is "Merry Christmas."



Supplies: Paper plate, paint, paper, glue, buttons, ribbon
<https://tinyurl.com/mpbsjr64>

Kwanzaa: 12/26/21-1/1/22, an annual celebration of African-American culture. Families celebrating Kwanzaa decorate their households with objects of art, colorful African cloth, or fresh fruit to represent values and concepts that reflect the African culture. The seven principals of Kwanzaa are unity, self-determination, working together, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. Women may often wear kaftans. The holiday greeting is "Joyous Kwanzaa."



Supplies: Yarn, uncooked penne pasta, paint (red, green, black)
<https://tinyurl.com/yywxymm8>

New Years Eve: 12/31/21, the last day of the year, often celebrated at parties with dancing, food, and family activities. Some Christians attend a watchnight service. The song "Auld Lang Syne" is often sung at midnight to bid farewell to the old year.

Supplies: Empty toilet paper roll or small plastic container, duct tape, uncooked beans or rice, stickers, ribbon, glue
<https://tinyurl.com/rmv657bx>





Back To Sleep and Tummy To Play

Babies should be on their backs for sleep, but should spend some time on their tummies when awake.

From baby's first week at home, place her on her tummy for a few minutes 2 or 3 times every day to play. But only place baby on her tummy when she is awake and watched closely by an adult.

Tummy time helps babies learn to lift their heads, strengthens their neck muscles and shoulders, and prepares them for crawling when they are older (7-9 months).

At first, some babies may not like tummy time. Here are some things you can do to help:



Place a toy or book in front of the baby.



Sing or talk to the baby while she is on her tummy.



Lay on your tummy on the floor face to face.



Have older kids play with her while she is on her tummy.

Keep trying, and your baby will learn to love tummy time with you.



"Tummy Time" is recommended by:

Minnesota Sudden Infant Death Center of Children's Hospital and Clinics of MN
American Academy of Pediatrics
Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

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If you require this document in another format, such as large print Braille or cassette tape, call 651-201-3760.

TUMMY TIME

