

TOPIC:

Winter Time Fun Ideas

February 2020

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOSTER PARENT TRAINING CREDIT:

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Winter time in Alaska can mean so many fun things for children and families. With the length of our winter compared to other places, it seems fitting that we should look at ways to support youth development and growth through play! Following are some ideas of fun activities that are likely to help build trusting relationships and confidence in children and families.

1. Have you tried snow shoeing? If you have a youth who enjoys being outside in the snow, this might be a great way to plan an adventure together. You can pick a simple route, pack a snack or lunch, and maybe add in a scavenger hunt for the hike! Snowshoeing is a great way to build a relationship with a child also, as there is no going back. Literally, you can't walk backward in the things. You and the child will need to work together learning how to navigate the shoe and learning to turn around using wide circles.

"Scientists have recently determined that it takes approximately 400 repetitions to create a new synapse in the brain – unless it is done with PLAY, in which case, it takes between 10-20 repetitions."

- Dr. Karyn Purvis



2. If you're starting to get a little cabin fever, head outside to enjoy some snow paint. All you need is some spray bottles, water, food coloring, and a large spot in the yard covered in snow. Painting ignites the imagination! You and your kids can paint hieroglyphics, bring out your inner Pollock, or paint a tic-tac-toe game in the yard. This type of play also encourages gross and fine motor development. Need a quick snow paint recipe? Find one here:

<https://www.thesitsgirls.com/diy/diy-snow-paint/>

3. You can also arrange a day of board game competitions! Not all families enjoy the cold or maybe it's just too cold to be outside for very long. Try holding a board game marathon and have popcorn for a snack. There is evidence that learning through play helps develop executive functioning in children. So when you play a game with a child that requires them to plan, strategize, and feel emotions such as anticipation, excitement, or let down, you're helping their brain grow and learn new pathways!
4. Alaskan winters also let families work on and practice other types of skills, like beading. Beading helps youth connect with traditional cultural practices, connect with elders of their community, and helps work on fine motor development. While beading designs and

meanings vary across Alaska, you can provide a youth in your home with opportunities to research and connect. One of our favorite examples for beading is Angela Gonzales' YouTube channel. Angela is a Koyukon Athabaskan woman. She has wonderful tutorials on beading. Check out her channel here [Alaska Native Beading and Sewing Tips with Angela Gonzalez](#)



5. To help kids feel connected to their community, make a list of neighbors you haven't seen or talked to in a while. Bring some cookies or quick simple snacks and spend a Saturday visiting neighbors. This helps kids (and adults) feel more connected and grounded in their relationships. It's also a great way for kids to practice talking with others.

6. On those days/nights when it's too cold to venture outside, consider taking time to brush up on your storytelling skills. Helping kids craft a narrative can ignite a sense of passion, provide a way for a child to see themselves in the story, and build connections with others through mutual understanding. Need some help crafting a story? The Molly of Denali Podcast is a wonderful story telling medium that can inspire the imagination. Check it out here: <https://mollyofdenalipodcast.org/>



7. Connecting with a child doesn't always require that parents create additional activities. You can spend time preparing and cooking meals together. Kids can learn the recipes to their favorite dish, make shopping lists and help gather ingredients, and learn and practice new techniques and skills. Meal preparation can help a child connect to their culture and have a greater understanding of the resources and ways food brings communities together. The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium has a delightful YouTube channel called the Store Outside Your Door that explores food harvest, gathering, and preparation in Alaska. Check it out here: [ANTHC Store Outside Your Door](#)



While this self-study is in no way an exhaustive list of Alaskan winter time activities, keep in mind finding ways to build safety and trust through your interactions. No matter what you do this winter, have fun, take pictures, and share those memories with the children you're caring for. And remember, learning new skills happens more quickly when it's done through play!



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