

## OFFICE OF FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### TODAY'S FAMILY **LEARNING TIP**\*

#### December

- 1 December is Safe Toys and Gifts Awareness Month! Check that your child's toys are safe for him or her and your pets.
- 2 Invite your teens to help plan the family holiday budget. Include travel plans, family meals, and gift prices. Encourage creative cost-saving ideas.
- 3 French painter Claude Monet was born in 1840. Ask your child to research Monet's impressionistic style and then create his or her own artwork using that style. Learn more at [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cmon/hd\\_cmon.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cmon/hd_cmon.htm).
- 4 American novelist Louisa May Alcott's book about growing up with three sisters during the Civil War was published in 1868. Does your child know the name of that novel? Here's more: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louisa\\_May\\_Alcott](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louisa_May_Alcott)
- 5 Author Mark Twain was born in 1835. What was Twain's real name? What are some of his most well-known books? Start reading one with your child today! Learn about the famous author here: [www.marktwainhouse.org/man/biography\\_main.php](http://www.marktwainhouse.org/man/biography_main.php)
- 6 Read the newspaper with your children. Talk about the news and current events. How has society changed since you were a child?
- 7 National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day pays tribute to those who passed during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Have your child locate Pearl Harbor on a map. [www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/pearl-harbor](http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/pearl-harbor)
- 8 Why do some students wear their pajamas inside out? Why do others cross their fingers and toes? Talk to your child about superstitions and why some people believe them.
- 9 The "Father of the American Dictionary" was born in 1758 and spent 27 years working on the first dictionary. Who was he? Quiz your children to see if they know! Here's a hint: [www.merriam-webster.com/info/noah.htm](http://www.merriam-webster.com/info/noah.htm)
- 10 The United Nations declared December 10 as Human Rights Day in 1948. How many different human rights can your children name? Which is most important to them? [www.timeanddate.com/holidays/un/human-rights-day](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/un/human-rights-day)

\*For additional ideas and daily parent tips, visit the [Maryland State Department of Education Family Literacy Take 15 Web page](#). Click on English or Spanish to view the tips.

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- 11 What is in a name? Your child's name, that is. Discuss history of your child's name: Who chose it and why. If your child could choose another name, what would it be?
- 12 It's Poinsettia Day. Enjoy the holiday plant with your family but take caution. Why are poinsettias dangerous to pets and small children? Learn more here:  
<http://extension.illinois.edu/poinsettia/facts.cfm>
- 13 Do a safety check in your home with your family. Be sure that outlets are not overloaded, cords are not covered, vents are clear, and smoke detectors have batteries. Here's a great checklist:  
[www.realsimple.com/home-organizing/organizing/home-safety-check](http://www.realsimple.com/home-organizing/organizing/home-safety-check)
- 14 Boxer Muhammad Ali was born in 1942. What famous, self-written expression describes his winning style? Have your child write slogans to describe themselves. Learn more at  
<http://muhammadali.com/>.
- 15 Happy Bill of Rights Day! How many amendments from the Bill of Rights can your child name? Look online for the remaining ones! For more on the document, check this out:  
<http://constitutioncenter.org/learn/civic-calendar/bill-of-rights-day>
- 16 Explore the properties of water with your child by pouring water into different types of containers. Notice that water takes the shape of the container, takes up space, and has weight.
- 17 The first woman to have her picture on a U.S. dollar bill was also the first to appear on a postage stamp. Can your child guess the name of this woman? Here is some additional information:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_one-dollar\\_bill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_one-dollar_bill)
- 18 About 13 percent of young people have had some hearing loss due to loud noises. How can you protect your child's ears and hearing?
- 19 Play a word game, such as Scrabble, with your family when the weather makes it too cold to play outside!
- 20 Use community festivals and local performances as a way to explore – and try – various types of dance styles. Discuss the styles' similarities and differences with your children.
- 21 Encourage your children to think about everyday objects in different ways. What other uses can they imagine for household items? For example, how can they use cups for painting shapes?

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- 22 Happy First Day of Winter! Today is also the Winter Solstice. Have your children research and describe the science behind the Winter Solstice to a friend. They can begin here:  
<http://earthsky.org/?p=2951>
- 23 A newborn whale can weigh more than 6,000 pounds, while a newborn horse weighs up to 60 pounds. Does your child know the average weight of a healthy human baby? Find out here:  
<http://kidshealth.org/parent/growth/growth/grownnewborn.html>
- 24 Most snowflakes have six sides; others look like triangles or columns. Help your children use paper, scissors, and thread to make and display paper snowflakes. Try these:  
<http://snowflakes.barkleyus.com/>. Or these: [www.its.caltech.edu/~atomic/snowcrystals](http://www.its.caltech.edu/~atomic/snowcrystals)
- 25 Christmas celebrations vary from country to country and from family to family. Have your child do some online research about why and how Christmas is celebrated:  
<http://www.history.com/topics/christmas/christmas-traditions-worldwide>.
- 26 Have your children look around your home for all the appliances and gadgets that run on batteries. How would the world be different without batteries?
- 27 Demonstrate graciousness and creativity. Show your children how to express their gratitude for gifts and hospitality by designing and writing thank-you notes. Need help?  
<http://ideas.hallmark.com/thank-you-ideas/how-to-write-a-thank-you-note/>
- 28 Make it a math meal! Use conversations about mixing, measuring, cooking times, and temperatures as opportunities to reinforce math skills.
- 29 What is unique about "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog"? Ask your children, then encourage them to think of another sentence that is similarly unique. Find clues here:  
<http://www.fun-with-words.com/pangrams.html>
- 30 Create a festive collage with holiday wrapping, ribbons, and cards. Have children personalize their artwork with pictures and photos.
- 31 Reflect on your accomplishments of the past year and explore the challenges. Talk to your family about goals for 2016. Write them down and review them throughout the year.

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