

# CO-OP CAPERS

The Newsletter of the Williamsburg, Eastern Cooperative Free School

## CO-OP CALENDAR



**January** 2 (T) School Re-opens, January Tuition Due  
21 (M) **No School**, Martin Luther King's Birthday  
31 (R) School Picture Day

**February** 1 (F) School Picture Day, February Tuition Due  
4 (M) Registration deadline for current Co-ops  
11 (M) Registration deadline for former Co-ops  
14-15 (R-F) **No School**, VAECE Conference in Northern VA  
18 (M) Registration deadline for new families  
28 (R) **No School**, Teacher Work Day, Mid-Year Clean-up



Deadlines for submissions are as follows: Monday, January 28; Friday, February 29; Monday, March 31; and Wednesday, April 30. Please contact Lorelee Clark at 258-3254 for further information. We welcome news of local opportunities for family activities and/or any parent- or child-related materials. Submissions via e-mail are strongly encouraged: [loralee13@verizon.net](mailto:loralee13@verizon.net).

## Announcements

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❄️ **Parents—** ❄️  
❄️ **remember** ❄️  
❄️ **to switch** ❄️  
❄️ **your child's** ❄️  
❄️ **change of** ❄️  
❄️ **clothing for** ❄️  
❄️ **warmer** ❄️  
❄️ **clothes!** ❄️  
❄️ **Thank you.** ❄️  
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Looking for some adult discussion?  
The 2nd Tuesday Book Group looking for new members. It is a group of women who read one book a month and discuss it at the Williamsburg Regional Library, Room C from 7-9 pm on (guess what) the 2nd Tuesday of each month. We are open to all members of the community and discuss a variety of genres. Contact Juliana Smith at [juliana89@widomaker.com](mailto:juliana89@widomaker.com) for more information.

## Waiting games

Waiting has become a part of our everyday lives. The next time you hear, "How much longer?" try one of these ideas to occupy your child:

- Play word games. Start with a simple word like "up," and take turns thinking of opposites or alternative words. Examples, down, left right.
- Take all the change out of your wallet and let your children sort it. Then show them how to count it out. How much will make a dollar?
- Work on "skip" counting. You say one, she says two, you say three and so on.
- Try an alphabet search. One person finds an object that begins with the letter "a." The next finds something beginning with "b," and so on.
- Finally, "I spy with my little eye" is always a good game.

(contributed by Julianna Smith, Parent Ed. Committee, adapted from Resources for Educators, [www.refonline.com](http://www.refonline.com))

## **Alternatives To Punishment**

- Use positive reinforcement.
- Create a positive environment.
- Say yes as much as possible.
- Save no for the important things.
- Use natural consequences.
- Use logical consequences.
- Use restitution.
- Leave it up to your child.
- Compromise.
- State your expectations & get out of the way.
- Give specific instructions.
- Give a reason.
- Offer help.
- Give a choice.
- Redirect your child.
- Remove your child.
- Get to the root of the problem.
- Make positive statements.
- Give in occasionally.
- Give your child time to agree.
- Simply insist.
- Make rules.
- Model appropriate behavior.
- Use the golden rule.
- Ignore some behavior.
- Avoid nagging and threats.
- Distract your child.
- Use humor.
- Make it a game.
- Be willing to admit mistakes.
- Stop and think before you act.
- Don't make a big fuss over little things.
- Stick to routines.
- Don't hurry your children too much.
- Give yourselves time.



## Crafty Kids: Avoiding Winter Doldrums



- Ink pads (non-toxic, washable)
- paper
- black pen or marker
- fingers

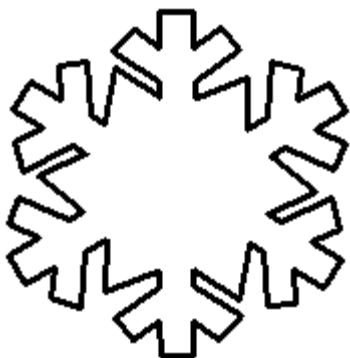
With these four ingredients you could make a circus, zoo, farm, aquarium, kitty village, bug bonanza, forest of flowers, parking lot, monster town...anywhere your child's interests lay!

Simply make fingerprints on paper and then draw in key elements (nose, wheels, tails, eyes, etc.) to create beautiful scenes, bookmarks or cards.

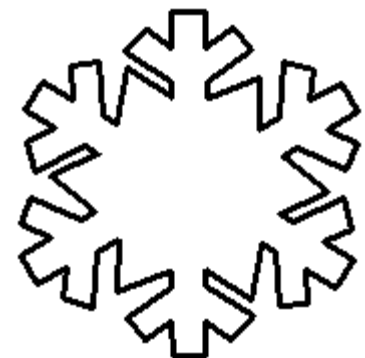
Make a game of it for 2 or more: each person stamps their paper with fingerprints, then switch papers to draw on the other's marks for a wonderful collaborative picture.

### Winter Tree Craft

The craft is simple enough for young kids to contribute but still fun for even mom to make. Use the snowflake template at bottom of this page or another template of your choosing. All you need is paper, scissors, glue, and something to color with. For a change of pace, try using different mediums than you typically do, such as paints or pastels. Color pieces and then cut out the snowflakes. Glue the snowflakes onto the tree. Use crayons, paints or collage materials to further decorate the page (white cotton balls for clouds works very nicely!)  
(dltk-holidays.com)



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# EARTH CORNER



## Nature's Alphabet

*Check out nature's alphabet! Letters are hiding on the ground, in the trees, on the water, and in the sky. When you look at the world a little differently, letter shapes pop out at you from everywhere.*

- Go outside with your eyes open wide. Start by looking for the letters in your first name. Found them all? Now try the rest of the alphabet.
- To see something new, try a different view. Lie on your back and look up at the sky. Get down low on your hands and knees. Stand on your head to see an upside-down scene. Over, under, all around. Up high and on the ground. Letters can be hiding almost anywhere.
- Examine the patterns in clouds, mud, and snow; in branches and leaves; in sunlight and shadow. Look at big shapes and small ones. Use binoculars or a magnifying glass to really zoom in.
- As you discover every letter, a picture will help you remember it better. Carry a camera or sketchbook and take your letters home as photos or drawings.

(National Wildlife Foundation website)

### Talking to Your Child to Ensure a Strong Future for Forests

My son and I talk a lot about nature. Awhile ago the topic was food chains and the importance of plants. He was interested in understanding the different ways we rely on plants: for food, shelter, the ways all life is linked to them. If you talk with your children about this issue, you may want to keep the subsequent information in mind, and consider asking and answering the following questions:

Forests provide habitat for more than half of all species living on land, (*What animals live in forests? Where do they live in a forest?*) help filter pollutants out of the air and water, (*Where do these pollutants come from and what are they? How do trees filter them?*) and prevent soil erosion (*How do trees/forests do this?*). Trees also play a major role in regulating global temperatures by absorbing heat-trapping carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it in their cell walls. Unfortunately, they and all of their attributes are threatened by deforestation.

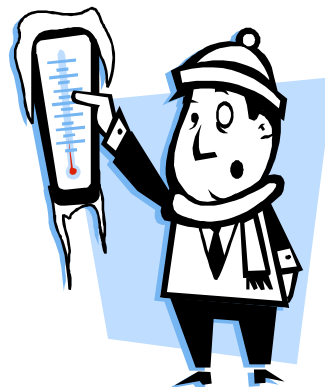
The Earth loses more than 18 million acres of forestland every year—an area larger than Ireland—according to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). (*How big is Ireland on a map? How many animals and people are affected by this loss?*) When trees are cleared, their stored carbon is released back into the atmosphere. (*What effect does this have for global warming?*)

The best way to reduce emissions from tropical deforestation is to help ensure these trees are not cut down in the first place. (*How can we help make sure trees aren't cut down?*)

You and your family can consider answering this last question and I'll provide more ideas for you in next month's newsletter.

*(statistical information from greentips@ucsusa.org, 9/07)*

## Too Cold to Go Outside?



**Make a Scrapbook:** Pull out photos of past vacations and organize them in photo albums. Let the kids create their own vacation scrapbooks by leaving space for them to share their thoughts about each photo. It's a great way to remember all the sunny days you enjoyed together and years later, the scrapbooks will provide a world of warm memories. Also encourage them to create a scrapbook of their past school year. Give them a photo album where they can place their report cards, school photos and other mementos from the past year. Encourage them to write down their memories.

**Make a regular book:** Help your child make a book out of construction paper. You can write down the stories they make up (with a little prompting) and they can decorate it.

**Jazz Up Bedrooms:** Let the kids have fun adding decorations to their bedroom walls. Accent wallpaper is now available in various sticker-type (no rolls) designs, allowing the kids to add them to the walls wherever and in whatever pattern they want.

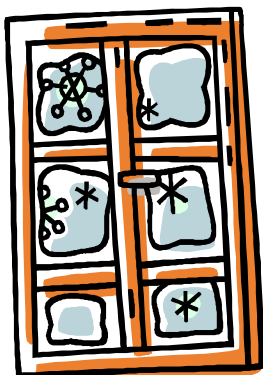
Allowing them to add decorations also may spark new interest in organizing (and cleaning) their rooms, another perfect way to spend part of a rainy day.

**Read Together:** If everyone wants to get out of the house, consider a trip to the library or bookstore. Find a book everyone will enjoy, and then come home and read it aloud together. Taking turns reading gets the entire family involved and sharpens reading and language skills. Top the reading session off with a batch of homemade cookies.

**Plan a winter camp-in:** Bring out the sleeping bags and set up your campsite in the living room. Use flashlights, tell stories, eat popcorn, and if you have a fireplace, roast hot dogs or toast marshmallows.

**Create a real treasure hunt:** Hide a box filled with old costume jewelry. Give clues or a treasure map with an X marking the spot.

**Create Thank-you notes:** Make artwork to send as thank you notes for gifts or "thinking of you" cards for grandparents or people in the community who are sick or homebound, or who would just find joy in getting something special in the mail. Remember to let your child put the stamp on the envelope and put the flag up on the mailbox.



**Get help paying bills:** Let your child help when you pay your bills by letting him/her put stamps and return mailing labels on envelopes.

(contributed in part by Julianna Smith, Parent Ed. Committee; adapted from [homemadesimple.com](http://homemadesimple.com) and *101 Ways to be a Special Mom*)

## Turning Things Around By Debra Monte Wetzel (motheringmagazine.com)

It was not a particularly great day right from the start. My eleven-year-old was suffering from altered hormone levels (as was I). The harder we tried to reach a common ground the more divided we became. And unfortunately, our mode of communication consisted mostly of shouting at each other instead of speaking. My seven-year-old's voice was elevated an octave or two above normal as he tried to make his point several times. The noise level in the house was gaining momentum. My two-year-old insisted on playing 52-card pickup as he raced through the house on his tiny trike, narrowly escaping peril at every turn. He did manage to stop to nurse every minute or two and then carry on making messes throughout the house. Fortunately, my nine-year-old was no trouble at all. But his continuous piano playing in the next room, sounding wonderful of course, just added to the difficulty.

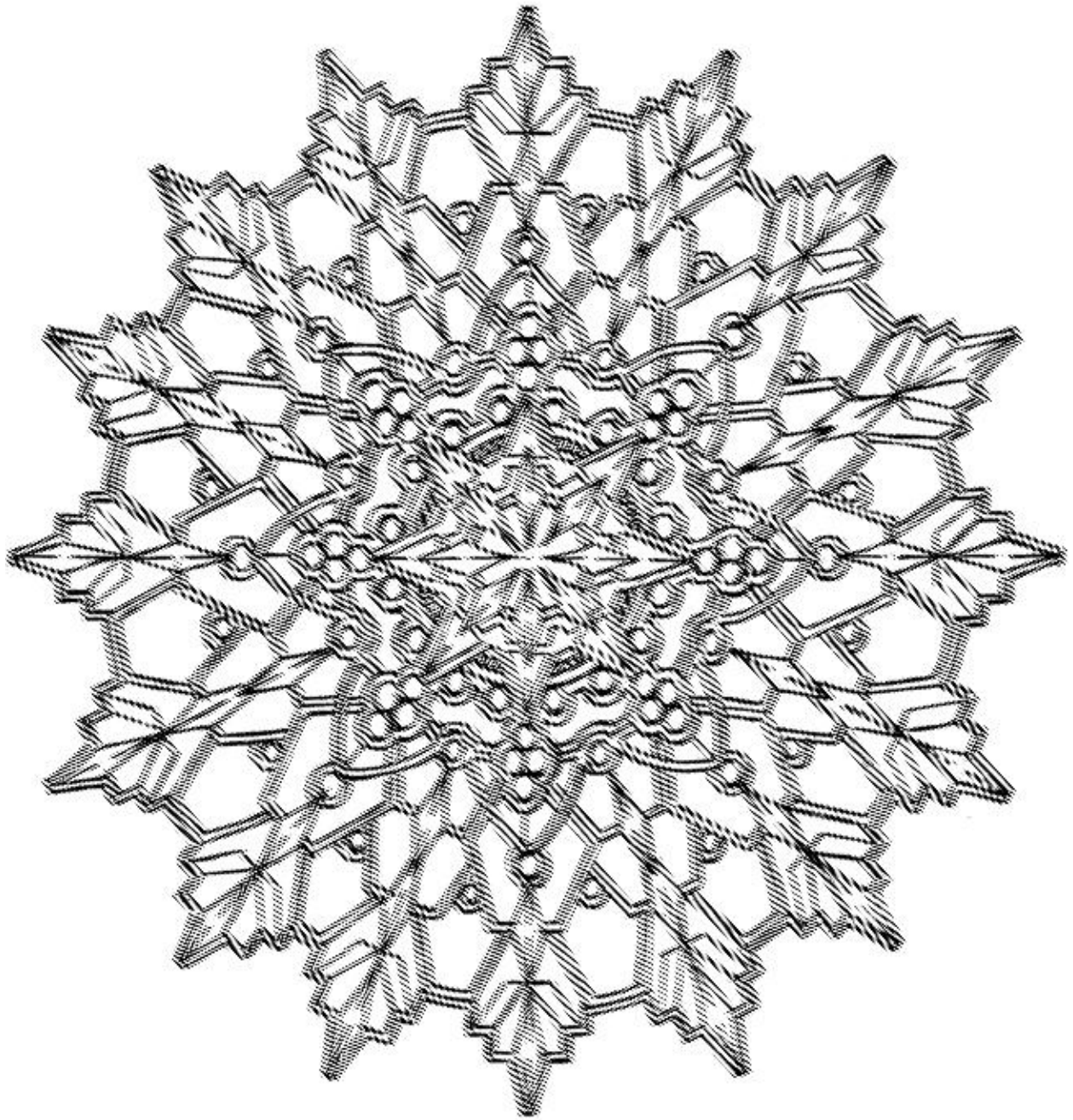
Things finally came to a head as we made our way through the aisles of the grocery store at the bewitching hour before supper. Of course everyone was both tired and hungry. And we were totally out of everything at home so we needed to pick up more than just a few things. [M]y two-year-old insisted on jumping in and out of the kid-friendly car/shopping cart as I tried desperately to push through the narrow and crowded aisles full of non-amused shoppers. We got so many dirty looks I actually began to break a sweat. After an hour of torture for all of us, we finally made our way out to the car where the baby refused to get into his car seat. Stopping just short of crying myself, I bribed him with a lollipop just so we could get home.

Once home he proceeded to lie on the floor in full tantrum mode. I walked around his little body spread across the floor as I put the groceries away and prepared dinner. About an hour later after dinner was served and cleaned up, I was finally able to take him up for his bath. But we took a detour instead.

While looking at his beautiful little face on the way up the stairs I was able to see a glimpse of him once again as an infant. The light must have touched his large green eyes and his tiny mouth just right. Now that he is a two-year-old, it seemed we were both often frazzled and frustrated. Instead of [going] to the tub as planned, (where we'd likely struggle again), we headed to the bedroom. I took an old photo album down from the shelf in the closet. He and I lied on our tummies on top of the bed and spent 20 minutes going back in time.

It was truly wonderful, and just what we needed. It enabled me to slow down enough to appreciate how quickly time passes us by. In pausing and cultivating a few moments of gratitude, we were able to relax, reflect and turn the day around. It seems that only a moment ago he was wrinkled and pink; now he stands before me defiant and strong. Those traits, while difficult for the two of us to deal with on a daily basis, will refine and help him as he grows. I am raising him to be powerful and strong in this world. I can't be angry when he is only exerting the freewill I wish him to possess.

I wouldn't want it any other way.



Once I caught a snowflake inside my mittened hand.  
Its frosty tablecloth of lace was delicate and grand.

—An excerpt of "Snowflake Poem" by Rebecca Kai Dotlich