

the JAMES MOWAT Messenger

December 2023



Dear Parents/Guardians,

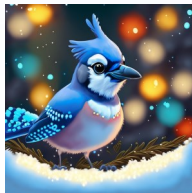
December has arrived and the holiday season is upon us. The holiday season is a great time to reflect on the past year. We would like to thank our staff for their dedication, enthusiasm, and commitment to students. We are also grateful to our Parent Council and Parent Advisory Association for their initiatives to enhance and support our school.

This year we won't be having a Christmas Concert, instead we will be having a Family Fun Night. We hope that you'll be able to join us for a fun-filled evening on December 14th.

The school will be closed to staff and students December 25th to January 5th for Winter Break. Classes resume on Monday, January 8th.

Wishing you a wonderful holiday season and a Happy New Year!

Mr. Stacey Boyko, Principal
Mrs. Amaya Ortigosa, Assistant Principal



December at a Glance:

Dec 1	Hot Lunch (Boston Pizza)
Dec 1	Report cards published
Dec 3	Parent Teacher Interview Booking - closes
Dec 6	Early Dismissal
Dec 6	Parent Teacher Interviews (4:30-7:30pm)
Dec 7	Parent Teacher Interviews (4:00-7:00pm)
Dec 14	Family Fun Night (5:30- 7:00pm)
Dec 25-Jan 5	No School - Christmas Break

Looking ahead to January/February:

Jan 1-5	No School - Christmas Break
Jan 8	Classes resume
Jan 8	Parent Council/Parent Advisory Association Meeting - 6pm
Jan 10	Early Dismissal
Jan 19	Winter Formal Dance
Jan 31	No School - PL Day
Feb 7	Early Dismissal
Feb 8-9	No School - Teachers' convention
Feb 19	No School - Family Day



Family Fun Night



Our Family Fun Night will be held on Thursday, December 14, from 5:30-7:00pm. Events will be held inside of James Mowat School. There will be a scavenger hunt, crafts, story reading, cookie decorating, caroling and more. Parents/caregivers, we are asking that you bring a pair of indoor shoes to wear inside for the evening. You can store your outdoor shoes at your child's door. We will be collecting donations for the Fort Saskatchewan Food Bank, so please bring a non-perishable food donation.



Parent-Teacher Interviews—Dec 6 and 7

Report cards will be published on December 1 at the end of the day. Parents can view their child's report card by logging into their [PowerSchool Parent Portal](#) and clicking on the "Report Card" button on the left hand side. Please note: Report cards cannot be accessed through the PowerSchool App.

Parent-Teacher Interviews will be on December 6th (4:30-7:30) and December 7th (4-7pm). Interviews will be set for 10 minute blocks for an individual conference time with the teacher.

All interviews will be scheduled through the online booking system on our website until December 3rd. Please go to <http://www.jamesmowat.ca/bookings> and select either 'December 2023—Parent/Teacher/Student Interviews' or 'December 2023 - Kindergarten - P/T/S Interviews' to book your time.

Please note: Kindergarten P/T interviews will be on December 6th (4:30-7:30) and December 7th (9-11:40am and 4-7pm)

Lost and Found

Our lost and found is overflowing! If you're child has lost something please ensure to have them check the lost and found items laid out on the tables by the library. Any items that are not claimed by December 15th will be donated.





Chess Club

The chess club will be in full swing for the month of December, starting Tuesday, December 5th in Mr. Pel's room during the lunch hour recess. Any students in grades 4-6 are welcome to join and will be introduced to the wonderful game of chess! They will be shown how to play the game as well as introduced to some basic chess strategies. All chess levels are welcome! Come sign up and "check" out the fun!

James Mowat Express

The James Mowat Express is almost back up and running! On December 5th all students will bring their pack of golden tickets home! The Mowat Express will start its journey to the North Pole on December 6th. For every day when your child reads 15 minutes or more at home (or for Kindergarten when you read to your child) sign a ticket and return it to school. We will keep track of all the tickets by moving the James Mowat Express train along its track. Make sure to check out our train bulletin board at Interviews or Family Fun Night to see how it is moving along! We have over 4000 km to travel so make sure you keep reading! If we reach the North Pole we will have a full school treat with Hot Chocolate and Candy Canes! Happy Reading!

Dressing for the Weather

We would like to remind students to dress for the weather and wear their mittens/gloves, snow pants, boots and hat at recess. Also please clearly label your child's belongings. Clearly labeled items assist us in returning items to the rightful owners should they be misplaced.

Nut Aware School

James Mowat is a Nut Aware School. Several students and staff at the school suffer from allergies. The most prominent allergy is one to nuts and nut products. Elk Island Public Schools has a "Nut Aware" strategy. Please do not send any nuts or nut products to school. Thank You for your cooperation.



Snacks and Cutlery

Please ensure your child remembers to pack all of their needed supplies for the day. Students are reminded to bring their lunch, snacks, and water bottle each day, as well as any needed utensils for their snack/lunch.



Fee Waiver Application Deadline

If circumstances exist where you're unable to pay school or transportation fees, you can apply to have [fees waived](#) by submitting an [Application for a Waiver of Fees](#). The application deadline is Dec. 15, 2023. If you're new to the Division, the deadline is the latter of Dec. 15, 2023, or 45 days after registration.

To access your fee information, simply log in to the [PowerSchool Parent Portal](#) and go to "Student Fees." There you can view your fees and pay them online using Visa, MasterCard or debit card—when available from your financial institution. All fees are due within 30 days of being posted.

Don't forget to also log in to the PowerSchool Parent Portal regularly throughout the year. Fees are often added to your child's account to cover the cost of various school activities such as field trips, class projects, extracurricular activities and more.

For more information about school fees, waivers and payment deadlines, visit www.eips.ca/schools/fees and [James Mowat Elementary Fees](#). Alternatively, contact Sherri Jensen, 780-922-1272.

Has your contact information recently changed?

Have you recently moved or has your contact information changed? James Mowat Elementary encourages families to review the information the Division has on file to ensure it's up to date. Using the **Student Information Update** available through the [PowerSchool Parent Portal](#), families can review the current information on file for each student—including addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, parent and guardian information, emergency contacts, medical details and other related information—and submit any updates needed.

Reviewing and updating the form ensures the school and Division have the most up-to-date information regarding your child. Your review is especially important as the Division prepares for 2024-25 registration processes beginning in the new year.

NOTE: Only submit updates for the changes that have already taken place. If you're moving later this school year, you'll submit the necessary updates to your information through the **Student Information Update** after you've moved.

If you have questions about the form or any trouble with your Parent Portal account, contact the school office at 780-922-1272.



Recorders

We would like to remind parents and students in grade 5 and 6 that recorders must be brought back to school. If your child needs to order a new recorder, the order forms are in the music room and the cost will be \$10.00. Please do not buy your child a recorder from the dollar store, we have ordered them through the school. Students in grade 4 get their first recorder bought by the school, which will be given to them after the Christmas break.

Christmas Break

James Mowat Elementary will close for the Christmas break at the end of the day on Friday, Dec. 22, 2023. The school will reopen on Monday, Jan. 8, 2024. During this time, if you have any school-related questions or concerns, contact Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) Central Services at 780-464-3477.

EIPS Central Services Christmas Break Hours

Closed Dec. 25, 2023 to Jan. 1, 2024

Open Jan. 2, 2024; 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

*for location and contact information visit www.eips.ca.

From everyone at Elk Island Public Schools, we wish all of you a happy holiday season and a wonderful New Year.

Kindergarten Registration Starts Soon!

Is your child turning five on or before Dec. 31, 2024? If so, it's almost time to register for kindergarten.

Kindergarten registration opens for the 2024-25 school year on Feb. 1, 2024.

To help families prepare, Elk Island Public Schools has put together an online [EIPS Kindergarten Tool kit](#) to make the transition as smooth as possible. The kit includes information on registration, important dates, programming options, what to expect, eligibility, how to find your designated school, transportation and more.

Additional information regarding James Mowat Elementary kindergarten program is available at [James Mowat Elementary](#)



Returning Student Registration: 2024-25

Mark your calendars! Returning student registration for the 2024-25 school year will take place Feb. 8-21, 2024.

Families of all current students—with the exception of graduating Grade 12 students—must complete the process to confirm the school their child plans to attend in the 2024-25 school year or advise the Division of their plans not to return to EIPS. Additionally, students who want to attend a non-designated school need to make that request through the returning student registration process—acceptance is based on available space. Watch for more details in the new year.

FNMI Corner...

The 7 Grandfather Teachings

The Seven Sacred Teachings (sometimes called Grandfather Teachings) are teachings that many Indigenous Peoples have learned from elders in their community. Elders are knowledge keepers who help ensure the continuity of culture. These teachings have been passed down from generation to generation and continue to be used today. The 7 Grandfather teachings are as follows:

Love – represented by the Eagle

Truth – represented by the Turtle

Bravery – represented by the Bear

Respect – represented by the Buffalo

Humility – represented by the Wolf

Honesty – represented by the Sabe

Wisdom – represented by the Beaver

Over the next several months students are learning about these teachings during Circles and with our First Nations, Métis and Inuit advisors. In December we will be closing our work on Respect and beginning to explore Eagle (Love).



Lunch Supervisors needed!

Are you interested in Earning \$20.67/day? Are you a stay at home parent/guardian or retired?

WE ARE CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR SUBSTITUTE NOON HOUR SUPERVISORS TO WORK ON A CASUAL - AS NEEDED BASIS

Time of shift would be 11:50 am 12:50 pm (approx.)

If you are interested, please apply online at EIPS.ca/careers and look for Noon Supervisor (JMW)



Parent Council & Parent Advisory Association Corner...

Next Parent Council/Parent Advisory Association Meetings:

No meeting in December. Next meeting is on January 8, 2024 at 6:00pm (library). All parents/guardians are welcome to attend. If you are interested in bringing your kids along, please send an email to jamesmowatpaa@gmail.com, by the Friday before the meeting, to ensure we have an appropriate number of babysitters.

Parent Advisory Association Fundraising:

Upcoming Hot Lunch:

Boston Pizza—December 1, 2023

Purdy's Fundraiser:

Purdy's Holiday Fundraiser orders will be arriving the week of December 16th.

Winter Formal Dance:

Watch for details coming home about the Winter Formal Dance on January 19, 2024 organized by Parent Council/Parent Advisory Association.

We appreciate your ongoing support of our fundraisers!



Your Future in MIND

Spread the Word: EIPS is Hiring Substitute Educational Assistants

Do you know someone who may be interested in part-time, flexible work as a substitute educational assistant (EA)? Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) is hiring—spread the word!

EAs are integral to the school team, assisting teachers with instructional and non-instructional tasks in the classroom and other school activities. Whether it's working one-on-one with individual students or with a small group of students in a class or special program, EAs provide support and assistance to help students achieve success.

Substitutes are needed to fill positions at all school locations until the end of the school year. The application deadline is **December 8**. If you know someone who'd be great in this role, encourage them to [apply today](#).

Share Your Thoughts on Budget Planning for 2024-25

Alberta Education allocates funds to school boards to fulfill their delegated responsibilities of providing education programs for students in kindergarten to Grade 12. As part of Elk Island Public Schools' (EIPS) commitment to stakeholder engagement and to continue allocating resources according to local priorities, the Division conducts an annual budget planning survey to seek input from staff, families, Grade 12 students and community partners.

The survey is voluntary, anonymous and takes about five to 10 minutes to complete. The survey questions suggest possible budget areas for EIPS to focus its resources, which align with the Division's current [Four-Year Education Plan](#). If you believe there are other areas where the Division should concentrate its resources, you can also indicate what these are. EIPS will consider all budget planning input to guide future decision-making.

COMPLETE THE SURVEY NOW

Survey closes Dec 20, 2023

Grade 12 students will complete the survey at school.

Thank you for sharing your input to help inform Division planning.



Your Future in MIND ●

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from the Board of Trustees

I want to extend warm holiday wishes to all students, staff and families on behalf of the Elk Island Public Schools Board of Trustees.

We're grateful to have school communities full of hard-working families committed to the success of their children. Education doesn't just happen in school, it happens at home too—in every homework assignment completed, every textbook chapter read and every test reviewed. Thank you for taking the time out of your day to cultivate learning at home, so that students are eager to strive for their best at school the next day. We also appreciate the countless hours school councils put into planning events and appreciate all the people who volunteer at and attend them. Your support is invaluable.

We hope you enjoy all the holiday concerts and festivities happening at your schools, and that you get some well-deserved rest during the break. To each and every person, have a wonderful holiday season and a healthy and happy New Year.

We look forward to seeing everyone back at school on Jan. 8, 2024.

Merry Christmas and happy holidays,
Cathy Allen
EIPS Board Chair

What are the “winter blues” or seasonal affective disorder?

Seasonal Affective Disorder or SAD occurs in up to 17% of people, and often is seen in more than 1 family member. It is a type of depression that usually happens in the colder months, when the days are shorter.

Winter blues impacts about 15% of Canadians and involves a lower mood or waves of emotions in the colder months.

These tend to be more common in adults, but can still show up in children and youth. If you see signs in yourself or your children, speak to a healthcare provider.

Ways to combat “winter blues”

If you notice your children have lower moods in the winter, there are some strategies that may help:

- Open curtains and allow natural light in your space
- Spend time outdoors and get fresh air
- Get regular exercise and eat healthy food
- Talk to a doctor or a therapist
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist about vitamin D supplements
- Help your child understand what increases their stress and how they can better manage it

Ways to combat “winter blues” as a family

- Watch a funny show or movie together; make a night of it!
- Put on your favourite music and have a dance party
- Make a winter bucket list, come up with some activities the whole family is interested in
- Try new recipes
- Create new family traditions
- Have conversations and check in with each other if you notice any changes in behaviour

Stress Busters

Stress can impact your overall mood and wellbeing. If you notice yours or your children's moods are fluctuating in the cold winter months, you may need to take extra special care. This could include things like:

- Deep breathing strategies
- Try “mindful crafts” or “stress reduction crafts for kids”
- Mindfulness strategies like focusing on your 5 senses (5 things you see, 4 things you touch, 3 things you hear, 2 things you smell, 1 think you taste)

MORE RESOURCES

[Winter Blues and SAD](#)

[Parent Information Series | AHS](#)

[Mindfulness for Kids](#)

Information on mental health, community supports, programs and services in your area:



Addiction Services Help Line
1-866-332-2322

Mental Health Help Line
1-877-303-2642



Caregiver Education Team Newsletter

December 2023



Alberta Health Services is proud to offer FREE online programming to caregivers of school-age children and youth as well as adults in the community who want to learn more about addiction and mental health topics.

Sessions are offered online through the Zoom conferencing application. A link to access the online session will be sent by email to those who have registered for the session.

Caregiver Education Sessions

Parenting Strategies for Positive Mental Health

For parents and caregivers of children in grades K-6

Part 1:

Wednesday, December 6
12:00 – 1:00 pm

Part 2:

Wednesday, December 13
12:00 – 1:00 pm

Adult Education Sessions

More than Just a Bad Day

Understanding Depression

For adults supporting their own wellness or the wellness of youth (grades 7-12)

Wednesday, December 20
12:00 – 1:00 pm

Participant Feedback

"I appreciated the delivery method of an hour webinar over the lunch hour."

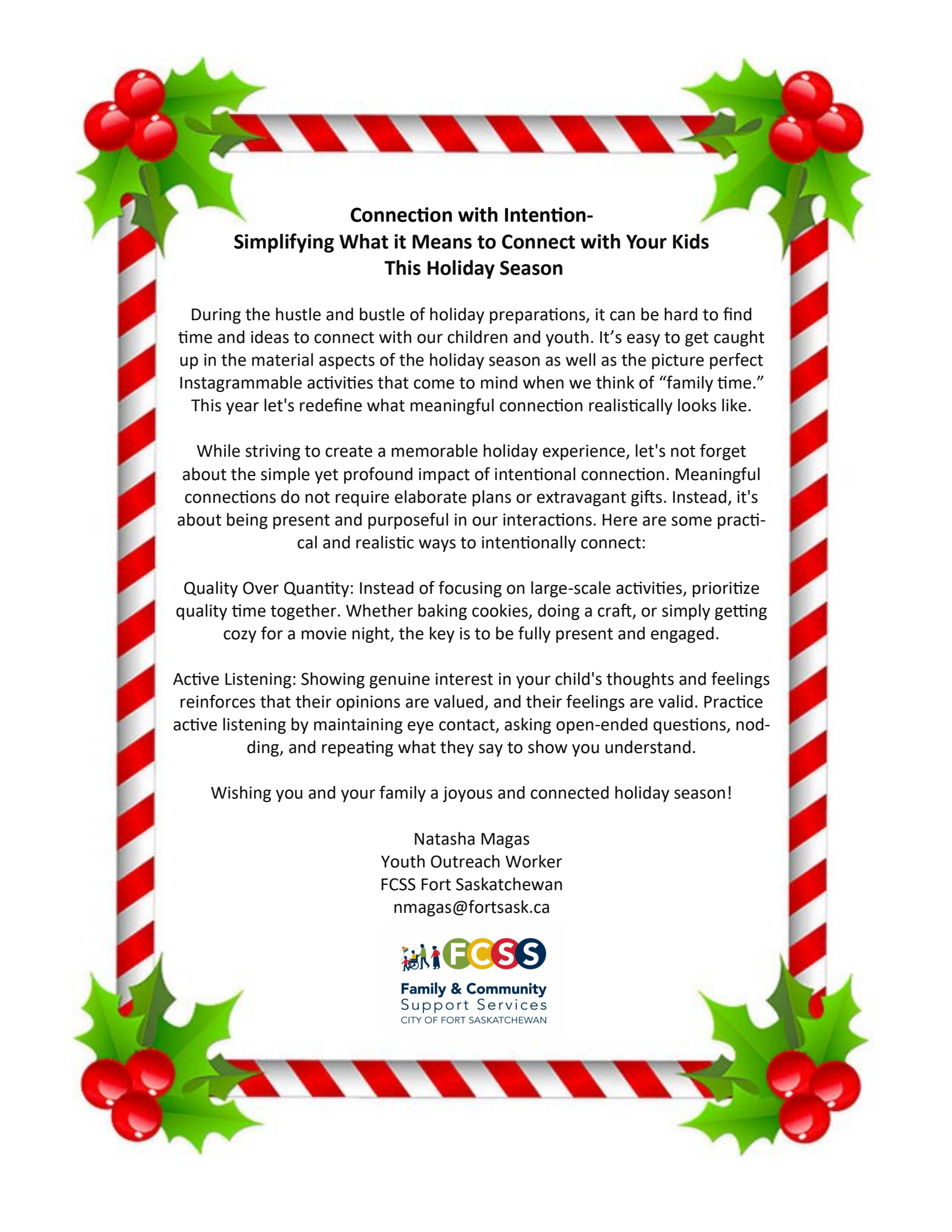
"I thought the use of chat / Q&A functions were also smart so that folks could still participate but without pulling the session off track."

Sessions at a Glance



Professional Practice & Education
Addiction & Mental Health
Edmonton Zone

For more information, visit www.cyfcaregivereducation.ca



Connection with Intention- Simplifying What it Means to Connect with Your Kids This Holiday Season

During the hustle and bustle of holiday preparations, it can be hard to find time and ideas to connect with our children and youth. It's easy to get caught up in the material aspects of the holiday season as well as the picture perfect Instagrammable activities that come to mind when we think of "family time." This year let's redefine what meaningful connection realistically looks like.

While striving to create a memorable holiday experience, let's not forget about the simple yet profound impact of intentional connection. Meaningful connections do not require elaborate plans or extravagant gifts. Instead, it's about being present and purposeful in our interactions. Here are some practical and realistic ways to intentionally connect:

Quality Over Quantity: Instead of focusing on large-scale activities, prioritize quality time together. Whether baking cookies, doing a craft, or simply getting cozy for a movie night, the key is to be fully present and engaged.

Active Listening: Showing genuine interest in your child's thoughts and feelings reinforces that their opinions are valued, and their feelings are valid. Practice active listening by maintaining eye contact, asking open-ended questions, nodding, and repeating what they say to show you understand.

Wishing you and your family a joyous and connected holiday season!

Natasha Magas
Youth Outreach Worker
FCSS Fort Saskatchewan
nmagas@fortsask.ca

