



## Curbing Power Struggles with Special Days Part Two

by *Tulum Dothee*

One of the easiest ways to empower your children is to implement special days. Special days work well because you let the calendar, as opposed to yourself, be the authority thus reducing the number of power struggles. Here is the second installment of the special day article.

Create options to make decisions by offering a choice: "Are we getting our pajamas on now or in five minutes?" Decide what you are willing to do and phrase it as a choice for that child. "Are we going to make pancakes or waffles for breakfast?"

Express regret if child A doesn't get his way, "Oh I wish it was your day to pick the music for the car ride, but it's child B's special day."

Decide in a family meeting what decisions the special day person can make (more on Family Meetings in future newsletters). Agree on any decisions that must be adult only choices.

The Special Day person gets to settle disputes:

- Who gets \_\_\_\_\_?
- What do we do about \_\_\_\_\_?
- Are we going to do \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_?
- Your sister would like to do \_\_\_\_\_ together, is that okay?

Here are some ideas for special day person decisions and activities:

- Chooses music to listen to in the car.
- Picks food for meals and snacks. Hold choices out and let child pick.
- Picks the bedtime stories & gets to read/tell them or choose who reads.
- Decides who gets to sit next to Mom (or Dad, or Sister, etc....).
- Picks television show to watch – age appropriate for everyone, of course.
- Decides which sprinkles to decorate a cake.
- Gets to be the "leader".
- Gets to go first at the sink bowl for washing hands.
- Makes or receives a special phone call
- Decides which game to play.
- Gets to apply everyone's toothpaste.
- Puts the house to bed and says good night to each: turns off lights, turns down beds, locks doors...

Reserve the right to pull rank ONLY if it is a safety issue.

Along with making decisions comes responsibility on one's special day.

When it is your special day it is not all glory. You actually get to help serve the food and do clean up too, after all, it is your special day.

This variety of special day activity encourages us to think of chores in a positive way as opposed to negatively. With privilege comes responsibility, something that we are teaching them from the beginning.

When we approach our chores with joy and light heartedness our child will too. If your child whines about helping around the house observe your response to chores for a few days. You might discover that you are modeling whining about chores, "This place is a mess! Am I

## Upcoming Events

### Kindergarten Registration

Children who will be 5 years of age on or before December 2, 2009, are eligible for kindergarten. For dates and times call the Nevada County Superintendent of Schools Office at 478-6400.

### Baby & Me

#### New session begins April 13

Join in for songs, playtime, and discussion while getting to know other parents and babies. Join an existing group now. Birth to 12 months. Weekday mornings at the Grass Valley Methodist Church in downtown Grass Valley. FREE to first-time participants, sliding scale fee up to \$50 for 10 sessions for subsequent groups. Phone: Meg 913-2745

### Toddler & Me

#### New session begins April 13

Join in for songs and playtime in a preschool setting while getting to know other parents and toddlers. We are creating new groups now for children 12 to 24 months. Monday mornings at the T.K. McAteer Family Resource Center in Nevada City. FREE to first-time participants, sliding scale fee up to \$45 for 9 sessions for subsequent groups. Phone: Samie 265-0611 x223

### April 4

#### Friends of the Library Book Sale

1st Saturday of Every Month – Monthly Used Book Sale, Friends of the Nevada County Libraries. Foley Historical Library, 211 N. Pine St., NC. 9am-3pm. Find quality children's books for 25 cents. Phone: 265-7050.

### April 9

#### Local Food Movement

An evening of delicious, locally grown and made soup, kids activities, Saul Rayo music, and so much more. Join your friends and neighbors, support your local food movement. Soup Night 5:00 - 8:00 p.m. and Saul Rayo 8:00 - 11:00 p.m. at the Miners Foundry. Suggested donation: \$5. Phone: 277-5877

### April 16

#### Free Prenatal Breastfeeding Class

6:30-8:30pm. Call to reserve your space. Phone: 477-5442

the only one who picks up around here? How many times have I told you to put your stuff away?" In case you are wondering how to adopt a positive attitude about chores, here is how:

- Name it so you can change it: Notice how you react to chores.
- Surrender to the reality that life is messy.
- Accept that the chores need to be done whether we like it or not.
- Create a family policy to do them together.
- Brainstorm ways to have fun getting chores done. Set the timer for 10 minutes, put on dance music and go for it!
- Release the idea that things have to be perfect.
- Schedule chore time on your calendar.

Here are some ideas of special person activities that encourage responsibility:

- Set the table (with a parent for younger children).
- Clear the table (with a parent for younger children).
- Fill the pet's water bowl.
- Serve snack and/or dessert.
- Light the dinner candles (age appropriate and after training only).
- Blow out the dinner candles.
- Ring the dinner bell.
- Help prepare meals.

You get the idea. Determine what works for you and your family.

*Tulum Dothee is a credentialed and certified educator and counselor, with 30+ years experience teaching and working with families. For more info call: 271-1258.*

## Victorian Tea Sandwiches – Perfect for a Fairy Tea Party

by Wendy Van Wagner

Violets are a delightful, edible flower that grow abundantly this time of year. Kids and adults thrill at the notion of being able to feast on something as tender as flowers! I like to pick them and eat them right away, but if you want to really make something special for this time of year, try this Victorian tea sandwich recipe. Easy to make and beautiful!

- 4 Slices of good quality sourdough bread, crusts cut off and lightly toasted
- Cream cheese
- A hand full of wild violets

Spread cream cheese on the toasts, cut diagonally so that you have 2 triangles per toast.

Firmly press your violets into the cream cheese.

Enjoy with a hot cup of tea with someone you love!

*Wendy Van Wagner is the owner of the local cooking school IN THE KITCHEN in Nevada City, offering classes to both kids and adults. Join the revival of taste, table and tradition! For more info call 478-0669*

### April 21

#### Imaginarium Preschool Play Day

Pre School play days give young ones a chance to explore science in a stimulating and fun environment. Come make new friends, play with bubbles, magnets, sound, shadows, listen to stories, and more. Theme is Bugs & Butterflies. Bring your lunch or snack and eat it inside or have a picnic outside and enjoy our outdoor solar exhibit, pond, and bridge. 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon. Cost \$3/Students & Seniors, \$5/Adults. Phone: 478-6415

### April 22

#### Earth Day at Briar Patch

Everyone is welcome to come all day from 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. for organic food, coupons, free samples, prize drawings, an eco-themed silent auction benefit, and to talk to members of local environmental groups. Children's activities will include face painting by Penney the Clown from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m., the Great Green Building Hunt, essay contest and Earth Day coloring. FREE Phone:271-2034

### April 23 – May 21

#### Advanced Mindful Parenting Class

Thursdays 6:30 – 8:30 pm at Oakhaven Montessori School. FREE! Phone: 271-1258

### April 24

#### Imaginarium Open to Public Day

The Imaginarium is a hands-on science, nature, and technology museum. On display through June is Simple Machines. 12:00 noon – 5:00 pm. Cost \$3/Students & Seniors, \$5/Adults. Phone: 478-6415

### May 2

#### 6th Annual Child Development Conference

Bev Bos Returns! Back by popular demand! Don't miss Bev at the annual conference in Truckee. A day of fun and learning with a variety of exciting workshops and take-home ideas for parents and early educators. Breakfast, lunch and child care provided. New this year- a special workshop just for Dads! Call 582-2583.



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