



John Tracy Clinic





Free Services Worldwide for Parents of Infants and Preschool Children with Hearing Loss

Holiday and Cultural Celebrations

Each season of the year brings with it special holidays and cultural celebrations. Naturally you want your child to enjoy the special occasions your family celebrates. Even more importantly, you want him to be involved. With some planning ahead, each new season, every holiday and occasion can be a fun-filled time for you and your little one.

What does a holiday mean to a three-year old? What does it mean to **your** child? It is about games, food, gifts, music? Think about the experience **as your baby or preschooler views it** and then prepare for one aspect of the festivities from his perspective.

For example, a special holiday might focus on preparing a large dinner. This means going shopping at the market, cooking and setting the table. Friends and extended family members might join you. So, your focus is on food. Where will you begin? Here are some thoughts:

-  You might want to find a book at the library about this holiday and look at the pictures about the meal you will prepare.
-  Talk about the food you will buy at the store.
-  Make a short shopping list with pictures of a few items so that when you and your child go shopping, you can buy these few items together.
-  Of course, you will want to talk, talk, talk! “We’re going to buy turkey. Do you see the picture of the turkey on our shopping list? Yes, that is the turkey.”



Choose one low-key, simple cooking activity in which you can involve your child. Simple cookies with pre-made dough might be fun. Maybe pudding would be a nice addition to your dinner. Whatever it is, find time to make your special treat together and be close to your child, for holidays are family time!

Friends and family might visit and you can help your child by making a little photo album with pictures of these special people. Show the pictures before the guests arrive and talk about who is coming to visit. In this way, your child is prepared and comfortable as your guests arrive.

Small children cannot understand the history of a holiday or cultural event and relate it to the celebration in your home. If some of the history is taught at preschool or daycare and you can carry over the concept at home, that is fine. But at home, you want your little one to be involved in activities and **have fun**. This is a time to establish traditions.

Are there songs that are part of the celebration? Start early as you sing them together. Even if your little one doesn’t know the words, encourage him to join in the fun. And if he is old enough and has the language, help him understand the meaning of the song.

Also if your child is old enough to understand sequencing, talk about what will happen next. Use some beginning questions. Present new vocabulary. This is a busy time, and it will be necessary to prepare in advance so that you can focus on your child. You’ll be glad you did!