

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Esmeralda Martinez - Elem. Principal
 Jana Kieschnick- Inter. Principal
 361-368-3881

Sonia Gamez- Asst. Prin.
 Cynthia Garcia- Counselor
 www.oeisd.org



Odem Elementary and Intermediate School

Report Cards

The first semester is coming to an end soon. Odem Elementary and Intermediate Schools will receive their 3rd six weeks progress report on Wednesday, December 5.

The third six weeks will end on December 20. Reports will be distributed in January. Parents please make sure you are communicating with teachers. Teachers can be reached by email using their last name and first initial, for example garciac@oeisd.org.

If your student is absent please make sure a doctor's excuse or parent note is sent with your son/daughter.

The annual winter holiday is gladly welcomed by most kids. No school. Sleep in. No homework. Hang out with friends. More time for video games.

The annual winter holiday is celebrated in a variety of ways. In addition to Thanksgiving and Christmas, there is Chanukah, Kwanzaa, New Year's, and other special days. Each commemorates a memorable event. A host of family and community traditions are connected to these annual celebrations. But, these occasions typically require an expense of time and money which is already in short supply for many families.

For parents and families, the winter holidays can be stressful. Who will take care of kids while I go to work? How do I know they are safe if left home alone? Kids want to go to the movies and go bowling and buy new electronic gadgets – how do I tell them there is more month than money?

So much energy is expended on advertising and marketing and commercializing the holidays. I encourage you to refocus, not

spending but sharing.

- Share your joy of baking by giving to others some of your favorite holiday treats.
- Share your energy by washing the car of an elderly neighbor or helping to clean their house for the holiday
- Share your time playing games with your kids or grandkids or watching one of their favorite movies, or if the weather is warm enough have a picnic or fly a kite.
- Share your creativity and fun by making silly selfies of the family and sending them to friends and family, even making a silly-selfie-video.
- Share your love for family by creating homemade cards out of construction paper or by placing sticky notes around the house and in drawers and on mirrors and in cabinets and on cereal boxes, etc. that say things like:

“Mom, your cookies are the best!”

“Dad, thanks for playing catch or coaching my soccer team.”

“Son, your stories always make me smile.”

“Daughter, when you sit and listen to grandma and hold her hand, I cry.”

The winter holiday can be frantic but try to slow down. Focus on activities that can build memories for a lifetime rather than stuff that is quickly forgotten. I wish for you a happy holiday, sharing and caring for one another.

Forsyth, S. (2018, November 28). ESC 16. *The Parent and Family Engagement Connection*, 15(2nd Quarter). (T. Stafford, Ed.) Amarillo, Texas. Retrieved November 28, 2018, from Title I, Part A Parent and Family Engagement Statewide Initiative: <http://www.esc16.net/upload/>



9 Tips to Cope with Holiday Depression

The stress of the holidays triggers sadness and depression for many people. This time of year is especially difficult because there's an expectation of feeling merry and generous. People compare their emotions to what they assume others are experiencing or what they're supposed to feel and then think that they alone fall short. They judge themselves and feel like an outsider. There are a host of things that add to stress and difficult emotions during the holidays:

Finances. Not enough money or the fear of not having enough to buy gifts leads to sadness and guilt. The stress of financial hardship during this economic downturn is often compounded by shame. When you can't afford to celebrate it can feel devastating.

Stress. The stress of shopping and planning family dinners when you're already overworked and tired can be overwhelming.

Loneliness. A whopping 43 percent of Americans are single, and 27 percent of Americans live alone. When others are with their families, it can be very painful for those who are alone. Seventeen percent of singles are over 65, when health, age, and mobility can make it more difficult to enjoy yourself.

Grief. Missing a deceased loved one is painful at any age, but seniors have more reasons to grieve.

Estrangement. When you're not speaking to a relative, family get together can usher in feelings of sadness, guilt, resentment, or inner conflict about whether to communicate.

Divorce. If you're newly divorced, the holidays may remind you of happier times and accentuate your grief. It's especially difficult for adult children of divorce who have to balance seeing two sets of parents. The stress is multiplied for married children who have three or even four sets of parents to visit.

Pleasing. Trying to please all of your relatives – deciding what to get, whom to see, and what to do – can make you feel guilty and like you're not doing enough, which leads to depression.

The signs of depression are feelings of sadness, worthlessness or guilt, crying, loss of interest in usual activities, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, irritability, social withdrawal, and changes in sleep, weight, or appetite. If these symptoms are severe or continue for a few weeks, more than the holidays may be the cause. Seek professional help.

Some measures you can take to cope with the holiday blues include:

- **Make plans in advance, so you know how and with whom your holidays will be spent. Uncertainty and putting off decision-making add enormous stress.**

- **Shop early and allow time to wrap and mail packages to avoid the shopping crunch.**
- **Ask for help from your family and children. Women tend to think they have to do everything, when a team effort can be more fun.**
- **Shame prevents people from being open about gift-giving when they can't afford it. Instead of struggling to buy a gift, let your loved ones know how much you care and would like to, but can't afford it. That intimate moment will relieve your stress and nourish you both.**
- **Don't allow perfectionism to wear you down. Remember it's being together and goodwill that matters.**
- **Make time to rest and rejuvenate even amid the pressure of getting things done. This will give you more energy.**
- **Research has shown that warmth improves mood. If you're sad or lonely, treat yourself to a warm bath or cup of hot tea.**
- **Spend time alone to reflect and grieve, if necessary. Pushing down feelings leads to depression. Let yourself feel. Then do something nice for yourself and socialize.**
- **Don't isolate. Reach out to others who also may be lonely. If you don't have someone to be with, volunteer to help those in need. It can be very uplifting and gratifying.**

Darlene Lancer is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and expert author on relationships and codependency. She's counseled individuals and couples for 30 years and coaches internationally.



Up and Coming Events

December 5– Progress Reports
December 20—End of the 3rd Six Weeks
December 21– January 6– School Holiday

Technology Is on Our Side

Parents take advantage of technology. Our teachers use a number of apps and software to keep you up to date with your student. Including email addresses which are usually the teacher's last name and first initial for example garciac@oeisd.org .