

## Shasta Head Start Holiday Guidelines

Shasta Head Start understands that staff, children, and families celebrate a wide range of holidays and traditions. We respect the cultures and beliefs of those in our program. Staff may choose to do an activity, take part in natural conversations with children, or share a family's cultural tradition in the classroom. If so, it is important to keep in mind the goal of bringing holiday experiences into the classroom. First, that children become aware of and grow comfortable with the reality that some people celebrate different holidays or celebrate the same holiday in different ways. Second, all activities will be developmentally appropriate for the children in the classroom. Lastly, at no time will a child be excluded due to an activity taking part in their classroom.

### Holiday Guidelines:

- Holiday learning activities are not required.
- Staff shall not provide religious instruction or worship.
- Learning activities need to be relevant to the children and families in the classroom.
- Identify learning objectives. (What are the children learning from the activity you are offering? What do you want the children to learn about the holiday?)
- Avoid centering classroom themes around a holiday. (“Spring” not “Easter”).
- Steer away from activities that scare children or that are **developmentally inappropriate**. Consider what might be wonderful about the holiday and what might be difficult for them. (Santa Claus is a hard concept for young children to fully grasp by the age of 4 and for many; it can create anxiety and fear. While costumes may be fun for adults, they may scare children, and young children may not understand them.)
- Limit the amount of time you offer holiday activities in your environment. (A few days, not a few weeks).
- Remember that holidays may be a time for celebration for some, but not for everyone. Consider the perspectives of others, including staff and families.

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- Continue to follow Creative Curriculum for environment set-up, you may add additional items to your environment to enhance your learning activities.
- Fit holidays learning activities into the regular routine/classroom environment.
- Offer activities that calm children and focus on the process.
- Provide a selection of holiday-related and other activities.
- At no time should a holiday learning activity cost staff or families money or additional stress.
- Contractors shall not provide nor be reimbursed for preschool services which include religious instruction or worship.