

Coping with Holiday Stress



Although the holidays may bring lots of joy, they tend to bring an unusual amount of stress to everyone in the family.

Here are some hints that will help reduce your family's holiday stress this year:

1 Routines

During the holiday season, routines are often disrupted by holiday gatherings, school programs and community events. Routines make children feel safe and can help reduce anxiety. Consider keeping your normal routines as much as possible.



Bedtime routines are particularly important since high quality sleep is essential to being able to cope with stress. When their normal bedtime routine has to be disrupted, encourage your child to bring a favorite toy, book or blanket along with them.

2 Priorities

When invited to yet another holiday function, decide if it is a priority for your family. It's okay to say "no" and to give yourself and your family permission not to participate in every cookie swap or holiday party.



Take a moment to think about what traditions are most important to you and your family and prioritize them. Over-scheduling your family will likely cause you as the parent to feel stressed which can make it more difficult for you to manage your own emotions while parenting your children.




3 Downtime

Intentionally schedule downtime for your family. Children need time to relax and restore. Parents do, too! Use the time to check in with each other to reflect on the reason for the season.



4 Nutrition

With all the hustle and bustle of holiday shopping and getting to the post office to send out cards, fast food may become the standard versus an occasional treat.

-  Consider bringing fruit or veggie trays to an event if you are expected to bring a dish. Then make sure your family takes advantage of what you've brought!
-  If you expect a holiday dinner may be filled with sweets, ensure that your kids were offered healthier meals earlier in the day.
-  Staying hydrated is also important. Don't forget to pack water bottles when you will be out and about during the holidays and remember to take breaks to drink up!



5 Exercise

Offer opportunities for you and your children to spend time outdoors playing and burning off those Christmas cookies!

-  Sledding can be a fun activity that can wear down anxieties and make falling asleep at bedtime a bit easier—something that many children find difficult because of all the excitement during the season!

6 Merry & Bright

Finally, don't forget to have some fun and laugh this holiday season! Children often take their cues from parents and if YOU aren't having fun, they probably aren't either!

-  Take time to watch a holiday comedy, play in the snow and truly delight in the wonder of the holiday season.

