

## HEAD START AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Janet Yaros,  
Head Start/ECE  
Director  
[www.nocac.org](http://www.nocac.org)  
visit us on facebook



*Celebrate  
December!*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Togetherness During the Holidays	2
Helping Hands	2
Picky Eaters	3
Winter Safety in the Home	3
Safety Tips for Grandparents	4
Promoting Good Attendance	4
Apple Muffins	4



Madelyne of the Leggett Head Start Center is getting an up close view of seeds from a gourd.

# FAMILY CONNECTION

NORTHWESTERN OHIO COMMUNITY ACTION COMMISSION  
1933 E. SECOND ST., DEFIANCE, OH 43512  
419-784-2150



DECEMBER

2018

## Let NOCAC Invest in Your Success!

In July 2015, Sade Arce was certain of two things: she wanted a good education and she couldn't afford it on her own. Sade was referred to NOCAC's matched savings program. Sade was eventually able to access the \$4,000 savings match to cover the cost of her tuition and books. "I am grateful the match money was there when I needed it," she confided.

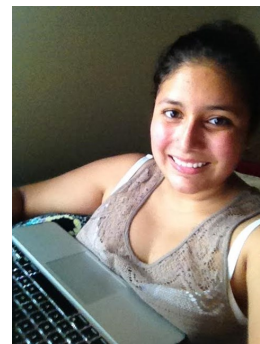
Sade attended a series of financial literacy courses and took advantage of individual support while she saved toward her goal. Sade said "I was so surprised at how much I learned at each class," adding "Even though I was pretty knowledgeable in financial matters, I picked up quite a bit of information each time I attend-

ed." Even after she graduated with a Bachelor's Degree, Sade worked with Financial Empowerment staff to **cut her student loan payment by 53%!**

**Since 1999, NOCAC's matched savings program has helped 38 students pay for their education.**

NOCAC is actively seeking individuals interested in education to fill vacancies with their matched savings program. **The education match rate is 8:1. Income-eligible students that save \$500 can receive a \$4,000 match.** Participants must be actively employed, able to save a minimum of \$40 per month, and be enrolled in the program for a minimum of 6 months.

For more information or to complete the application process, contact Amy



McMaster, Financial Empowerment Specialist at (419) 990-5136 x 3122 or via [amcmaster@nocac.org](mailto:amcmaster@nocac.org). *Space is limited and prospective participants are encouraged to act quickly.*

**december:** |də-'sem-bər| -n.  
a month of lights, snow and feasts; time to make amends and tie loose ends; finish off what you started and hope your wishes come true

## Family Playtime

Has the grown-up world left you too tired to play? Consider these ideas that will let you connect with your youngster—and unwind after a long day:

- Show her what you liked to play when you were her age. You could teach her a card game, a jump rope

rhyme, or a magic trick, for instance.

- Step into a role. You might each pretend to be someone else (a cashier and a customer, a bird and a squirrel) while carrying on a conversation. Encourage your child to think about what her character would sound like

and what she would say.

- At bedtime, shine a flashlight on the walls, ceiling, and floor. Have your youngster "chase" your beams with her own flashlight. Then, trade roles.

Source:  
2017 Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Inc.

**PHOTOS:**

On the left—the Wauseon Head Start Center recently had a visit from the Wauseon Fire Department. On the right—Paisley and Skylynn get creative with paints at the Defiance Family Resource Center.



## Togetherness During the Holidays

*Tips from Nefertiti B. Poyner, Ed.D*

For many families, the holidays are spent dashing around trying to find those perfect presents, slaving over a hot stove cooking up family feasts and scurrying from one festivity to another. As the whirlwind weeks go by and stress levels soar, it might be time to slow down and remember what is important: spending time with the ones you love.

**Tip #1:** Enjoy the simple things: Whether it is having your child help you prepare a meal, sitting down as a family and playing a board game or having an older child tell a story to a younger child, life is full of magical moments that make lasting impressions.

**Tip #2:** Unplug from electronics: It can be hard to connect with the people around us during the holidays when we are constantly glued to our smartphones, tablets

and computers. Parents wanting to set a good example cannot expect their children to disconnect from their devices if they are not willing to unplug, as well. Setting aside time each day to power down your phone, put it in a drawer and focus on family activities can have a huge impact on family engagement and connection.

**Tip #3:** Respect others: While the holidays are a time when family and friends come together, they are also a time when joyful gatherings can quickly turn into heated exchanges. To avoid any family squabbles, skip discussions around the dinner table that focus on religion, politics or any other controversial topics. If someone tries to start a spat, remember – everyone is entitled to their opinion.

**Tip #4:** Lend a helping hand:

Helping others is not only a benefit to them, but to you, as well. Offering support as a family – whether it is by going caroling at a nursing home, delivering cookies to employees at a fire station or leaving a card in your mailbox for the mail carrier – can bring about feelings of self-worth, happiness and even optimism.

**Tip #5:** Cultivate moments of mindfulness :

If you find yourself losing focus of what the holidays are all about, utilize mindfulness techniques such as deep breathing to relax and regroup. Feel free to involve your children, if you notice they need to unwind as well.

*Submitted by: Kaitlin Faber  
Mental Health & Behavior  
Specialist*

Source: [https://centerforresilientchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/Togetherness-Article-w.-NP-from-J.Paine\\_.pdf](https://centerforresilientchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/Togetherness-Article-w.-NP-from-J.Paine_.pdf)

## Helping Hands

Trace around your child's hands on paper, and ask her to name different ways she is helpful. Maybe she takes care of your dog by feeding him and helps you by

dusting. Together, write each example on a separate finger. Then, hang up her "helping hands" to remind her how helpful she can be.



*Source: 2017 Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Inc.*

# Picky Eaters Benefit from Holiday Cooking

Have a picky eater? The more children are involved with food preparation, the more likely they are to try new foods. The trick to picky eaters is to stimulate their interest about different foods so they become so curious they want to try it.

Here are some ways to involve kids in the holiday preparation:

- Kids can help come up with the menu.
- Let them help create the grocery shopping list and write down the names of the foods.
- Have the kids help pick the fresh produce and find items on the list.
- Have the kids help compare a few food labels when selecting canned or packaged goods.
- Kids can help wash the fresh fruits and vegetables. Play a game guessing their names as they are taken out of the grocery bag.
- Have kids help in age appropriate cooking activities in the kitchen. Children can help with measuring and mixing ingredients. Little ones can watch while you explain the different steps of your holiday recipe. Maybe share some family memories of your own!
- Children can help put fresh fruits and vegetables on platters.
- Kids can help set the table.
- Let them name their dish for a fun bonus. They will love creating a special name like "Andy's Green Goopy Gravy".
- Children can help decorate the table with cute holiday decorations. They could even make some of their own!
- Kids should also help in the clean up after cooking. Make it a little game. Each person can count the number of foods and kitchen items they put away. Or they try to find a rhyming word to go with the

item being put away. Before you know it, the kitchen is clean and everyone had fun!

During the holiday season, it can seem like everyone is running in different directions. Cooking with kids during the holiday season gives you both time to step away from the hectic season and have fun together. Cooking together provides family bonding time. Having children take an active role in food preparation gives them hands on experience in basic cooking skills and a positive start in learning to make healthier food choices.

This holiday season stir up some fun memories with your little ones! Have fun creating wonderful scents that will fill the kitchen and your child's heart. Happy and Healthy Holidays!

Source: Nourish Interactive

Submitted By: Tiffany McBride-Health and Safety Assistant



## Winter Safety in the Home

### • Decorate Your Tree With Your Kids in Mind

Kids are curious and will want to play with the ornaments on the tree. Move the ornaments that are breakable or have metal hooks towards the top of the tree. That makes room at the bottom for the ones that are safer for young kids.

### • Water the Tree Regularly

Natural trees look beautiful, but if they're not watered regularly, needles can dry out and pose a potential fire hazard. Make sure your tree has plenty of water.

### • Check the Lights

Take a look at the lights on your tree and in and around your home for exposed or frayed wires, loose connections or broken sockets.

### • Blow Out Candles and Store Matches Out of Reach

Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can

burn, and don't forget to blow them out when you leave the room or before you go to sleep.

Keep matches and lighters in a safe place, out of children's reach. Avoid novelty lighters or lighters that look like toys.

### • Keep Harmful Plants Out of Reach

Keep plants that may be poisonous out of reach of children or pets. This includes mistletoe berries, holly berry, and Jerusalem cherry.

### Find the Perfect Toy for the Right Age

Consider your child's age when purchasing a toy or game this holiday season. It's worth a second to read the instructions and warning labels to make sure the gift is just right.

### • Keep Button Batteries Away from Young Kids

Keep a special eye on small pieces, including button batteries that may be included in electronic toys. While these kinds of games are great for older kids, they can pose a potential danger for younger, curious siblings.

### • Prevent Spills with Pot Handles

Kids love to reach, so to prevent burns from hot food or liquid spills, simply use the back burner of your stove and turn pot handles away from the edge.

### • Avoid Placing Foods on an Open Oven Door

Your oven door may not be as strong as you think. To prevent oven tip-overs, place heavy foods on a counter top out of the reach of young children, and not on an open oven door.

An anti-tip bracket is a valuable tool to prevent oven tip-overs.

Source: [www.safekids.org/holiday-safety-tips](http://www.safekids.org/holiday-safety-tips)



## THE FAMILY CONNECTION HEAD START



Phone 419-784-2150

Fax 419-782-5648

# Safety Tips for Grandparents

### Toy Safety:

- Buy new toys for your grandchild that have a variety of sounds, sights, and colors. Simple toys can be just as good. Remember, no matter how fancy the toys may be your own interaction and play with your grandchild are much more important.
- Toys, CDs, and books should be age-appropriate and challenge children at their own developmental level.
- Follow the recommendations on the package to find toys suitable for your grandchild's age.
- Because toy boxes can be dangerous, keep them out of your home, or look for one without a top or lid.

### Garage & Basement Safety:

- Make sure that the automatic reversing mechanism on the garage door is operating.
- Keep all garden chemicals



and pesticides as well as tools in a locked cabinet and out of reach.

Source: [www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/A-Message-For-Grandparents-Keeping-Your-Grandchild](http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/A-Message-For-Grandparents-Keeping-Your-Grandchild)

Submitted by:  
Sheana Behringer, LPN  
Child Health & Safety Manager

# Promoting Good Attendance All Winter Long

Every winter, bad weather — snow, slush, freezing temperatures — can present challenges to getting children to school. So do the colds, fevers and earaches that often come with the winter months.

1. Develop back up plans for getting your children to school in bad weather.
  - a. Check to see if your child can get a ride with other families who have a reliable car that can manage the snow.
  - b. Form a "walking school bus" with other families to get students to school safely.
2. Keep your children healthy.
  - a. Dress them warmly for the cold weather.
  - b. Stress the importance of eating a good breakfast every morning.
  - c. Stress hand washing, particularly in the winter months. Send your child to school with a small

bottle of hand sanitizer. Research shows that something as simple as hand washing can improve attendance.

- d. Talk to your doctor or school nurse about when a sick child should come to school. Most health providers allow a child to attend with a cold, but not with a fever.

Source: [www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/parents-winter-flyer-1-15-15-final.pdf](http://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/parents-winter-flyer-1-15-15-final.pdf)

Submitted by:  
Amber Simmons  
Family & Community  
Engagement Manager

# Apple Cinnamon Molasses Buckwheat Muffins

### Ingredients

- 3/4 c . buckwheat flour
- 1 t . baking powder
- 1/4 t . sea salt
- 1 t . cinnamon
- 1/2. c . milk of your choice
- 1 egg
- 3 T . oil
- 1 1/2 t . vanilla
- 1 T . molasses
- 1 small apple, grated
- 3 T . raisins
- 2 T . unsweetened grated coconut, optional

### Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
1. Mix the dry ingredients (flour, baking powder, salt, cinnamon).
2. Mix the wet ingredients in a

separate bowl (milk, egg, oil, vanilla, molasses).

3. Mix all the ingredients, along with the grated apple, raisins, and coconut (if using).
4. Divide the batter among nine muffin cups.
5. Bake 12-16 minutes until tops are "springy" to the touch.
6. Cool and enjoy!

Source: [www.oatmealwithafork.com/apple-cinnamon-molasses-buckwheat-muffins/](http://www.oatmealwithafork.com/apple-cinnamon-molasses-buckwheat-muffins/)