

MAKING CONNECTIONS

WINTER 2026

DECEMBER 2025



Winter is the perfect season to explore, play, and connect, even if it is chilly outside. Here are some fun ways to make the season special for you and your child:

- Nature walks: spot animal tracks, icicles, or winter birds.
- Build in the snow: snowmen, forts, or snow angels.
- Cozy storytime: read favorite books by a window or fireplace.
- Hands-on play: sensory bins with snow, rice, or water.
- Bake together: simple recipes teach counting and following directions.
- Winter crafts: pinecones, leaves, or paper snowflakes.
- Learning games: "I Spy," counting, or matching games indoors.
- Daily reflections: share what made you happy or excited each day.

Even when it is cold, little moments of play and learning make big memories. Bundle up, get creative, and enjoy all the magic this winter brings!



In this issue:

- Ways Kids Can Help Prepare for a Family Gathering
- Health & Safety Tips
- Upcoming Events
- Resources

REGION 6

MOUNTAINHEART COMMUNITY SERVICES

248 RED OAK SHOPPING CENTER

RONCEVERTE, WV 24970

OFFICE : 304-647-3810

FAX : 304-647-5521

Ways Kids Can Help Prepare for a Family Gathering

Before a big event or family gathering, there's much to do! My kids often ask, "How can we help?" because they want to participate, too. Everyone is important in a family and community — including the kids! Finding ways to include your kids in the event can make it more meaningful for everyone, and when children can help, they share the responsibility and the fun.

Check out these fun ways your kids can help prepare for your next gathering!

Start with these (great for kids aged 2 to 4 years old and up):

- Pick out what to wear. Whether you're hosting or traveling, one way your kids can prepare is by picking out what clothes to wear before the big day. Talk through the occasion and let them know if there are colors or types of clothing that are most appropriate. Maybe that means picking out a fancy outfit for a wedding or a warm hat for an outdoor winter festival. Sometimes, it helps to give children two choices when making a decision. For example, you can ask, "Do you want to wear the red shirt or the blue one?"
- Decorate with art. Before Thanksgiving dinner, brainstorm simple crafts you can create with your child using paper and crayons. Help your children decorate the table by creating place cards, or designing placemats. It makes the table more festive, but it also gives everyone in the family a job and a way to help.
- Talk about what you'll do. Even if you've done an event like this in the past, it might feel new to your child. Before the family gathering, remind your child who will be there and what the expectations are during your time together. Maybe that means using manners by saying "please" and "thank you" or sharing their toys with relatives.



Then add these when your child is ready (especially for kids 5 to 8 years old):

- Count down the days. When you're preparing for an event, it's exciting! Make a paper chain to give your child a visual reminder of how long it is until the next get-together. For older kids, write out a to-do list with something they can do to get ready each day, like packing their bag, practicing for the talent show, and creating decorations.
- Invite guests. Are you hosting a party or gathering? Ask your children who should be invited! Make a list of the family members or friends who should come. Then, let them help with the invitations by making cards, sending audio messages to relatives, or asking people in person.
- Arrange the space. Different gatherings, parties, and holidays use different decorations, music, and food. Talk about how to prepare your space when hosting, and ask your child for ideas. This might include cleaning up before decorating! If you're guests, point out to your child how the host has worked hard to prepare the party.
- Gather up games. If your event spans several hours, playing games is a perfect way to spend time together. Ask your child to decide on some fun games to offer to play during the gathering.
- Prepare the food. For many gatherings, food is a big part! Ask your child to help with simple steps in making a dish to share. They can gather ingredients, stir the mixing bowl, or help chop salad ingredients with kid-safe kitchen tools.

Adapted from: Gratton, S. (November 8, 2023). Ways kids can help prepare for a family gathering. Retrieved from www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/ways-kids-can-help-prepare-for-a-family-gathering.

WINTER HEALTH & SAFETY TIPS FOR FAMILIES

Keep your little ones safe and warm this winter:

- Dress in layers with hats, scarves, mittens, and water-resistant boots.
- Stay dry to prevent chills.
- Limit outdoor time during extreme cold.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia and frostbite.

For more tips, visit the CDC website:
[Winter Weather Safety](#)

UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

WV Birth to Three is excited to continue offering new training opportunities for families on a variety of topics designed to support your child's growth and development. These sessions provide practical tips, helpful resources, and strategies you can use at home. To learn more about upcoming trainings, speak with your service coordinator or visit our website for the latest schedule and details.

[Click Here: WV Birth to Three Homepage](#)

STATE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

WV WIC

Supporting Families with West Virginia WIC
The West Virginia Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program helps families access nutritious foods, breastfeeding support, and health resources. WIC provides guidance and support to pregnant women, new mothers, and children up to age five to ensure healthy growth and development.

Services Offered:

- Nutritious Food Assistance: Access to healthy foods for mothers and young children.
- Nutrition Education: Tips and guidance for feeding and caring for children.
- Breastfeeding Support: Help from trained professionals to support breastfeeding moms.
- Referrals to Health Care & Community Services: Connects families to medical care, childcare resources, and other family supports.

Families can learn more and find a WIC clinic near them here: [West Virginia WIC Program](#)

AGENCY RESOURCES

MountainHeart Community Services offers a Child Care Resource & Referral program to help families in Region Six find safe, nurturing, and affordable child care — and to support child care providers in giving the best care possible.

Child Care Support for Families – MountainHeart Community Services

MountainHeart Community Services offers a Child Care Resource & Referral program to help families in Region Six find safe, nurturing, and affordable child care.

Families can get guidance on choosing the right child care, learn about financial assistance options, and connect with early childhood support programs like Help Me Grow West Virginia.

Child care providers also benefit from training, resources, and support to help them provide the best care possible.

Learn more and connect with the program here:
[MountainHeart Child Care Resource & Referral](#)



“Grateful for Birth to Three: A Family’s Story”

“As a parent whose child has been wrapped up in birth to three, we are incredibly grateful for them. My son has been seeing his “Miss Megan” for over a year now and she has helped him grow leaps and bounds. He greets her at the front door and tells her she loves him before she leaves each visit. He’s not particularly friendly with all visitors, but lights up each time Megan is at our house. He has showed his love for puzzles and stem toys with her. He brings new toys in the livingroom just for her to play with or look at. She has truly become apart of our family and has helped improve not only his ability to eat but communicate as well! We will be forever grateful to have been matched with Miss Megan!”

-Kayla Payne



Know a child who could benefit from WV Birth to Three?
Scan the QR code to make a referral today!

[Submit an Electronic Referral to WV Birth to Three](#)

If you would like to share your families story contact:

Samantha Modley

Parent Partner

smodley@mthtwv.org

Office: 304-647-3810 ext. 111

Cell: 304-573-0602

Toll Free: 1-866-229-0461

As we move into a new season, we are excited to continue offering support, resources, and opportunities for families across Region 6. Together, we can explore new experiences, celebrate every milestone, and make the year ahead full of growth, learning, and connection.