



Calendar

November 25 and 26

Closed

November 24

Parents and Pastries

December 4

Parent Day Out

December 22

Parents and Pastries

December 10

Holiday Party

December 17

Staff Holiday Party

December 21

Preschool Solstice Party

December 24, 30, 31

Closed

Have a ScreamFree Holiday

Holidays are a time to focus on what matters most. It is easy to get caught up with the material focus and busyness of the season causing damage to the relationships that matter most, with our partner and children. Take time this holiday season to take care of yourself. This will help ensure that you are in the best space to be present and connected with your family.

Remember it's always easier to complain than it is to change.

What are your common complaints about the holiday season. Is it you feel so pulled to get in every holiday experience, attending holiday parties, decorate the house, purchase presents and make the perfect holiday meal made that you need a vacation after the holidays to recoup. Or that after listening to your friends talk about the getting their children the newest "it" toys, electronics, and vacations to sunnier climates you find yourself purchasing additional gifts for your child in a desire to not look bad.

The key to turning your holiday experience around is not to expect anyone or thing around you to change but instead to focus on yourself. The only thing we have control over is our expectations and responses.

Slow Down

I learned this from my daughter, RaeAnn, when she was about 2 years old. On that Christmas morning, she opened her first present and wanted to play with it. Everyone started pressuring her to open the next one as we were looking forward to her excitement about the gifts we had purchased for her. (Who is the focus on there?) She was enjoying her toy and she saw no reason to hurry along. She was overloaded by all of the chaos and she realized something that we hadn't: by rushing through the opening of gifts, we were actually cheapening the activity. Now, our family takes its cue from her and opens presents one person at a time, one gift at a time. We pause to let the kids play with the gifts and come back to open another present later. Sure it takes a while, but that's the fun part. It reduces stimulus overload, it gives time for pictures, it builds lasting memories.

Do Something to Fulfill You

Take a long bath, Read a book, Go to the gym, Get a coffee, Use Parent Day Out. Do something that will refill your energy and spirit. Taking care of yourself allows you to take better care of your family.

2011 Holidays– UPDATED

February 21

May 30

July 4

September 5

November 24, 25

December 26

In-Service Date: February 3 and 4: Future dates still to be decided

Holiday Activity Ideas

Festival of Lights

Kids love the holidays, and most really, really love the lights. Take an evening – or two – and head out to view all the local holiday light displays. The Anchorage Daily News does a map each year highlighting some great displays. My children talk about the ones to music year round and have already asked to go.



Holiday Bake

The holidays are as much about the treats as anything. So get hands-on while preparing the goodies and let the kids get creative. Get some holiday cookie cutters, bake some sugar or butter cookies and then have each child decorate them in their own festive way. Or try the Puppy Chow recipe for a simple, fun activity. Having the child look at the recipe, measure out the ingredients are beginning reading and math skills. Once the treats are done, share them with family, neighbors and friends.

Puppy Chow

Instructions:

1. Combine peanut butter, butter and chocolate chips in a microwave safe bowl.
2. Microwave for one minute then stir to blend all ingredients thoroughly. Add vanilla. Stir well.
3. Place the Crispix cereal in a very large bowl.
4. Pour the peanut butter-chocolate mixture over the cereal and toss evenly, making sure all the cereal gets a good covering.
5. Put the powdered sugar in a gallon ziplock bag. Add the cereal mixture. Shake– Shake– Shake– until covered.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 9 cups Crispix cereal (any flavor)
- 1-1/2 cups powdered sugar



Hillcrest Board

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Could this be you?

Staffing Updates

Ms. Olga returns in December. Ms. Carmen will be on vacation through the months of December and January returning around the beginning of February. Ms. Robyn will be on vacation from December 20th thru January 7th.

We wish Ms. Kandyce the best!

Due to the changes in the Bunny Room we will be hiring a substitute to cover Ms. Carmen's leave.

Parent Day Out: Saturday December 4th 11am to 11pm

Every December we offer parents a full Saturday of child care to start their holiday's off right. This is a perfect time to take cross off items from your todo list and take care of yourself. Go shopping or decorate the house during the day then meet up with your partner or friends in the evening. Your child(ren) will have a fun filled day at Hillcrest: playing outside, doing holiday crafts, making yummy treats.

Cost is \$50 per family (a GREAT deal for 12 hours)



Pictures from Picture Day

Staff Holiday Gifts

Each year Hillcrest Children's Center accepts contributions during the months of November and December to provide our staff with a holiday bonus. This is a wonderful opportunity to show your appreciation for the hard work and dedication of Hillcrest's 18 teachers. Donations will be accepted from now until December 17th. If you have any questions please contact Ms Christina or a member of

Mission

Hillcrest Children's Center provides quality care for every child in an environment that focus on developing a foundation for a lifelong love of learning and respect for self and others. Hillcrest is a non-profit, parent-cooperative that believes quality care comes from a partnership between the home and school.

Philosophy

Children are cared for in a loving, safe environment surrounded by positive interactions where they develop feelings of self-esteem based on individual strengths and accomplishments. Learning is best achieved through play and activities that are designed to offer experiences in a variety of situations geared to the developmental needs of the child.

Hillcrest's 2010 Business Supporters

Costco, Sam's Club, Title Wave Books, Red Robin, Spenard Roadhouse, Bear Tooth, Intuitions Day Spa and Salon, Car Quest, Anchorage Museum Association, New Sagaya, Over the Rainbow Toy Store, H2Oasis, Bouncin' Bears, Great Harvest Bread Company, Alaska Zoo, Subway of Alaska, Napa Traction Store, Factory Motor Parts



Look for
ScreamFree
events at
Hillcrest starting
in January!

What is ScreamFree?

The greatest thing we can do for our kids is learn to focus on ourselves. "Now, it's all about the kids," is what most of us recite as soon as we bring offspring into the world. And we keep receiving countless bits of counsel urging us to continue taking all focus off ourselves and placing it squarely on our kids. After all, what they need is our constant attention, affection, and sacrifice so they'll think the right way, feel the right way, and behave the right way. Right?

Wrong. Such child-centered advice is simply a lie. But here's the truth: we cannot orbit our lives around our children without giving them the impression that the world revolves around them. And then we have the nerve to call them self-centered, disrespectful, and unappreciative! When we're the ones that helped create them that way! The advice we followed is actually creating the problems we were hoping to avoid!

That's why the greatest thing we can do is focus on ourselves, because we're the only ones we can control. We cannot control our kids, that's for sure—that's why we're reading parenting books in the first place! But every parenting expert we've read before has just given us more tools ("techniques") to help us do just that. But the more we've tried to control our kids (with new charts, new rewards, new punishments), the more out of control they've become.

That's because nobody likes to be controlled. And it's because our kids are not the ones out of control. We parents are out of our own control, placing ourselves in the backwards position of needing our children to behave for our benefit, because, after all, they now represent our whole world.

No wonder we end up screaming. Or shutting down. Or simply giving up and caving in.

Emotional reactivity is behind every bad pattern, bad decision, and bad relationship. Whenever we get reactive — whether by screaming, cutting ourselves off, overcompensating for others, or taking things personally or defensively — we operate out of our anxiety and, ironically, end up creating the very outcomes we were hoping to avoid. ScreamFree Living takes this reactivity very seriously and stresses that the number one step toward creating the types of relationships we truly crave is learning to calm down.

ScreamFree Parenting offers a revolutionary new option by inviting parents to focus on themselves, grow themselves up, and calm themselves down. The ScreamFree Parenting principles will lead parents of all ages (with kids of all ages) to create and enjoy the family relationships they've always craved starting now.