

Winter '10

SHIELD NOTES



CONNECTING THROUGH THE COLD

Winter is potentially a hard time of the year. We face day after day of freezing temperatures, snow, ice and little sunlight. We expend vast amounts of energy shoveling, cleaning off cars, or putting on coats, scarves, hats, boots and gloves. Even a simple act like going to work, school, or the grocery store can be exhausting.

Feelings of isolation and loneliness are a frequent result of endless winter weather. Children can't go out for recess, family walks are impossible, and visiting loved ones is a struggle. That's why it's important to think about ways to combat isolation and maintain connections. How about inviting over some family members to your home for game night? Meeting a friend for lunch? Or, calling someone you haven't seen recently to talk and catch up. A steaming cup of hot chocolate and that good book you've wanted to read is a perfect wintertime evening activity. And, there's nothing better than crawling under a warm blanket and cuddling with your children.

One essential key to wintertime survival is realizing that being stuck indoors is actually an opportunity to strengthen connections. When it's blustery and lonely outside, you have the power to make it warm and friendly inside the walls of your home and family.



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Project Shield works in partnership with the community to build safe, healthy Jewish relationships and families by heightening awareness and providing education about child molestation.

For more information please contact:
Rachel Zimmerman, Project Coordinator
847 745 5405

Helpline
312 656 3669

ProjectShield@jcfs.org

TOOL BOX: SLEEPOVERS & PLAYDATES

Sleepovers and play dates are essential parts of children's lives. Here are some tips for ensuring that these events can be both fun and safe.

- Talk with the hosting family about who will be home, sleeping arrangements, and supervision.
- Review possible scenarios with your children and role play ways of responding to situations like saying "no" when something feels uncomfortable.
- Tell children that they can call you anytime – to talk, ask a question, or request that you pick them up.
- Create secret, special family codes. "I feel tired," for example, may be your code for "come get me now."
- Afterwards, ask a few questions, listen and be available in case your child needs to discuss something with you.



FAMILY RULES RULE

We know that young children, adolescents and teens are surrounded by peer pressure. It can be hard for them to go against the tide and not participate in the things that "everyone is doing". It can be equally difficult for parents to say "no" when their pleading child insists that refusing permission to do something or go somewhere will result in the destruction of their relationships and social life. One effective strategy for dealing with these challenges is to create family rules. Rules establish standards for conduct and behavior. By clearly defining what is and what isn't allowed for all family members, rules help to encourage safe, healthy homes and enforce a sense of family connectedness. "This is what WE do in our family" is a powerful statement that anchors children to parents, parents to children and siblings to each other.