

# Sierra Nevada Children's Services

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## HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM DENNIS FOURNIER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND THE SIERRA NEVADA CHILDREN'S SERVICES STAFF

This is a wonderful time of year when the generosity of the human spirit is on display. Here at Sierra Nevada Children's Services that spirit is running high as we observe the benefits of our services in the community, as well as the many examples of generosity displayed by so many. And while we are grateful for the resources that allow us to assist parents in finding quality child care, we are also mindful of the difficult times we are living in currently and always seek to stretch our resources to help as many as possible.

We hope that in some small way our services will help make the holiday season a little brighter for all our families. And as we approach the coming year all of us at Sierra Nevada Children's Services wish you Happy Holidays and a healthy and peaceful New Year.

Sierra Nevada Children's Services enriches the community by supporting quality child care and empowering families to aspire to lifelong success.

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# Holiday Reading

## Sharon Thurman's SNICS Picks



### IMANI'S GIFT AT KWANZAA, by Denise Burden-Patmon

"Grandma braided Imani's hair. Imani loved the braiding times. They were special times she and M'dear shared. They were times of talking and times of listening." On this day they were talking about Kwanzaa. This is a sweet story, beautifully illustrated, about family, community, and sharing. It is also very helpful for anyone who wants to learn about Kwanzaa. It tells what happens during the week of Kwanzaa and includes a glossary of the Swahili words used in the celebration.

### HERSHEL AND THE HANUKKAH GOBLINS, By Eric Kimmel

On the first night of Hanukkah, Hershel of Ostropol was walking down the road. He was tired and hungry, but he was looking forward to reaching the village where he knew there would be bright candles, merry songs, and platters piled high with tasty potato Latkes. When he arrived, the village was silent and dark. Not a single Hanukkah candle could be seen. What could be wrong? The villagers told him that goblins had taken over the old synagogue on the hill. They hate Hanukkah and do not allow the villagers to celebrate it. Hershel knew he must help the people, so he made a plan to get rid of the goblins and bring Hanukkah back to the village. Can he do it? You will have to read the book to find out.

### A TREASURY OF CHRISTMAS TALES, Contributing writer Carolyn Quattrocki

This beautifully bound and illustrated book contains 19 favorite Christmas classics, including: A Christmas Carol, The Little Match Girl, 'Twas the Night Before Christmas, The Elves and the Shoemaker, The little Drummer Boy, The Littlest Angel, and Rudolph's Adventure. It is a perfect "story a day" book to get families into the holiday spirit.

### MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYWHERE!, By Arlene Erlbach with Herb Erlbach

"To Christians all over the world, December 25<sup>th</sup> is an important day. It's Christmas, the anniversary of Jesus Christ's birth. Christmas is observed by more than a billion people in more than 100 countries around the world." "Not everyone celebrates Christmas the same way. In this book you will discover many Christmas traditions. You'll read about activities you can add to your own celebration. You can share these customs with your family and friends to honor the most widely celebrated holiday in the world."



### Other holiday books available in the SNCS Library are:

- Babar and Father Christmas** ~ By Jean De Brunhoff
- Baboushka and the Three Kings** ~ By Ruth Robbins
- Latkes and Applesauce ~ A Hanukkah Story** ~ By Fran Manushkin
- Off to Bethlehem!** ~ By Dandi Daley Mackall
- The Polar Express** ~ By Chris Van Allsburg
- One Yellow Daffodil ~ A Hanukkah Story** ~ By David A. Adler
- The Christmas Dolls** (a chapter book) ~ By Carol Beach York
- The Legend of the Candy Cane** ~ By Lori Walburg
- The Littlest Christmas Tree** ~ By Janie Jasin
- D is for Dreidel ~ A Hanukkah Alphabet Book** ~ By Tanya Lee Stone
- Christmas Eve on Sesame Street** ~ Created by Jon Stone
- A Snowman Named Just Bob** ~ By Mark Kimball Moulton
- Christmas Songs** (a pop-up songbook) ~ Traditional Christmas Songs



## Subsidy and Resource and Referral Updates

### UPDATED PARENT & PROVIDER GUIDE:

SNCS has recently updated the *Parent & Provider Guide* that is distributed to parents and child care providers served by supportive child care programs. We now have 2 different handbooks – one for parents (*Parent Guide*), and one for child care providers (*Provider Guide*). The updated versions are on our website at [www.sncs.org](http://www.sncs.org). You may also request a copy from office staff. If you have any questions about the new handbooks, please contact your local SNCS office.

### BUDGET NEWS:

In December, California State finance officials will decide if California is on the path to gain \$4 billion more in revenue, or if the budget requires a “trigger” of \$2.5 billion in cuts to be made to education, public safety and social services. What this means for Sierra Nevada Children’s Services is that the possibility of more cuts to our funding will limit the number of families that we can assist financially with child care.

### FREE LEAD SCREENING OF ARTIFICIAL TURF:

The nonprofit Center for Environmental Health is offering free screening of artificial turf for child care programs and schools. To request a free screening, or for more information, call CEH at 510-655-3900 or email [turf@ceh.org](mailto:turf@ceh.org).

### FRAUD ALERT:

We have received numerous complaints that child care providers are requiring parents to sign their child in and out on days that care was not used. As a reminder, if the parent does sign on days that the child was not in care, this action is considered fraud, by both the provider and the parent. The parent risks losing services through our agency and will have to reimburse the cost of the care that was paid to the provider but was not really used. Also, the provider will no longer be accepted in our subsidy or referral programs.

### CAPACITY REGULATIONS for FAMILY CHILD CARE:

As a reminder, Community Care Licensing has strict capacity regulations.

- For a Small Family Child Care Home, you can provide care ONLY for 4 infants, or 6 children with no more than 3 infants, or 8 children with no more than 2 infants and 2 of the 8 children must be school age (one child at least 6 years of age and one enrolled in Kindergarten).
- For a Large Family Child Care Home, with a qualified assistant, you can provide care for 12 children with no more than 4 infants, or 14 children with no more than 3 infants and 2 of the 14 children must be school age (one child at least 6 years of age and one enrolled in Kindergarten). If there is no qualified assistant, the capacity reverts back to the requirements of a Small Family Child Care Home. Also, if you are caring for more than 12 children at a time, you must notify the parents of those children in care. And if you rent, you must have your landlord’s permission.
- An infant is a child under the age of 2 years.

### SUBSIDY ATTENDANCE SHEETS DUE DATES:

December Attendance Sheets Due at SNCS no later than 5:00 pm - Thursday, January 5, 2012  
January Attendance Sheets Due at SNCS no later than 5:00 pm - Monday, February 6, 2012  
February Attendance Sheets Due at SNCS no later than 5:00 pm - Monday, March 5, 2012





# SNCS Grass Valley News and Workshops

## SIERRA NEVADA CHILDREN'S SERVICES WORKSHOPS IN GRASS VALLEY OFFICE

For the following workshops, please call and register at: 530-272-8866 x221

December 13, 2011 6:30 – 8:30 InDidJnUs Kids Playshop for Educator and Child Care Professionals at Sierra Nevada Children's Services. Join us for a fun-filled evening of singing, dancing and playing amazing instruments from around the world. Learn the value of music and movement in the lives of children.

January 11, 2012 6:30 – 8:30 Scott Herring Licensee Advocate at Sierra Nevada Children's Services. Scott is an advocate for you, the child care provider! Have questions about zoning, or landlord/tenant issues? Come and ask Scott your "burning" licensing questions.

January 26, 2012 9am – 1pm Family Child Care Licensing Orientation at Sierra Nevada Children's Services.

February 8, 2012 6:30 – 8:30 2012 Tax Workshop for Family Child Care Providers with Catherine Claw at Sierra Nevada Children's Services. Find out the newest info for the 2012 tax year. "2012 Tax Workbook & Organizer" from Tom Copeland will be available.

## LOCAL NEWS, GRASS VALLEY

Here we are again with winter fast approaching and the holidays nearly upon us. Before you get caught up in the usual "busy-ness" and accompanying stress of the season, take a moment to think about what really matters to you. What are the things that are important and meaningful for you to do? What are the things that aren't necessary? Maybe buying tons of presents isn't as important as spending quality time playing with your children, like going for a walk or to the park, or playing in the snow with them. When we take some time to reflect on this, and breathe deeply, we can begin to eliminate much of the stress that comes along with the season. The following are some fun events to enjoy with your family.

## ONGOING HAPPENINGS:

Tots & Twos Thursdays, 10am – 11:30am at Sierra Nevada Children's Services. Free, fun activities for children, families, and educators to learn more about how children develop and learn. For more information and to reserve a spot please call 530-272-8866.

Toddler & Me Groups (Bilingual) Mondays, 9:30am – 10:30am (12-24 month olds), 11am-12pm (24-36 month olds). Free. Sponsored by Sierra Nevada Children's Services and First 5. For more info and registration call 265-0611 x223.

## OTHER COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS:

Cornish Christmas in downtown Grass Valley – arts and crafts, caroling, good family fun. Fridays, 12/2, 12/9, 12/16, 12/23 6pm.

Victorian Christmas in downtown Nevada City- arts and crafts, caroling, horse and carriage rides, roasting chestnuts, and good family fun. Wed. 12/7 (5pm), Sun. 12/11 (1pm), Wed. 12/14 (5pm), Sun. 12/18 (1pm), Wed. 12/21 (5pm).

Santa's Christmas Shoppe Saturday, December 10, 9am-12pm. Children ages 3-10 can shop for their parents, grandparents or siblings. Items .25 - .50. at Sierra Presbyterian Church, Ridge Rd. Nevada City. For more info call 265-0693.



## TRUCKEE

As winter sets in and the holidays approach we want to honor the gift of giving. Sierra Nevada Children's Services has participated in the Truckee Community Christmas gift and food basket project for many years and this year in particular with the financial shortfalls families are experiencing, it has been very rewarding to assist so many, many families seeking support. They have expressed their gratitude for the services.

Sierra Nevada Children's Services through a generous donation from the community was able to assist an uninsured family with dental follow up and treatment in collaboration with Kyle Adams DDS.

## Truckee Events

- 12/1/11: Noel Nights, Village at Northstar
- 12/2/11: Holiday Tree Lighting, Truckee Train Depot
- 12/8/11: Squaw Valley Lunafest Film Festival, Olympic Village Inn
- 1/21/12: Snow Carnival, Tahoe Donner Downhill Ski area



## SIERRA COUNTY

The advent of Full Day kindergarten is upon us; beginning November 28, 2011 families will have the option of part day or full day Kindergarten. SNCS is contacting families of Kindergarteners to poll their choices, as there is possible impact for subsidized families, providers and center based programs.

## CCIP trainings:

Our very successful Communication series will continue with two more sessions;

December: Successful communication with children of all ages

January: Shaping your environment via effective communication



# Too Many Toys

By Deborah Bohn (Babyzone.com)

**Feeling a little overwhelmed by your child's sizeable toy collection? Read on for tips to alleviate the problem of too many toys.**

**The Education Trap** You can't read a toy package these days that doesn't tout the educational advantages of the brightly colored, squeaking, vibrating object inside. All of them are designed by teams of experts to stimulate your child's neural pathways, improve their hand-eye coordination and develop their auditory awareness. Makes you wonder how anyone born before the 1980's was able to tie their own shoes, much less compose symphonies, travel through space or cure polio!

While studies have shown that bright colors and a variety of sounds and textures help babies learn about their world, that kind of stimulation is readily available in most children's homes. Those toys "are gimmicky - artificial," says Limbert, "Children grow tired of them quickly. Toys should make kids think, not just press buttons."

Family psychologist and author John Rosemond strongly agrees. "Generally speaking, store bought toys are fairly worthless," Rosemond states in his book *Making the Terrible Twos Terrific*. He explains that toys with only one function, like a wind-up train quickly become boring to small children and don't allow them to be creative or use their imaginations. Rosemond advises parents to pass up one dimensional toys for time tested favorites like blocks, Legos, crayons, finger paints and dolls that children will play with for years as their imaginations grow and their abilities to see these toys in different lights adapts with their age. Rosemond says, "Creative toys include everyday things such as empty boxes, wooden spoons, pots and pans, empty oatmeal containers, and Mom's and Dad's old clothes. A toddler will be more content playing with any of these things than a piece of expensive injection molded plastic."

Dr. Auerbach echoes this sentiment, "I recommend toys that are self directed rather than set up to do a certain thing. Buy things that children have to figure out like puzzles, stacking products and simple games."

**Keeping Up with the Joneses** Believe it or not, another common reason parents cite for buying tons of toys is because they feel they ought to. Peer pressure induced by visits to other children's homes often sends mothers running to the store for more junk. "When I saw the playrooms full of toys in my friend's homes I felt like the worst mom in the world because my daughter only had a small basket of them at home," remembers first-time mom, Jennifer Cummings. Comments from grandparents and in-laws such as, "You've got to get the new singing, rolling turtle toy!" or "She doesn't have a pretend kitchen set?" can have the same affect.

Unfortunately bringing home the latest knick-knack frequently causes visual over-stimulation for little ones. Cummings says, "It seemed like the more toys we added, the more whiny and easily bored my daughter became." Dr. Auerbach says she's seen the same affect on other children. "If you overbuy, your child will become overloaded and over stimulated." Rather than buying even more toys to stave off the inevitable baby boredom, Dr. Auerbach recommends creative interactive play between parents and children. "Build a relationship with your child based on free and mutual interaction," she advises, "Make silly sounds, turn off the noisy toys and make the 'quack-quack' of the duck yourself as you roll it across the floor together."

**Back to Basics** But why do seemingly boring household items win the toddler attention war over flashy new gadgets? Stanford University's Limbert explains, "Children are curious. If they were in the forest, they'd go grab twigs and dirt. They want to explore their surroundings; it's how they learn. Moving things, acting upon things. That's why basic materials are valuable." Other experts believe that babies love everyday items like telephones, measuring cups and old clothes because these items allow them to mimic grown-ups, which is how little people learn to act like big people.

**Now What?** So now you know that Tupperware and finger paints are all kids need to grow up to be rocket scientists, but that doesn't change the fact that you can't find your couch because of all the stuffed animals. Despite your good intentions, Grandma, Santa Claus and your credit card have all conspired to create a mountain of blinking, meowing, educational nonsense in your living room. What can you do now? The answer is in these three magical words: donate, rotate and reciprocate.

**Donate** Despite the dozens of toy options they have to choose from, each child has his own personal favorites. Set those aside and create a big pile of stuff your baby hasn't touched in months. Call your nearest homeless shelter, women's safe house or emergency nursery (for children taken out of unsafe homes) and see if they could use your extras. Church and synagogue nurseries are another great place to donate toys. Ask your doctor and dentist if their offices need an infusion of new stuff to entertain smaller patients. There's also the Salvation Army and other local thrift stores. Lots of towns have consignment stores for gently used toys. Or give the toys your child has outgrown to a neighbor with younger children.

**Rotate** If you can't bear to part with your hard earned toys, hide them instead. Stashing away half of your current plastic collection not only reduces clutter but also creates "brand new" toys when you pull them out six weeks later and conveniently stow the other half away. Babies are enthralled at the "new" items revealed in their closets! Even older children enjoy getting reacquainted with old favorites if they haven't seen them in a month or so. T not only saves spaces, it saves money too!

**Reciprocate** Every parent knows it – the only toy your child wants belongs to another kid. That's why playgroups are so popular; delighted rugrats get to go bananas in another child's house and wreak havoc on someone else's toy-box stash. It's fun for everyone... except that week's host of course. Why not make every day a playgroup day? The next time you and your friends get together with your munchkins, have everyone bring five toys to swap. Write your little one's initials in permanent marker somewhere inconspicuous and throw all the toys in a pile. Whichever toys your child gravitates toward are hers for the week! You didn't really get rid of any toys, but you gained five new ones and didn't spend a dime. You're happy. Junior is happy. What more could you ask for?



# FUN COOKIE RECIPES



## REINDEER COOKIE RECIPE

Nutter Butter Cookies  
Peanut Butter  
Raisins  
Small Pretzel Twists  
Red M & M Candies with Peanuts



### Directions:

Place a small amount of peanut butter on the top of a Nutter Butter cookie and then put a small pretzel twist on the peanut butter (letting it stick beyond the cookie) for antlers. Put two more dots of peanut butter and add raisins for eyes. Finally put a dot of peanut butter on the bottom part of the cookie and add a red M & M for a nose

## CHILDREN'S HAND COOKIES

Older children can use their hand to outline the cookies, drawing around it on the dough with a skewer and using a knife tip to cut along the line. If your child can't participate, make a pattern from a manila folder. Translucent parchment works well for the heart stencil; it will allow you to see the shape of the cookie through it.

### Ingredients

- **For Dough**
  - 2 cups sifted all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
  - 1/4 teaspoon table salt
  - 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
  - 8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter
  - 1 cup sugar
  - 1 large egg
  - 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract, for decorating
- **For Decorating**
  - 1 large egg white
  - 1 teaspoon water
  - Sanding sugar



### Directions

- In a large bowl, sift together flour, salt, and baking powder. Set aside.
- In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat together the butter and sugar on medium speed until fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add egg, and beat until smooth, about 1 minute.
- Add reserved flour mixture, and mix on low speed until thoroughly combined. Stir in vanilla. Wrap dough in plastic, and refrigerate for about 45 minutes.
- Make cookie pattern and heart stencil while wrapped dough is chilling. For the pattern, have your child trace his or her hand on a manila file folder, and cut out the tracing. You will lay this on the dough and trace around it with the tip of a paring knife. For the heart stencil, cut a heart shape from a piece of parchment paper, discarding center.
- Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. On a well-floured work surface, roll out cold dough to 1/8 inch thick. Cut out hand shapes. Transfer cookies to prepared baking sheets. Refrigerate until firm, about 15 minutes. Dough scraps may be re-rolled twice.
- To decorate the cookies with sanding sugar hearts, lay the heart stencil over a cookie. Combine the egg white with the water in a small bowl. Brush the egg wash in the heart, and sprinkle with sanding sugar. Lift stencil and repeat with remaining cookies. Bake until edges just begin to brown lightly, 8 to 10 minutes. Let cookies cool on pans for 3 minutes before transferring to wire racks to cool completely.

## HOLIDAY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

**Sierra Nevada Children's Services:** Families who need help can sign up for toys donated from the L.A. Firefighters – call 530.272.8866 x 201 to sign up

**Sierra Nevada Children's Services:** Families with a need in which no other community support is available may request assistance from the Children's Community Chest. Please visit [www.snccs.org](http://www.snccs.org) , or call 530.272.8866 ext. 222 for more information.

### Other resources:

**Dial 211 Nevada County :** will list local donation programs on the Dial211 website. To access, search for "Christmas" under "Services."

**The Salvation Army:** Families who need help can apply for toys, clothes and food - 530.274.3500

**Women of Worth:** Families who need help can apply for toys, clothes and food - 530.272.6851

**Roamin Angels Classic Car Club:** Adopted 100 families last year – 530.432.8449

**Interfaith Food Ministries:** Food distribution – 530.273.8132

**Food Bank of Nevada Count:** Food distribution – 530.272.3796

**Grass Valley Elks Lodge:** Food distribution – 530.273.8342

**United Methodist of Nevada City:** Food distribution – 530.272.1946





# Happy Holidays!

**Main Office:**

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Grass Valley, CA 95945

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We're on the Web!

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