



Newmark Education Parent Alert

November 20, 2024

Winter Tips: Self-Regulation and Enhanced Social Interactions

Dear Newmark Parents,

As the holiday season approaches, we often find ourselves visiting friends and family members for various gatherings. This year, let's focus on setting our children up for success during these social interactions. One effective way to do this is by discussing who will be in attendance before each event and encouraging our children to reflect on their upcoming encounters.

- **For younger children**, we can make these conversations engaging and exciting. Instead of simply listing who they'll see, try saying something like, "We're going to visit Grandma and Grandpa this weekend! I know Grandma loves to bake, so maybe we can help her make cookies together!" Or, "We'll be seeing your Aunt Lisa at the holiday party. Remember how she loves to tell stories? Let's think of some fun questions to ask her!"
- **For older children**, we can encourage more thoughtful preparation. You might say, "We're visiting our family friends next week. Last time we saw them, their kids were really into soccer. What do you think we could ask them about soccer or any other interests they might have now?" Or, "We're going to see your friends from school during the break. What games do you think they might want to play? Let's brainstorm some ideas!"

While preparing our children for social interactions is important, it's equally crucial to encourage self-regulation during this busy season. Self-regulation is the ability to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in various situations. It's a foundational skill that supports academic achievement, social interactions and overall behavior.

To help develop these vital skills, we can incorporate practices such as mindfulness, sensory activities, and goal-setting into our holiday routines. Here are some fun activities that involve various sensory systems and can help children feel more calm, organized, and focused:

- Create a cozy winter sensory bin filled with rice, pinecones, small toys and/or holiday scents to encourage messy play and engage multiple sensory systems.
- Use scented playdough to promote creativity and fine motor skills. You can make your own with flour, salt, water and essential oils.

- Play in the snow or with ice to provide opportunities for cold exposure, which can be helpful for regulating the nervous system.

View more **winter and holiday-themed sensory activities** that can engage students across different grade levels, promoting creativity and sensory awareness while celebrating the season!

By combining thoughtful preparation for social interactions with activities that promote self-regulation, we can help our children navigate the holiday season with confidence and joy.

Sincerely,

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