

DECEMBER 2021

Resource Family Approval Newsletter



Hello All,

The Holidays are fast approaching with many competing demands placed on you. We just want to say "Thank You" for all that you have done this year to support the youth of Yolo County. We look forward to our continued partnership over the next year and are excited about 2022. We will be seeing some of you at our Holiday event on December 18, 2021. Please take time to enjoy your friends, family and children over the upcoming Holidays. We wish you all the joy, hope, and wonder of the season. We will be in touch in January 2022.

- Yolo County RFA Team

Happy Holidays!



Previous Yolo County Holiday Events



Holiday Conversation Tips

The following tips are to help our youth navigate the holidays. Have conversations with the youth to understand their family traditions, as well as what the holidays look like in your home.



Prepare foster youth in your care for the holidays in your home. Have a discussion with them about your family's holiday customs.

Do you celebrate over multiple days, or is there one "main" celebration?

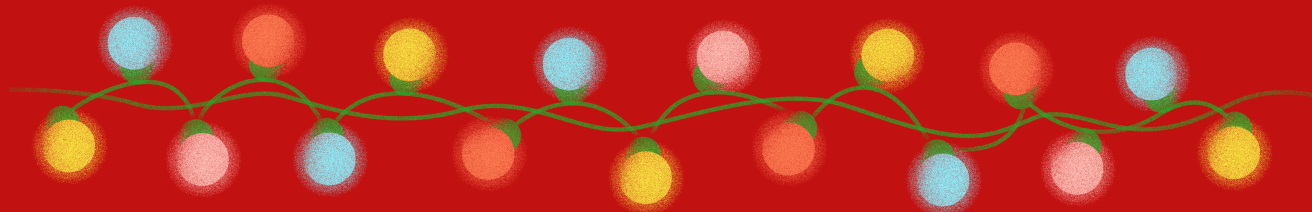
Will gifts be exchanged? What should they wear? Who will they meet?

What preparations need to be done in advance? Will there be visitors to the home?

Will they be taken on visits to the homes of other family or friends? And in all of these events, will they be expected to participate?

Knowing what to expect will help to decrease anxiety around the holidays.

Avoid surprises and you will decrease seasonal tensions.



Understand and encourage the youth's own traditions and beliefs.

Encourage discussion about the holiday traditions they experienced prior to being in foster care, or even celebrations they liked while living with other foster families. Incorporate the traditions the youth cherishes into your own family celebration, if possible. Use the opportunity to investigate the youth's culture and research customary traditions. If the young person holds a belief different from yours, or if their family did, check into the traditions customarily surrounding those beliefs.



Ideas over The Holidays

READ A BOOK, WATCH A MOVIE

There are so many classic holiday stories out there, and while our foster youth might be partly familiar, it's possible that no one has ever sat them down and read a book about Hanukkah or Kwanzaa to them. While it's always a good idea to read books to young children, you need to be aware that they might have missed out on even the most famous stories if they weren't allowed books in their previous home.

Similarly, there are so many great holiday films, whether it's an old classic like *Miracle on 34th Street* or a modern classic like *Elf*. Of course, there are also often repeated television programs such as *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. You would think that everyone knows these holiday favorites...but foster kids might not. Such movies are cultural milestones, yet your foster child might not be familiar. It's not necessarily important for them to see them intellectually, but it can help them socially when kids are talking about their favorite holiday shows at school.

Holiday Reading List ideas for your family

- 'Twas Nochebuena: A Christmas Story in English and Spanish by Roseanne Greenfield Thong and Sara Palacios
- The Nutcracker in Harlem by T.E. McMorrow and James Ransome
- The Twelve Days of Christmas by Rachel Griffin
- Tree of Cranes by Allen Say (ages 4-9)
- The Christmas Truck by J.B. Blankenship and Cassandre Bolan
- The Polar Bear Express by Chris Van Allsburg
- Little Red Sleigh by Erin Guendelsberger
- The Night Before Christmas by Clement Moore

Fun and Cheap Holiday Activity ideas for your family

- Take a **holiday light** tour through your community
- **Make a wreath**-take a walk to find pine cones and branches or trim the bottom of your Christmas tree. Attach to a foam or wire, then allow the youth to decorate with bows and ornaments.
- **Christmas cookies**- Peanut-butter blossoms! Spritz cookies! Gingerbread cookies! Younger kids can add pre-measured ingredients, stir the bowl and decorate cooled cookies. Older kids can pitch in at any stage.
- **Gingerbread house making**-gather family and friends with some gingerbread walls and roofs and all the candy and frosting you can get your hands on. Set everyone up with their own house, or work in teams to see who can make the most colorful gingerbread house. The challenge is also in keeping your house intact without it falling apart!
- **Movie Night**- Watch your favorite Holiday Classic movies. Make a big bowl of popcorn for everyone. If there is any leftover string some popcorn garlands and allow the kids to hang them on your tree or place them in the back yard for the birds to eat.
- **Homemade Christmas Ornament**- Mark the year on your ornaments so that you can keep track of when each cutie was created! Love a hands-on DIY Christmas activity, and this one can easily become a family tradition that documents your child's growth and creativity each year.

