

What About Holiday Art?

Holidays clearly pose a special challenge for teachers. Some teachers have a holiday-oriented curriculum, moving with the calendar from one holiday to the next. At the other extreme are programs who ban holiday celebrations altogether so as not to offend anyone who may not partake in a particular holiday. We suggest that at the start of your program year, you discuss this topic with the children's families and decide how you will approach the celebration of holidays. How important are these celebrations to the family's values? Do some families not celebrate any holidays?

Holidays can be celebrated in a respectful and developmentally appropriate way, exposing children to differing customs. For example, you can feature the value of the holiday- the "thankful" element of Thanksgiving, and the celebration of love and friendship at Valentine's Day. Keep in mind that anything that you do for a holiday should allow the children to express themselves individually, in ways of their own choosing. What you don't want children to be doing is coloring pumpkin cutouts at Halloween or having everyone in the class dipping their hands in paint at Thanksgiving to make a print of a turkey's tail. The artwork needs to reflect the children's ideas and feelings- not your or those in an activity book.