

December 25, 2023  
Heidi Darby  
Buffalo County Extension  
For Immediate Release

### Keeping Kids Entertained over Christmas Break

Here we are at the end of 2023. All the Christmas presents have been opened and the guests have all gone home. Now what? The last five weeks from Thanksgiving to Christmas have been a blur of short work weeks, school programs, holiday shopping, and family dinners. Now that you have some downtime, how do you keep your kids entertained until they are back in school?

I remember when our kids were younger, the 8 days from Christmas until they were back in school sometimes seemed like the longest days ever. To keep them busy, my husband recruited them to help him. Most years, my husband's job would do a shutdown over these days. That gave the kids some extra ways to keep them busy. "Dad days" were busy days. Some days were spent moving cows with horses or four-wheelers for friends, or fixing fences that the deer or snow would mess up. A lot of days were spent cutting and splitting firewood. We heat our home with a fireplace so they would cut and split quite a bit of wood over these breaks. I would come home to a full load of split firewood and tired and hungry children.

The lull between Christmas and the new semester at school is also a good time to sort through closets and toys. Do they really wear all those clothes in the closet? Do they play with all those toys? Most often, they do not. You can easily free up closet and toy box space by pulling out what doesn't fit or is not something they like to play with or wear. Of course, this task isn't something that kids really like to do but you can make it fun. Our kids would pull out stuff that didn't fit and we would start a donation pile. We would talk about who the clothes might fit or who would like to have it. This helped to make room for their Christmas gifts and I'm pretty sure our family friends with younger children appreciated the hand-me-downs.

Another fun activity is to have your kids make a scrapbook for the year. These were always my favorite. Blank scrapbooks can be purchased at craft stores. You could also use school notebooks or even fun stationery too. You could ask your kids to write about their favorite memories of the year. Maybe they choose to add photos from your family trip that summer. One thought is to make memorial pages for family members or pets that passed away. It's a good opportunity to reminisce about their past loved one.

One rule of thought is to let them decide what is "worthy" of the book. You might be surprised what they thought were the best moments of the year. Just let them take the lead. To make it more personal, let them use their imagination to decorate it. In the future, you can pull them out each Christmas and reflect on all the fun and memorable events of previous years.

If your kids feel like sharing their project with others, this can be entered as an exhibit at the County Fair. Memory books, scrapbooks or even Photography from summer vacations, family trips or just fun memories make great exhibits. See your local Extension office for project information.

Heidi Darby

4-H Extension Assistant

Nebraska Extension in Buffalo County

1400 East 34<sup>th</sup> St. Kearney, NE 68847 308-236-1235