



BADGERBUZZ

Discover events, resources, and activities for UW families

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December Highlights & Winter Break Resources

Welcome to the December issue of Badger Buzz! As winter break approaches, we're sharing resources to help families feel supported, connected, and inspired through the season: from free parent coaching sessions and discounted online classes, to UW Extension's free parenting education and a featured podcast. This month's issue also highlights scholarship opportunities for single parents and returning adult students, registration for the 2026 Raising Wisconsin's Children Conference, ways to support or volunteer at The Open Seat Food Pantry, and the enrollment lottery for Isthmus Montessori Academy.

Dates & Reminders

- [OPEN NOW - Spring CCTAP application](#)
- [12/1 - Spring KidsKare application open](#)



Parenting Support Over Winter Break

Our fall parenting class series has wrapped up for the semester, thank you to everyone who joined us! We look forward to sharing our Spring 2026 class lineup with you in January. Until then, we encourage you to stay connected with the following parent support resources:

- **[Free 1:1 Parent Coaching:](#)** Virtual sessions with Dr. Laura Froyen for UW families
- **[Discounted Online Class:](#)** Dr. Froyen's Respectful Parenting 101 module.
- **[Free UW-Extension](#) & [Parents Place education](#)**
- **[The Balanced Parent podcast:](#)** Tools, mindful shifts, and practical parenting strategies

Single Parent and Returning Adult Student Scholarships

Are you a single student parent, or have you had a 5-year break in your education? Submit one application and be considered for multiple scholarships ranging from \$1,000-\$5,000! Must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident to be eligible.

Application period: Nov. 16th – Feb. 10th

[Learn more here!](#)



Adult Career and Special Student Services



Scholarships Available!

RAISING WISCONSIN'S CHILDREN

February 4, 2026 | 9 am - 4 pm | Virtual

Save the Date: Raising Wisconsin's Children Virtual Conference 2026

We are thrilled to co-sponsor this annual free conference for Wisconsin parents and caregivers!

The theme of this year's sessions is **Helping Children Thrive When Life Gets Tough**. Learn skills and practical tools from experts that will help your children cope with challenges, build resilience, and grow through hard times.

Date & Time: February 4, 2026, 9am - 4pm

Cost: FREE

Registration Deadline: February 2nd, 2026

[Register here!](#)

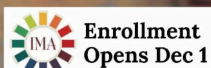
The Open Seat Food Pantry: How to Support or Volunteer!

The Open Seat Food Pantry has seen an **unprecedented surge in students seeking support**. Many of the student volunteers who run The Open Seat are balancing full class schedules, coursework, caregiving responsibilities, and their own basic needs—all while working hard to keep food on the table for their peers.

If you are in a position to help, **we invite you to join us in supporting this vital resource**. Your contributions—whether through donating funds or pantry items, signing up for a volunteer shift, or helping amplify our message—directly uplift students and families who rely on The Open Seat during moments of real hardship. **Together, we can extend compassion, strengthen our community, and ensure that no Badger family faces food insecurity alone.**

[Learn more and get involved!](#)





SCHOOL YEAR
2026-2027

Inquire today!

IMA, Inc.

(2 months-3H)

NAC and Youngstar 5 star
accredited. Free or reduced
tuition available for qualifying
families

Public Charter

(4K-12th Grade)

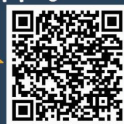
Madison's only public AMI
Montessori charter school

Public IB High

School

Madison's only public
International Baccalaureate (IB)
High School

Apply here!



Education rooted in love,
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A school dedicated to equity,
diversity, and inclusion

Programs **IMA(P)**
offers learners
and families

- Before and After School Programming
*Financial assistance available for qualifying families.
- Special Education support provided with a student-focused approach
- Transportation to nearby neighborhoods and community centers for 4K-6th grade
- Healthy hot lunch program prepared daily from scratch

Isthmus Montessori Academy: 2026-27 Enrollment

Isthmus Montessori Academy (IMA) is Madison's only public, tuition-free AMI Montessori school and public International Baccalaureate (IB) High School, serving students from 4K through 12th grade, with an additional private nonprofit program for infants through 3K. IMA offers a holistic, hands-on learning environment, a 5-Star YoungStar rating (making many programs low- or no-cost for Wisconsin Shares families), transportation for 4K-6th graders, and a daily scratch-made hot lunch program led by Junior High learners.

Applications for the 2026-27 lottery open December 1, 2025, and families who apply by the deadline will be considered for placement. Tours are available. Click image to see full-size flyer.

[Learn more and sign up](#)

Child Care Openings

The following open spots within the [UW-Madison Child Care and Education System](#) are current as of 12/1/25.

Eagle's Wing Child Care

- 5 morning/week openings for ages 2-4

Waisman Early Childhood Program

- 4 openings in preschool room, ages 3-4

Bernie's Place

- 5 morning/week opening for age 2
- 5 morning/week opening for age 3

Creative Learning Preschool

- Full-time & part-time openings for children born 9/2022 - 2/2023

Isthmus Montessori Academy

- 1 toddler spot opening in March
- 1 toddler spot opening in April

Meeting House Nursery School

- 5 open afternoon spots for age 3
- 1 open 4k (full day) spot

The Playing Field Midtown

- 2 spots open in 4K program
- 1 spot open for age 2

Preschool of the Arts

- 4 open spots for age 4 (FT or PT)
- 1 open spot for age 3 (FT or PT)
- 1 open spot for age 2.5 (FT or PT)

UW Research Studies Seeking Children & Families

Help UW-Madison researchers explore child development, family well-being, and more. Opportunities vary and may involve surveys, activities, or visits, often with compensation for your time.

[Speech Development Study](#)

Dates: ongoing

Time commitment: 60 minutes

Compensation: \$20 gift card

Eligibility: Children and youth between 7-14 years who 1. have normal hearing, 2. have typical speech and language, and 3. speak English as their native and primary language

Description: The WISC Lab at the Waisman Center invites children and youth to participate in a study about speech development. The information we gather will be used to determine how

Fill out interest form

December Family-Friendly Events

Special Events

Toddler Dance Party

December 4, 10:00 - 10:30 am
Sequoia Library

Kids in the Rotunda: Stewart Stotts

December 6, 9:30 am, 11:00 am, & 1:00 pm
Overture Center

Family Nature Walk

December 7, 1:30 - 2:30 pm
UW Arboretum

Warner Family Fun Night

December 12, 5:30 - 8:00 pm
Warner Park Community Rec Center

Kids in the Rotunda: The Handphibians

December 13, 9:30 am, 11:00 am, 1:00 pm
Overture Center

Art for Little Ones

December 18, 10:30 - 11:30 am
Lakeview Library

Kids in the Rotunda: Fox & Branch's Will Branch

December 20, 9:30 am, 11:00 am, 1:00 am
Overture Center

Family Nature Program: Winter Solstice

December 21, 1:30 - 3:30 pm
UW Arboretum

Donut Family Storytime

December 23, 10:00 - 10:30 am
Central Library

Bird & Nature Adventures: Nature's Gifts

December 27, 10:00 - 11:30 am
Aldo Leopold Nature Center

Stories & Songs with Junebug

December 27, 10:30 - 11:00 am
Pinney Library

Recurring Events

Holiday Fantasy in Lights

Every day in December
Begins daily at dusk
Olin Park

Little Sprouts

December 2, 5, 12, 13, 16, 19
10:15 am - 11:15 am
Olbrich Botanical Gardens

Storytime (ages 5 and under)

December 2, 9
10:30 am - 11:15 am
Monroe Street Library

Music Time with Tim

December 3, 10, 17
11:00 am - 11:30 am
Madison Children's Museum

Baby & Toddler Story Time (ages 0-3)

December 3, 10, 17
9:30 am - 10:15 am
Central Library

Sensory Stations

December 3, 17
9:30 am - 10:30 am
Middleton Library

MCM Free Thursday Evenings

December 4, 11, 18
4:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Madison Children's Museum

Tales with Teresa

December 4, 11, 18
9:30 am - 10:00 am
Madison Children's Museum

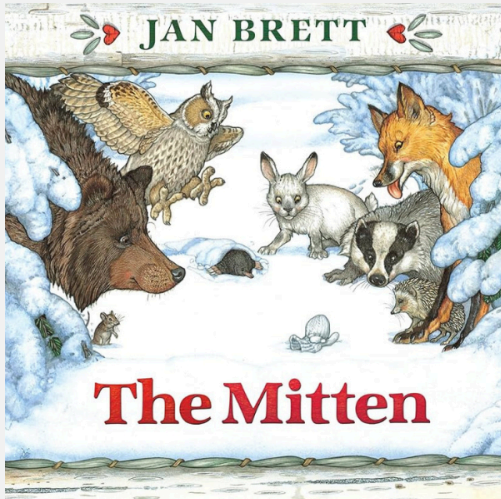
Messy Art with Laurie

December 4, 11, 18
11:00 am - 12:00 pm
Madison Children's Museum

ArtStudio Kids! (ages 2-8)

December 8, 22
10:00 am - 11:00 am
Monona Library

Book of the Month



The Mitten

In this beloved winter tale by Jan Brett, a lost white mitten becomes a cozy hideaway for a growing parade of forest animals—until a gentle surprise sends them all scattering. With detailed illustrations and a warm, whimsical story, *The Mitten* is a perfect winter read to enjoy with kids over break.

[Read Aloud Storytime](#)

Craft of the Month



Popsicle Stick Snowflakes

Create a charming snowflake ornament by gluing craft sticks into a snowflake shape, decorating it with paint or glitter, and adding a twine loop for hanging. This simple, customizable project is perfect for keeping kids busy and creative during the long, cozy winter break while staying warm indoors.

[Learn More](#)

Chef's Corner: Fruit Snowman Snack

Banana snowmen with grape and strawberry hats, chocolate chip buttons, and a sprinkle of coconut snow? It's the most adorable, edible Fruit Snowman Snack you've ever seen!

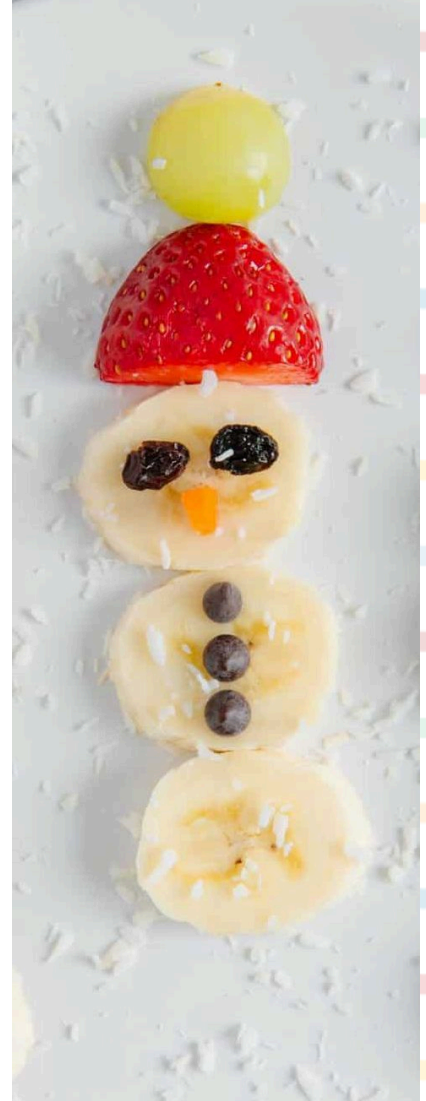
Ingredients:

- Banana (for the body)
- Strawberry (for the hat)
- Grape or blueberry (for the hat pom pom)
- Raisins (for the eyes)
- Chocolate chips (for the buttons)
- Carrot (for the nose)
- (optional) Shredded coconut (for the snow)

Instructions:

1. Cut fruit: Peel and slice the banana into 1/4 inch rounds. Cut the top off the strawberries and slice lengthwise. Slice grape in half. Slice carrot into a tiny stick.
2. Arrange three banana slices on a long toothpick/bamboo spear. You can also just lay the banana slices flat on a platter or plate if you don't have a toothpick or food spear.
3. Place strawberries and grapes/blueberries on top of each snowman's body with the cut side down.
4. Add two raisins to the top banana slice for the eyes.
5. Add the chocolate chips to the middle banana slice for the buttons.
6. Place a tiny carrot stick beneath the raisins for the nose.
7. Sprinkle coconut on top to make it look like snow!

Recipe from eatingbyelaine.com



*Badger Buzz Newsletter from UW–Madison's Office of Child Care and Family Resources shares monthly announcements, resources, events, child care openings, and research opportunities for UW families. **Subscribe or update your subscription preferences here.***

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