



Managing Stress During the Holidays

The holiday season brings families together but can also present added stress. Here's some tips for parents and caregivers on how to manage family stress during the holidays.

HOLIDAY SURVIVAL TIPS FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS:

- **Set reasonable expectations early.** This includes financial and behavior. If you expect your older children to be home for a family dinner instead of with friends, let them know. Set a budget with your family for gifts and stick to it. Encourage them to be creative with gift giving.
- **Remember routines.** Follow your normal routine as closely as possible throughout the holiday season to help reduce chaos and anxiety in yourself and your children. With older children go over the day's schedule so they know what to expect.
- **Simplify, Simplify, Simplify.** More events equals more chaos.
- **Enjoy the time you spend with your family.** The season is not about the number of presents, but your parental presence with your children. Do simple family activities including playing games, baking cookies, and looking at Christmas lights.
- **Don't forget to get some exercise.** Dance with your children to holiday music. Get some fresh air by taking a walk around your neighborhood to look at the holiday displays.

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- **Take time for yourself to relax.** Even five minutes can do a world of good.
- **Avoid explosive family topics.** Redirect if they come up.
- **Just do your best.** Don't expect everything to go as planned (or hoped). In fact, little holiday mishaps can be the best source of fond family memories.

If you need additional help, seek out friends, relatives, or neighbors to lend a hand – or call the Parent Helpline at 1-800-CHILDREN.

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For more online tip cards, visit www.KCSL.org under the "Resources" tab.



Kansas Children's Service League

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