

Celebrate

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In this era of rapid change and persistent uncertainty, traditions can provide stability and a sense of togetherness. Traditions and rituals are comprised of those personal and peculiar customs and celebrations that help to create and sustain community. No matter what holidays, religious observances, traditions or rituals your family follows, celebrating these milestone moments builds shared memories in families that children carry with them forever. Experiencing and celebrating these special times helps children understand what it means to be a part of a community. It builds teamwork, shared values, and a sense of belonging – all key to a positive Kindergarten experience.

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- **Start a dinner table conversation.** Ask the grownups at your dinner table these questions; What was a common celebration that was part of your childhood? What images, smells, tastes, and people come to mind when recalling that celebration? Are there any foods you remember eating on special occasions that you still love to eat today? What celebrations do we want to have in our family?
- **Cook a special meal.** As you celebrate a family holiday, ask your child to help you cook a special meal. Together you could choose one or two dishes that have become traditional. Teach your child to make it so she can pass it on to the next generation.
- **Play a traditional game.** The best things children can take away from a special celebration are memories – joyous, long-lasting memories of the relationships, the food, the games, and the closeness they felt with friends and family. Inventing a game or creating a new way to celebrate in your family will provide your child with memories to share with others as he goes off to school.

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Things to say:

- **“I like the way you’re stirring our ingredients!”** Increasing your child’s self-esteem comes when she knows she is doing a great job!
- **“How about you begin our celebration by _____.”** Encouraging your child to be an active participant in the rituals and traditions will make sure the memory sticks.

Read all about it:

The Book of New Family Traditions: How to Create Great Rituals for Holidays & Everyday, by Meg Cox

Everyday Traditions: Simple Family Rituals for Connection and Comfort, by Nava Atlas

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