



USEP-OHIO PARENT TIP: From Winter to Spring

This brief Parent Tip is provided at no cost by United Services for Effective Parenting-Ohio, Inc. as a tool to assist parents, teachers, grandparents and all who help to care for and to raise our children. For more information on this and other tools from USEP-OHIO refer to the conclusion of this Parent Tip.

The North Wind Doth Blow

The North wind doth blow,
And we shall have snow,
And what will the robin do then,
Poor thing?
He'll sit in a barn,
To keep himself warm,
And hide his head under his wing,
Poor thing.

- Anonymous

And so spring is coming. Digging into the snow mounded under a bush, I uncovered the *tenderest* little sprout of a spring flower with its head still curled under. I pushed the snow back over it, knowing it would survive with the warm blanket of white to protect it from the harsh March wind. But the memory of that tendril is sharp in my mind and reminds me to prepare! The spring is coming.

The time of changing days and longer sunshine, more work outside and the joy of new things starting at home and at work. Soon I will want to lose the extra pounds I have put on in the winter and get into the lighter clothing. Soon we will clean up the yard and switch out the closets from winter gear to sweaters. Soon I will be hearing the birds instead of the howling winter wind. Soon the neighborhood kids will be sunning in the yard and washing their cars and bikes in the driveways. Soon all vestiges of the snow will be melting out in the woods and in the yard, creating muddles of wet for the dogs to track in.

The passage of season is so important for us to absorb and feel deeply if we are to live passionately and well. Many of us have experienced extra stress, school closings, difficult travel and unnerving inconveniences in the winter just winding down. So it is time to put a bow around it! Some refer to it as summing up, or evaluating the time just past. I like to think of it as a package of time and experience just waiting for a bow and a label. So I can take it off the shelf and remember it again, put it back knowing I can get to it if I wish - but may not need to again.

It is time for fresh new thoughts and approaches to work, to organization, to our home and work tasks, to our parenting and teaching, to finding solutions to timeless problems of balancing budgets and managing the assets of time and resources.

Don't forget to revisit where you have been this winter - exasperated sometimes, at peace *othertimes*.

You and your family have had to hide your heads under wing. It's the smart thing to do. But as spring arrives, be ready to step into the sun and step lively into the tasks of fresh approaches to the work at hand. Sign up for a conference. Read a book that touches your heart and another that teaches you something new. Look again at the health and nutrition basics for you and your family. Focus on getting good sleep.

Restart routines that bring you satisfying social and emotional moments. Meditate, take a walk, put away the winter stuff and jump into the spring pastels in your home and clothing choices.

Be ready for new energy to advocate for your child, for your job, for your program! Go ahead and send those Valentines you meant to or even write the Christmas thank you note you wanted to send. It's never too late to reach out and be in touch with those you love. They will cherish your note, or call - giving *them* a chance to tell how long the winter has seemed.

Take a breath and tackle a project you are passionate about, but couldn't get to over the winter. Simplify it by jotting down the steps you need to take to make it happen. Springtime is a time for taking our heads out from under our wings, for putting a "spring" in our step, and a song in our heart; a smile on our faces and even a pat on the back for getting through a tough season that's now behind us.

Remember to watch for tiny light green leaves emerging on trees, and lacework coverlets in pink and white tossed over woodland shrubs, and for daffodils and delicate crocus everywhere and anywhere - surprising you!

Or as Wordsworth said it, "And then my heart with pleasure fills, And dances with the daffodils."

To see and hear something beautiful - Go to Youtube Relaxing Snowfall - Winter in the Country Spend 5:33 with bird calls - woodpeckers and a cardinal in the snowy woods. <https://youtu.be/3Rtioh8-nd4>

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