



# Families Matter

## Don't Let the Cold Keep You Inside!

This time of year we normally talk about how to stay active indoors; however, this year we want everyone to think about getting outside. Let's face it—we don't live in Alaska or North Dakota! Although our winter weather can be wet and cold there are a lot of days perfect for a brick walk or playtime outside.

There are several benefits for outdoor winter play.

- We see things in nature we can't see other times of the year. Exploring debris on the ground and playing around rocks aren't great ideas for kids in hot, Oklahoma summers, but can be great this time of year.
- Fresh air and sunshine! This can fight the "winter blues" people tend to get in January and February.
- Boosts the immune system, large muscle development and cooperative play.

Here are some safety tips and tricks to making your outdoor winter play habit.

- Ensure children are dressed properly. Children will need proper clothes for playing in colder temperatures. For example, children may need hats, scarves, mittens, rubber boots, winter coats, snow pants, etc.
- Use safe equipment. Some play equipment may be unsafe for the children in the winter months. Extra clothing may make them hazardous or difficult to play on.
- Additionally, the equipment may be covered with snow or ice. Therefore, plan activities that allow safe play, such as running in open spaces, obstacle courses, throwing balls, etc.
- Always move. In cold temperatures, both you and the children should constantly move and avoid standing still. Standing still in cold temperatures can lead to frostbite and hypothermia.

### Green Zone 30°F and Higher

- Layer Clothing
- Offer Water Often
- Watch for Signs of Getting Chilled
- Feel Babies' Hands and Feet
- Take Breaks



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POTTAWATOMIE COUNTY EXTENSION

### Inside this issue:

Family New Year Goals	2
Citrus Salad	2
Teach Problem Solving	2
Science Fun	3
	3
Play Dough Fun	4
Quick Fix Recipes	4

# Families Who Make Goals Together Keep Goals Together

While making a family resolution may seem as sensible as herding cats, it's worth the effort. But setting family resolutions will only work if each member of the family feels invested. And for everyone to feel invested, shared goals need to be recognized and treated equally within the family. If everyone feels they have a stake, then you have created the foundation for achieving your shared goals.

## 1. Go to Bed at the Same Time

Getting enough sleep is important for every age group, children and adults alike. This year, make a mandatory lights-out time for everyone, yourself included. You may need to collect and shut down electronic devices from kids to ensure everyone in the family goes to bed at the same time.

## 2. Unplug Devices

A great way to help everyone decompress from a stressful day and wind down toward bedtime is to create "unplugged" time, or time where electronic devices are shut off and everyone can read or relax in a way that doesn't include electronics. Most sleep experts recommend unplugging from electronics an hour or so before bed.

## 3. Eat Meals Together

The best way to cultivate better eating habits and to introduce new or healthier foods to your diet is to eat together. Not only will you get to enjoy good food (especially if you cook together), but this is also a great way to create time for daily connection as a family.

## 4. Create Reading Time

If your resolution is to read more often, make it a family routine to check out or download books once a week. Once everyone has books they want to read, create spaces in your home and designate a time when everyone will read.

You can even take it a step further: during meals or other times when your family is together, discuss what you're reading and share what you've learned.

## 5. Exercise as a Family

Everyone can enjoy the health benefits of exercise, which are almost endless. In addition to the obvious physical benefits, exercising also helps to lower stress and lift your mood. While bringing everyone to the gym may not be realistic for your family, going for walks together, [Con't Page 3](#)

## Easy Citrus Salad

- 3 oranges, peeled & sectioned
- 1 grapefruit, peeled & sectioned
- 2 tangerines, peeled & sectioned
- 1/2 cups chopped nuts (walnuts, pecans or peanuts)
- 1/2 lime, juiced
- 1/4 cup honey
- Combined all fruit and nuts.
- Drizzle with lime juice and honey. Stir to combine.
- 4 servings: 273 cal, 10g fat, 48g carb, 4g protein, 0mg chols, 2g sodium

## Teaching Problem Solving

### What If??

Ask your children "What if?" questions about problems that commonly arise. Try questions such as these: "What if you want to play on the swing, but your friend won't get off? What if there's one cookie left and 3 of you want it?" Help your children come up with peaceful solutions to these problems. Then encourage the children to think of more problems and ideas to help solve them.

As parents we often times want to give our children the answers for their problems!

However, if we do not teach our children how to think about solutions—they will never learn to solve problems on their own!

Give your child opportunities to come up with solutions and more importantly try them out to see if they will work!

## Families Who Make Goals Together Keep Goals Together ... Cont't

playing catch, shooting hoops, or joining amateur sports teams or clubs can make it easier to cultivate appreciation for exercise in your family.

### 6. Work Toward a Financial Goal

As parents, you may feel it is inappropriate to talk about your finances with your children, especially if you have outstanding debt. But if you wish to help your children make good decisions about money, like smart spending habits and how to save, being open about family finances and creating financial goals as a family are surprisingly good ways to help prepare your children for adulthood.

### 7. Switch Out the Soda

Your family doctor will thank you, and so will your wallet, if you stop stocking your home with your soda of choice. If you like carbonated drinks and the idea of going cold turkey seems unthinkable, try switching out your favorite soda with flavored carbonated water instead. Not only will this prevent weight gain and overconsumption of sugar, but it will teach your kids to make healthier choices as well.

### 8. Go Meatless One Day a Week

Reduce your meat consumption and eat more vegetables by cooking meatless meals one day a week. Children who try different kinds of foods at a young age tend to be less picky and to expand their palates, and by maintaining healthy eating habits.

To make this year the year you actually follow through with your goals, make it a family affair. This way, everyone wins. You can share the sense of accomplishment together, which not only helps in achieving your shared goals, but can bring you closer together as a family.

Source: <https://www.gottman.com/blog/make-new-years-resolutions-family-affair/>

### Extension Resources ONLINE!

Website—

<https://extension.okstate.edu/county/pottawatomie>

FACEBOOK—

Pottawatomie County OSU Extension

### Science Fun:

For those cold weekends that need a little excitement

### Make a Bird Feeding Tree!

Choose a tree easily seen from inside so you can enjoy the sights and track what birds visit your tree.

Read "The Night Tree" by Eve Bunting

**Orange Feeders:** Cut oranges in half. Let your children carefully remove the orange segments from each half. Save the segments for Citrus Salad! To make each Orange cup, poke four holes near the top of the orange rind. Fasten a string through each hole and tie the strings together at the top. Let your children fill the Orange Cups with birdseed and hang them on a tree.

**Edible Garland:** Birds and people can eat this! String popcorn and fresh cranberries on a line to drape over branches of your tree. Birds will enjoy the treat and kids can eat it as they work!

**Pinecone Bird Feeders:** Use fresh, real pinecones (not scented or store bought decorations) to create a bird feeder by rolling them in peanut butter and then birdseed. Use a string to attach to your tree.

Use this lesson to talk about "Who brings you your Food" Farmers, Truckers, Grocery Stores, Gardens, etc.

The Families Matter E-newsletter is one way the Pottawatomie County Cooperative Extension Service, Family & Consumer Science programs provides educational resources in our community.

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POTTAWATOMIE COUNTY  
EXTENSION

## NoBake Granola Bites

2 cups quick cooking oats  
1 cup ground flaxseed  
1 cup crispy rice cereal (like Rice Krispies)  
1 cup creamy peanut butter  
1 cup mini chocolate chips  
2/3 cup honey (or agave nectar)  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
2 Tablespoons coconut oil (optional, if needed)

1. Combine all the ingredients together in a large bowl until well combined.
2. Using a cookie scoop and your hands, drop rounded tablespoonful-sized portions onto a parchment lined cooking sheet. Refrigerate for 1-2 hours.

**Storing:** Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to a week or freeze for several months.

Play dough can be a great, quiet way for children to release "bottled up" energy! And, it's great for adults too!

Lots of learning takes place as young children help prepare these easy to follow recipes for art materials. Measuring,

pouring and mixing ingredients provide preschoolers with math experiences. When children observe the changes in texture etc., science skills are developed. Creative art experiences begin when children (and their parents) actually use the materials that they have created from everyday household ingredients.

**Parent Tip:** Germs and bacteria can get trapped in play dough—use small amounts for your child to play with and discard after they have enjoyed their creations!

## No Cook Playdough

2 cups boiling water  
3 cups flour  
1/2 cup salt  
2 tbsp. cooking oil  
3 tsp. alum  
food coloring

In a large bowl, mix ingredients listed above. After mixing, knead well. Add food coloring as desired. Store in an airtight container or heavy plastic bag for up to six months.

## Slow Cooker Southwest Three Bean and Barley Soup

1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 large onion, diced  
1 large stalk celery, diced  
1 large carrot, diced  
2 cups water  
4 cups (32-ounce carton) reduced-sodium chicken broth, or vegetable broth  
½ cup pearl barley  
½ cup dried black beans  
½ cup dried great northern beans  
½ cup dried kidney beans  
1 tablespoon chili powder  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
½ teaspoon dried oregano  
¾ teaspoon salt

Combine all ingredients in a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker. Cover and cook until the beans are tender, about 4 hours on High or 7 to 8 hours on Low.

205 calories 3 g fat(1 g sat); 11 g fiber; 36 g carbohydrates; 9 g protein; 0 mg cholesterol; 454 mg sodium; 466 mg potassium  
Eatingwell.com

