

Helping Children (and parents!) Cope with Holiday Stress



Whatever your special holiday, the holiday season can cause stress in young children. Children respond to stress in their own ways: crying, tantrums, clinging, excessive energy, temporary regression such as thumb sucking and many other ways. **These tips can help reduce stressful situations!**

- ◆ Establish predictable routines. **EAT** regular meals. Make sure that children get enough sleep. Plan for **REST** times.
- ◆ Take time to **EXPLAIN** the day's activities. Children need to know what is going to happen.
- ◆ **PREPARE** ahead for a hectic day. Plan for **SNACKS**. Quick, take-along snacks such as crackers, veggies, and fruit require no refrigeration and can be shared when shopping lines are long or hunger makes tempers flare.
- ◆ **SLOW DOWN**. If the family is always rushing, consider cutting back on the number of planned activities or schedule them over several days.
- ◆ Allow time for children and you to **PLAY** and **MOVE**. Most shopping activities are boring to children. Allow them time to use some of their endless energy!
- ◆ Set a **GOOD EXAMPLE** yourself. Avoid overextending yourself by trying to do too much. Plan quiet times and "get away" activities for yourself.
- ◆ Share **HUMOR** in difficult situations. Take a "step back" and relax. **BREATHE**.
- ◆ Express positive appreciation for cooperative behavior. Provide **LOTS AND LOTS OF HUGS!**
 - ◆ **DISCUSS** any changes in routine. Plan ahead if you are expecting guests. Put away breakable or "special things." Let your children share in planning how to make your guests comfortable.



*This flyer provided by the
Amador Child Abuse Prevention Council
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For information about programs to support families in Amador County, contact A-TCAA Family Resource Services, 223-1485.