

Exploring the holiday season with a sense of WONDER

Nov 29, 2022



The holiday season is upon us, and it is often a time of joy and wonder in early childhood. Gathering with family and friends, engaging in traditions and rituals, the practice of gift-giving and gratitude, cooking and feasts, and the magical transformation of our outdoor and indoor environments.

What sparks wonder for you and your family during the holiday season?



Wonder and Identity:

Early childhood is rich with exploration of identity. Who am I? Who are the people in my family? How am I the same or different from others? Our traditions and rituals during the holiday season help to form our identity. Creating family traditions and sharing those practices with others can be a source of pride and reaffirm our connection to family and friends. Learning about others' traditions can support the development of empathy and the understanding of diverse perspectives.

What is a special family tradition that you honor each year? How can we learn from others and their holiday traditions?

Wonder of Transformation:

The winter holiday season is full of natural transformation in Chicago. Trees lose their leaves, temperatures drop, wildlife prepare by gathering food and den building or burrowing for warmth, the sky gets dark earlier and earlier each day. There is wonder in these changes! For some, the Winter Solstice is honored as the rebirth of the sun after the longest night of the year and celebrated with dance, gifts, and blessings. For others there is wonder in the formation of snowflakes, the scientific discovery of a frozen pond, and the magic of a city covered in white.

Which natural wonder will remind you to slow down and appreciate seasonal changes?

Wonder of Light:

Light in all of its forms can be a unifying factor in holiday celebrations and a source of warmth and great wonder. Candles light our thanksgiving tables, our menorah during hanukkah, the diyas on diwali, and represent the seven principles of Kwanzaa. The light from a fireplace or fire pit in the woods, the twinkling lights on trees and houses during Christmas, and the warm pool of light from your favorite cozy reading nook on the evening of the solstice, bring warmth and magic to the season. Light has the power to connect, teach, and spark wonder & joy.

How do you bring light into your home over the holidays? How does light enhance play, wonder and warmth for your family?

Staying connected to Childhood Wonder:

Sharing time and space with young children has always helped me to stay connected to wonder. Whether it's your first holiday with your little one, or you're neck deep in elf on the shelf, let your child guide you with their natural curiosity to share the wonder of the season.

Looking back at our Holiday Posts from Years Past:

- [The Holiday Season and Child-led Learning](#)
- [Thanksgiving from a Native American Perspective](#)
- [The Joy of Processed Based Art: An Argument for Leaning Away from the Traditional Turkey Handprint.](#)

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