

Tips for Helping Kids, Teens, & You Cope with Holiday Stress

Whatever your special holiday, the holiday season can cause stress in young children.

These tips can help reduce stressful situations and make your holidays happier!

- ♥ 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 minute 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.

Helping Teens With School and Holiday Stress

The holiday season can also be a stressful time for older kids; it often coincides with the end of the school semester when teens are under pressure to complete class projects, have more tests, are worried about their grades, have less time to complete tasks, plus, the pressure of shopping (and paying) for holiday gifts.

Here are some suggestions to help you and your teens cope with these added pressures:

- ♥ Remember most teens have work and projects they need to complete over weekends and school breaks.
- ♥ Don't over schedule. Be sure to ask what your teen needs to get done and by when to allow them adequate time.
- ♥ Help teens prioritize projects and break them down into manageable chunks to complete.
- ♥ Don't overreact when along with the holiday cheer comes some holiday attitude. It's all just part of being a teen!

Happy Holidays from the Amador Child Abuse Prevention Council!
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