



# PARENT Connections

A PUBLICATION OF CHILD CARE RESOURCES, A PROGRAM OF CHILDREN'S AID & FAMILY SERVICE

## STAY WARM THIS WINTER! ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS CAN HELP YOU BEAT THE COLD!



Energy assistance programs in Massachusetts help low-income residents pay for heating fuel and other utilities. Customers that meet income guidelines can apply for utility discounts, utility shutoff protection, and other types of assistance from non-government programs.

**The Good Neighborhood Energy Fund** helps people who are facing a short-term financial hardship and do not qualify for government fuel assistance programs. You can learn more at [magoodneighbor.org](http://magoodneighbor.org).

**Citizens Energy Heat Assistance** provides eligible households with a voucher for 100 free gallons of home heating oil or a \$150 credit toward the utility bill for eligible households that heat with natural gas. Learn more at [citizensenergy.com](http://citizensenergy.com).

**Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)** helps low-income families pay their heating bills. Eligibility is based on gross household income. Learn more at [benefitsapplication.com/program\\_info/MA/LIHEAP](http://benefitsapplication.com/program_info/MA/LIHEAP).

**MassSave** is an energy savings program for Massachusetts homeowners and renters, and offers energy tips, free home energy assessments, loans, rebates, and other incentives for energy saving home improvements. Learn more at [massave.com](http://massave.com).

## THE BEST HOMEMADE HOT COCOA RECIPE



This recipe is quick, easy, and delicious. One sip of this chocolately concoction and you'll agree that it's the best homemade hot cocoa mix—ever! It's especially perfect as a holiday gift!

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Makes 20-25 servings

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 c. dry milk powder (nonfat or whole)
- 2 c. powdered sugar
- 1½ c. special dark (or Dutch-process) cocoa powder\*
- 1½ c. white chocolate chunks or chips\*\*
- ½ tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. pure vanilla powder\*\*\*
- 1 c. mini dehydrated marshmallows (optional)

### DIRECTIONS

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together all ingredients. Working in 2-3 batches, pulse the ingredients in a food processor until the chocolate is finely ground. Add mini dehydrated marshmallows if desired, stir to combine. Store the cocoa mix in an airtight container for up to 6 months.

To prepare the hot cocoa, put 1/4 cup to 1/3 cup of the mix in a large mug and stir in 1 cup of hot milk or water.

Natalie. (Dec. 2014). Retrieved from <https://lifemadesimplebakes.com/the-best-homemade-hot-cocoa-mix/>.



# 10 WINTER SAFETY TIPS FOR KIDS: KEEP CHILDREN WARM & SAFE

With the New Year comes cold winter weather in many parts of the country, so what can you do during these long, dark months of cold, snow, sleet and rain to help keep your children safe and warm? Be aware that little ones lose their body heat more rapidly than adults and they are also less able to understand and express to you when they are starting to feel cold.

- 1. BE VIGILANT:** Check on your kids frequently when they are playing outdoors and if you notice them getting wet or they look visibly cold, bring them indoors.
- 2. TEACH TODDLERS** the difference between warm and cold temperatures. Reinforce this during bath time with the water, or when playing indoors as opposed to outdoors.
- 3. DRESS CHILDREN IN LAYERS:** A rule of thumb is that children should be wearing one more layer than adults, and always keep their heads, hands and feet covered & protected.
- 4. KEEP CHILDREN HYDRATED:** Offer water, warm cocoa or soups frequently.
- 5. TEACH SAFETY:** Demonstrate the proper way to shovel snow, sled, ice skate, etc and always supervise these activities.
- 6. WEAR SUNSCREEN:** Yes! Sun is reflected off the snow and kids can get sunburned even when playing outdoors in the winter.
- 7. ADD WATERPROOF LAYERS:** Try to make sure that outer layers of clothing offer some waterproof protection because children whose clothing gets wet will become colder faster.
- 8. FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES:** Remember that children with physical or cognitive limitations may become colder faster because they are not moving around or because they simply cannot articulate that they are cold and need to go inside.
- 9. PACK AN EMERGENCY BAG FOR YOUR CAR:** Keep extra blankets, dry clothing, hats and mittens (and snacks) in your car in case there is a rapid change in the weather during a road trip, or the kids get wet on an outing or you get stranded on a snowy road.
- 10. LEARN THE DANGER SIGNS OF HYPOTHERMIA:** Remember that infants and young children are more susceptible to the condition when they don't have adequate heat or warm clothing, or have been exposed to the elements for too long. Signs of hypothermia include: shivering, shallow breathing, loss of coordination, confusion, cold to the touch bright red skin or pale gray blistering skin on the fingers, toes, ears or nose. If you suspect hypothermia, bring the child to a warm, safe place and remove any wet clothing immediately. Use warm water, but not hot, and apply to affected areas. Dress them in warm clothing, cover them with extra blankets and call 9-1-1 as this can be a potentially life threatening condition.

Guo, T. (Jan. 2015). Retrieved from <https://day2dayparenting.com/winter-safety-tips-for-kids/>.

