



Dear Educator,

Kelly Smith Papa of Masonicare in Connecticut brought to our attention that 100 day celebrations have become common in elementary schools. While some celebrations focus on counting activities (e.g. make a picture with 100 cheerios, or create a structure with 100 cups), celebrations aimed to emulate 100-year-old people often called "Dress Like a 100-Year-Old Day" are becoming increasingly popular.

As organizations whose work focuses on the well-being of older people, we relish the idea of providing opportunities for children to be exposed to experiences at the other end of the lifespan. Yet, we are concerned that "Dress Like a 100-Year-Old Days" reinforce stereotypes about aging, rather than raise awareness, or create opportunities for meaningful intergenerational engagement.

We know from research that, like their older counterparts in the U.S., elementary school-age children already possess ageist attitudes toward older adults. But we also know that positive exposure to older adults can counteract those beliefs. With this in mind, we'd like to encourage a different kind of "100-Year-Old Day."

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Invite a 100-year-old person to speak to your class (either in person or via Skype). Talk about what life was like when they were a kid, what activities they enjoy now, and their hopes for the world.
- Take a field trip to a nearby aging services organization (use <http://www.leadingage.org/find-member> to find one). Do a craft or other engaging activity together with elders, and talk about what it's like to be 100, or nearly 100 years old.
- Gather some stories about 100-year-olds from books, or students' families and share the stories with your class (you can pull from books like, *If I Live to Be 100: Lessons from the Centenarians*, or *If I Live to Be 100: The Wisdom of Centenarians*).



Please don't hesitate to reach out to Laura Beck with The Eden Alternative (www.edenalt.org) with your questions, or a request for ideas or resources (<mailto:lbeck@edenalt.org>). The links below might also be helpful, as you seek to develop a more positive 100-Year-Old Day.

With appreciation for all you do,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Penny M. Cook".

Penny Cook
President & CEO
Pioneer Network

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katie Smith Sloan".

Katie Smith Sloan
President & CEO
LeadingAge

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jill Vitale-Aussem".

Jill Vitale-Aussem
President & CEO
The Eden Alternative®

Additional Information:

- "Dress Like a 100-Year-Old Day": A Call to Action (<http://www.edenalt.org/dress-like-a-100-year-old-day-a-call-to-action/>)
- LeadingAge Anti-Ageism Resources (<http://www.leadingage.org/ageism>)
- Old-Lady Day (<http://www.silvercentury.org/2018/09/old-lady-day/>)
- Old School: a clearinghouse for all things anti-ageism (<https://www.oldschool.info/>)