



Holiday Edition 2020

Oakwood Academy

Individualized Education JK-12

Director's Message



It has been a joyful December at Oakwood Academy and I am thankful to have ended this year in a fun, safe and meaningful way! This year has been full of new experiences and through it all, we can attest to the importance of the strong relationships among staff, students and families, which have guided us through them. I have been impressed that through these challenges, we have all become more open, creative and connected individuals. Our joint efforts in supporting the healthy, happy and engaged child has remained true. We have proven this year that together we can overcome many hurdles and reach more achievements than ever before. I am overjoyed to be a part of this community and to have been a part of this extraordinary community in the face of adversity. As the year comes to an end, I'd like to thank you for keeping open hearts and minds to all possibilities and for working together to keep the academic, social and emotional goals of each student on track. I look forward to 2021 bringing on new adventures and even more achievements together.

Home for the Holidays

Though it is nice to think about the simplicity of being home for the holidays, it can be stressful to think about everyone being home for longer periods of time. I would like every Oakwood family to be aware that we are here for you and will help you in any way we can to make this break a joyful one! Teachers and Therapists have planned at-home activities to keep you all thinking, relating and communicating together as a family.

We are all looking forward to sharing how your family spent the holidays and hear about all of the new memories you've created! If you have any additional requests or concerns about this upcoming break, please do not hesitate to let us know how we can help!

Thank you and Happy New Year!

Thank you once again to all the families who shared their heartfelt feedback to our dedicated teachers and therapists! Your words of gratitude go a long way after long days and I know each member of our team appreciates it!

Thank you to all the teachers and therapists for their endless efforts to create healthy, happy and safe activities for students and families; I hope you have a safe and merry holiday break as well.

Wishing you a warm and safe holiday and a Happy New Year!

Trillian Taylor, Director

DATES TO REMEMBER

December 18
to January 5
Winter Holiday
(no school)

January 6
Return to School

January 27
Casual Day
(optional)

Dear Parents and Families of Oakwood...

As we enter into our Winter Break, we want to offer our sincerest gratitude to you. Your resilience, flexibility and understanding over this first term has been inspiring. Your dedication to your children, their success during this unprecedented time and with that, your choice to make Oakwood a part of their success has fueled us in our own dedication to our students.

During this break, we hope you and your family take time to rest and recuperate. Allow yourself to cherish the small moments and enjoy the company of family, whether in person or through a Zoom gathering. Although this holiday season will be different, it will bring about new and exciting traditions your family can cherish for years to come. Whether it is staying inside together to bake some new holiday treats or simply going on a winter walk to take in nature's bounties, we hope this time will inspire moments of possibility and positivity.

Within this mini newsletter, we have included two fun activities created by Oakwood staff to get you into the creative, holiday spirit!

Have a wonderful Winter Break and see you back in the new year!

Sincerely,

Oakwood Academy Staff



Winter Concert

Although our Winter Concert looked very different this year, Oakwood students and staff used their teamwork and creativity to create unique performances which spanned a wide range of topics and themes. Some chose to focus on hibernating animals, while others decorated trees and gingerbread houses in preparation for the holiday season. Students adapted quickly and with impressive conviction to our unconventional performance spaces to help create this memorable performance. We hope you and your families have enjoyed viewing this special performance so far and that it is a keepsake you can return to during your Winter Break.

by Ms. Nicola

Festive Feedback Winner

Thank you to all of the Oakwood families who submitted their festive feedback over the past couple of weeks. We really appreciate all the kind words you shared about members of our team! We want to send big congratulations to Jennifer, the winner of our parent giveaway. Jennifer won a package containing mindfulness and regulation tools as well as a gift card to enjoy some sweet treats on us!

Weighted Friend



Weighted blankets, lap pads, vests and shoulder weights provide a great source of input for individuals who are anxious or have sensory processing difficulties. These items are often used to provide deep pressure input that targets the sensory systems and supports a child who is feeling overwhelmed or is seeking proprioception to regulate their arousal levels. They can be useful to help a child remain focused and provide gentle regulation and relaxation.

An easy and fun DIY is creating your own weighted animal or item!

You can choose to remove the fluff from a stuffed animal or create your own item using different materials. Encourage your child to think of some different animals they might like to use. Some animals, such as a snake, work better if the goal is to use the animal at the table as a shoulder weight or a pillowcase can be used to make a weighted lap pad.

You could also encourage your child to think of their own animal or monster and use items from around the home to create it! This is a chance for your child to use their ideation and creativity. Provide scaffolding to help support the interaction and have some materials available that could be repurposed. Use high affect and wonderment statements such as, "I wonder what we could use this for..."

When filling your weighted friend it is important to remember that it should not exceed more than 5-10% of the child's bodyweight and that they are only used for short periods of time and when supervised. Some kitchen items make great weight for your weighted friend. Natural products like rice, flour, beans or sand make great filler! You can then brainstorm with your child how to fill the bear, as it can be a little messy. You could decide on different utensils, make your own funnel or it could become a messy tactile play activity!

Once the item is full and squishable, you can seal it up using hot glue or sewing! You can continue this interaction by coming up with a name for your animal or monster. Continue to expand the play in creative ways and incorporate role play or pretend play!

by Ms. Jodie

Corn Flake Wreath



Here is a fun, easy recipe that you and your kids can do together over the Winter Break!

Ingredients

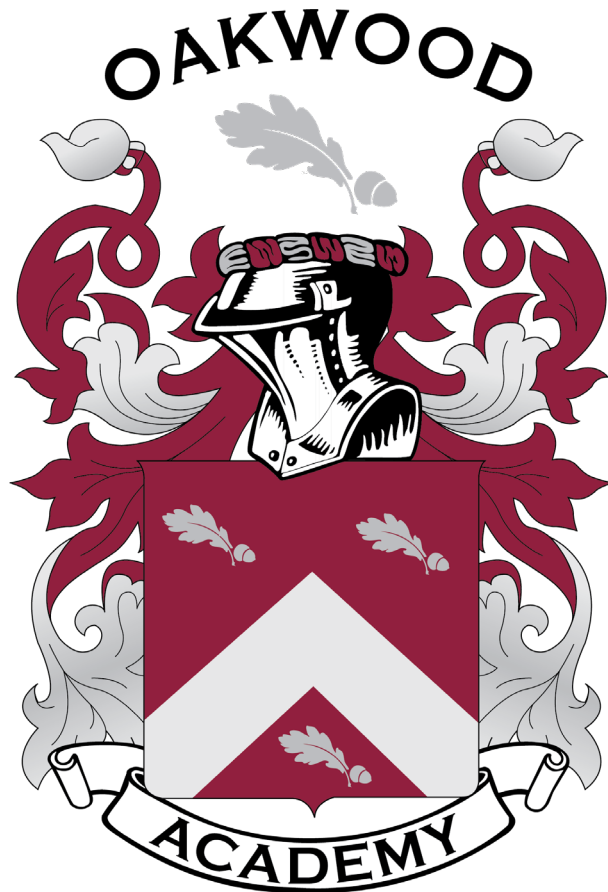
½ cup unsalted butter/non-dairy butter alternative/solid coconut oil
6-7 cups corn flakes cereal
6½ cups mini marshmallows/Dandies
½ tsp salt
1¼ tsp green food coloring
3 oz. cinnamon red hots/red Smarties

Instructions

1. Measure ingredients. *Have your child (ren) help you measure out all ingredients into separate bowls. For those working on counting, count how many "scoops" or "spoons" you will need for each ingredient. For those working on more complex math, have them use measuring cups to find the measurement, or work on adding measurements together. For example: if you need 6 cups of corn flakes and you have a 2-cup measuring cup, help your child solve for how many times they will need to fill their measuring cup to reach the desired amount.*
2. Now, this step is for grown-ups, or requiring adult supervision for older children. In a large pot, melt butter and marshmallows. Once melted, take pot off the heat. *If your child is able to assist, you can have them watch the mixture with you; use "I wonder..." statements to expand the interaction. "I wonder how long this will take to melt..."; "I wonder what will melt first: the butter or the marshmallows..."*
3. Stir in salt and green food coloring. *Have your child help with measuring, or squeezing the food colouring into the mixture.*
4. Mix in corn flakes. Stir to combine everything well. *This is a great step for kids to get involved, as the stirring is going to be a bit hard and it will provide some GREAT proprioceptive feedback and hand strengthening opportunities while stirring in the cereal. You can also focus on bilateral coordination by holding the bowl with one hand and using the spoon to mix with the other.*
5. Spread wax paper onto a baking sheet and spray with non-stick cooking spray (or wipe with an oily paper towel).
6. Take a large dollop of the mixture (about 1½ tbsp.) and roll it between hands into a 4-5 inch log. *This is another great step for ALL children to help with! Not only does this step provide great tactile feedback with the sticky mixture, it also allows them to see how manipulating something in your hands can change its shape and structure.*
7. Place the rolled out log onto wax paper. Connect and push the two ends together to form a wreath shape.
8. Repeat until done. Place 3 cinnamon red hots or other red candy on the corn flake wreaths. *Have your child count out the candies going on each wreath. You can also get creative and decorate them in new ways!*
9. Set in the fridge to harden until ready to eat!

Recipe: <https://www.swankyrecipes.com/christmas-corn-flake-wreath-cookies.html>

by Ms. Nicola



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