

It's Winter!

Wintertime! What comes to your mind when you think of winter? Do you think of sledding, snowball fights, and ice skating? Do you think of long cold days and nights when it's too cold to stick your nose outside? Or do you live in a milder climate when wintertime just means grabbing a lightweight sweater or jacket before you head out the door? Either way winter can be a fun and happy time, filled with opportunities to spend some special moments with your family. Here are a few suggestions for having fun this winter while making a few special memories as well. Have a wonderful winter together!

Make a Snowman



OK, so you don't have snow! You can still make a snowman, and you can make this one inside. Mix together equal parts of Epsom salt and boiling water, and allow the mixture to cool. Invite your child to

draw a snowman on a piece of dark blue or black construction paper, then brush the cooled mixture over the drawing. Watch the "crystals" form as the mixture dries. Locate buttons, fabric scraps, and twigs for your child to decorate her snowman after the picture is dry.

Ice Skate

Not everyone can find a frozen pond, but you can pretend to ice skate as you glide across a tile floor wearing a pair of soft socks. Put on a CD and "skate" across the kitchen

floor. *One word of caution: Never let your child skate alone. To prevent bumps and bruises, hold on tight as she slides and twirls.*



Volunteer

Wintertime is tough for many people. Homeless shelters in many areas are filled to overflowing. Involve your family in a helping project. You could serve meals at a rescue mission or help stock shelves at a local food bank. When the cold weather keeps you inside, suggest that your child help you sort through clothing and toys that he could give to someone less fortunate. You might even consider organizing a coat or blanket drive, if there is a real need in your area.



Explore Ice

If you live in a warm climate, provide an opportunity for your preschooler to explore ice. Fill large plastic or cardboard jugs with water and place in the freezer until solid. Cut away the jugs and dump the ice blocks outside on a walk or lawn. Provide coarse salt and plastic or wooden spoons for children to chip away at the ice blocks as they melt. You could also freeze a variety of objects in the ice blocks for preschoolers to discover as the ice melts.



Make Snow Cream

You can enjoy snow cream anytime with the delicious recipe below. Invite your preschooler to help you mix and stir the ingredients. Then sit down and enjoy eating it together.



Mix together a 14-ounce can of sweetened condensed milk and 1 teaspoon vanilla

extract. Pour the mixture over eight cups of fresh, clean snow or shaved ice. Beat together until the consistency of ice cream. Enjoy!

Make a Weather Calendar

Obtain or make a copy of a calendar page for January. Talk about the weather each day, and encourage your preschooler to record each day's weather in the block for that day. She could draw the sun to record sunny days, clouds for cloudy days, raindrops for rain, and perhaps a snowman for snow. If you have an older preschooler, at the end of the month guide her to count the number of days with each type of weather.



Make Snow Dough



Ingredients:

- 1 cup flour
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- ½ cup salt
- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon oil
- electric skillet
- glitter
- 1 tablespoon white tempera paint

Directions:

1. Mix all ingredients (except glitter and paint) together in the electric skillet.
2. Cook on low heat until dough thickens and pulls away from the pan.
3. Knead in glitter and paint.
4. Store in an airtight container.

