



Tiny Scholars Academy

December Curriculum Guide

Theme: *Light in the Darkness: Winter Celebrations & Kindness*

Month:	December
Theme:	Light in the Darkness: Winter Celebrations & Kindness
Age Groups:	Infants (6 wks–12 mo) • Toddlers (12–36 mo) • Preschool (3–5 yrs)
Standards:	Rhode Island Early Learning & Development Standards (RIELDS)

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MONTHLY OVERVIEW & LEARNING GOALS — DECEMBER

Big Idea: December is a month of warmth, wonder, and light. We honor the many ways families celebrate this season — Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Winter Solstice, and more — while exploring the science of light, the joy of giving, and the magic of winter.

Monthly Theme Weeks

Week 1 Winter Wonderland & Weather

Week 2 Celebrations of Light

Week 3 Kindness & Giving

Week 4 Winter Break Countdown

Guiding Questions

- What happens to our world in winter? How do we stay warm?
- How do different families celebrate with light in December?
- What does it mean to be generous? How does giving feel?
- What do animals do in winter? How do they survive?
- How is winter different from fall? What will come next?

■ Infant Room — Monthly Goals

- Experience multi-sensory winter: cool air, warm blankets, sparkling lights
- Develop visual tracking through twinkling light stimulation
- Strengthen secure attachment during holiday routine disruptions
- Build language through winter narration and seasonal songs
- Explore cause-effect with jingle bells and holiday shakers

■ Toddler Room — Monthly Goals

- Learn winter vocabulary: snow, ice, cold, mittens, cozy, hibernate
- Explore winter celebrations with inclusive, curiosity-based approach
- Develop generosity through classroom giving project
- Practice fine motor: wrapping, folding, cutting, gluing holiday crafts
- Count candles/lights 1–8 and practice holiday number songs

■ Preschool Room — Monthly Goals

• RIELDS integration through winter, light, and cultural celebration
• Explore light science: reflect, refract, bend, glow (D5)
• Write holiday cards and winter poems (D2,D3)
• Create and extend AB and ABC patterns with holiday shapes (D4)
• Investigate animal hibernation and winter adaptations (D5)
• Celebrate cultural diversity with respect and curiosity (D6,D1)

INFANT CLASSROOM (6 wks–12 mo) — DECEMBER 4-WEEK CURRICULUM

Curriculum Approach: All infant learning is embedded in responsive caregiving routines. Ratios, safe sleep, and RIDOH licensing standards are maintained at all times. Outdoor time occurs daily in the buggy or on a supervised blanket.

Week	Theme	Objectives	Activities	Materials	Assessment
Wk 1 Winter	Sensory Winter	Temperature awareness; visual tracking; motor engagement	Cool/warm water contrast play; silver tinsel visual tracking; jingle bell tracking; 'Let It Snow' lullaby	Warm/cool water bins, tinsel, jingle bells, winter lullaby	Document temperature discrimination; note visual responses
Wk 2 Light	Sparkling Wonder	Visual stimulation; awe/wonder response; sound localization	Soft holiday light watching (LEDs only); star-shaped toys; silver sensory bag; gentle 'Twinkle Twinkle'	LED lights, star toys, silver bag, holiday music	Note wonder responses; document visual attention duration
Wk 3 Kindness	Warm Giving	Social reciprocity; attachment; imitation	Gift-passing sensory play; hugging/patting social games; reading 'Baby's First Winter'	Soft gifts, cozy books, gift-passing toys	Note reciprocal social responses; document imitation
Wk 4 Wrap Up	Cozy Transitions	Routine comfort; motor; language bath	Winter sensory basket: felt trees, cotton 'snow', pine cones; cozy blanket reading; wind-down routine	Winter sensory basket, cozy books, blankets	Document transition comfort; note routine security

TODDLER CLASSROOM (12–36 mo) — DECEMBER 4-WEEK CURRICULUM

Curriculum Approach: Movement, language, and sensory learning drive the toddler experience. Centers rotate weekly with the theme. Predictable routines support autonomy and emotional regulation.

Week	Theme	Objectives	Activities	Materials	Assessment
Wk 1 Winter Weather	Snow & Ice Science	Winter vocabulary; sensory; science concepts	Ice melting experiment; snow dough sensory play; winter clothes dressing practice; cloud dough 'snow'	Ice cubes, snow dough, winter clothes, cloud dough	Note winter vocabulary; observe science language
Wk 2 Light Celebrations	Festivals of Light	Cultural awareness; counting; fine motor	Menorah counting 1-8; kinara candle craft; twinkle light sensory; 'We Have Light' multicultural song	Menorah model, kinara craft, LED lights, multicultural books	Document counting accuracy; note cultural vocabulary
Wk 3 Kindness	Giving Project	Generosity; planning; social language	Toy drive sorting; kindness card making; ribbon wrapping practice; 'The Gift' dramatic play	Donation box, card supplies, wrapping ribbons	Observe prosocial behavior; note planning language
Wk 4 Holiday Fun	Winter Celebration	Community; gross motor; fine motor	Class holiday party; cookie decorating; winter movement song; memory book making	Cookie supplies, memory book pages, party items	Document social engagement; note fine motor quality

PRESCHOOL CLASSROOM (3–5 yrs) — DECEMBER RIELDS-ALIGNED CURRICULUM

Standards Note: All activities are mapped to the 9 Rhode Island ELDS domains. Domain codes (D1–D9) appear in each activity. See the RIELDS Domain Reference in the June Curriculum Guide.

Week 1 — Winter Wonderland ❄️■

Focus Area	Activities & Standards
Literacy	Read: 'The Snowy Day' / 'Snowflake Bentley' Write winter observation poems: 'Snow is...' (D2,D3)
Math	Snowflake geometry: identify shapes within snowflakes; measure snowflakes (D4)
Science	Ice investigation: how long to melt? What speeds melting? Record data (D5,D9)
Art	Coffee filter snowflakes + watercolor tie-dye; paper snowflake geometry (D7,D4)
Science 2	Animal hibernation: who sleeps, who stays? Sort and research (D5)

Week 2 — Celebrations of Light ■■■■

Focus Area	Activities & Standards
Literacy	Read: 'Hanukkah! A Three-Day Counting Book', 'The Story of Kwanzaa', 'Night Tree' Holiday facts mini-book (D2,D3)
Math	Count Hanukkah candles 1-8; count Kwanzaa candles; pattern the colors (D4)
Science	Light experiment: what materials let light through? Sort and test (D5)
Art	Star of David origami; kinara painting; winter tree with lights (D7)
Social Studies	Cultural celebration comparison chart: what do celebrations share? (D6,D1)

Week 3 — Kindness & Giving ■

Focus Area	Activities & Standards
Literacy	Read: 'Extra Yarn' / 'The Mitten' Write: 'The best gift I ever gave was...' (D2,D3)
Math	Gift budgeting: if you had \$10, what would you buy for your family? (D4)
Science	Warmth investigation: which material keeps ice from melting longest? (D5,D9)
Art	Handmade gifts workshop: cards, bookmarks, yarn ornaments (D7)
SEL	Discuss: what are non-material gifts? (time, help, kindness) (D1,D6)

Week 4 — Winter Break Countdown ■

Focus Area	Activities & Standards
Literacy	Read: 'Bear Snores On' / 'Brave Irene' Year-in-review writing: 'My best memory is...' (D2,D3)

Focus Area	Activities & Standards
Math	Countdown chain: 5 days to break; subtract each day (D4)
Science	Winter science fair: share an investigation you did this semester (D5,D9)
Art	Memory book cover art; year-in-review class mural (D7)
Celebration	Winter party: share holiday foods and traditions; perform songs learned this year (D1,D6,D7)

TEACHER WEEKLY PLANNING — INFANT ROOM — DECEMBER

Week: Winter Wonderland & Weather

TEACHER WEEKLY PLANNING — INFANT ROOM | Winter Wonderland & Weather

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:
Reflections / Notes:				

Week: Celebrations of Light

TEACHER WEEKLY PLANNING — INFANT ROOM | Celebrations of Light

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Reflections / Notes:				

Week: Kindness & Giving

TEACHER WEEKLY PLANNING — INFANT ROOM | Kindness & Giving

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
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Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:
Reflections / Notes:				

Week: Winter Break Countdown

TEACHER WEEKLY PLANNING — INFANT ROOM Winter Break Countdown				
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Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:
Reflections / Notes:				

TEACHER WEEKLY PLANNING — TODDLER ROOM — DECEMBER

Week: Winter Wonderland & Weather

TEACHER WEEKLY PLANNING — TODDLER ROOM Winter Wonderland & Weather				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:
Reflections / Notes:				

Week: Celebrations of Light

TEACHER WEEKLY PLANNING — TODDLER ROOM Celebrations of Light				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:
Reflections / Notes:				

Week: Kindness & Giving

TEACHER WEEKLY PLANNING — TODDLER ROOM Kindness & Giving				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:
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Week: Winter Break Countdown

TEACHER WEEKLY PLANNING — TODDLER ROOM Winter Break Countdown				
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Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:

Reflections / Notes:	
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TEACHER WEEKLY PLANNING — PRESCHOOL ROOM — DECEMBER

Week: Winter Wonderland & Weather

TEACHER WEEKLY PLANNING — PRESCHOOL ROOM Winter Wonderland & Weather				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:
Reflections / Notes:				

Week: Celebrations of Light

TEACHER WEEKLY PLANNING — PRESCHOOL ROOM Celebrations of Light				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:
Reflections / Notes:				

Week: Kindness & Giving

TEACHER WEEKLY PLANNING — PRESCHOOL ROOM Kindness & Giving				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:
Reflections / Notes:				

Week: Winter Break Countdown

TEACHER WEEKLY PLANNING — PRESCHOOL ROOM Winter Break Countdown				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:	Circle Time: Activity: Outdoor: Notes:
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Welcome to December at Tiny Scholars Academy!

This month our theme is **Light in the Darkness: Winter Celebrations & Kindness**. December is a month of warmth, wonder, and light. We honor the many ways families celebrate this season — Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Winter Solstice, and more — while exploring the science of light, the joy of giving, and the magic of winter. Read on to see what's happening in each classroom and how to keep the learning going at home!

Infant Room: Our youngest learners explore the month's theme through all their senses! Ask your teacher about your baby's weekly sensory experiences.

Toddler Room: Toddlers dive into hands-on science, dramatic play, and language-rich activities. Send your child in clothes ready for messy, magical learning!

Preschool Room: Preschoolers engage with all 9 RIELDS domains through projects, investigation, writing, and creative expression. Portfolio updates go home at month's end.

Important Dates

- Dec 2 — Winter Theme Launch
- Dec 9 — Cultural Celebrations Sharing Day
- Dec 16 — Kindness Week Begins
- Dec 19 — Holiday Party & Memory Book Pickup
- Dec 20 — Last Day Before Winter Break
- Dec 23–Jan 1 — Winter Break — Academy Closed

Learning at Home

- Share your family's holiday traditions with your child.
- Read books about different winter celebrations together.
- Make a homemade gift together for a family member.
- Watch snowflakes fall and talk about their shapes.
- Start a winter-break family memory journal.

NOTE: Holiday party: Dec 19th. Please send labeled holiday snack or cultural food item to share.

This Month's Theme Weeks:

Week 1:	Winter Wonderland & Weather
Week 2:	Celebrations of Light
Week 3:	Kindness & Giving
Week 4:	Winter Break Countdown

With warmth and gratitude,

The Tiny Scholars Academy Team ■