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*Dedicated to helping children with emotional and behavioral problems,
by developing stronger more positive family relationships*

Seven Steps to Helping Children Deal with Holiday Stress

Is that holiday music I hear, or my children crying because they feel stressed? We all want our holidays to be special and happy, but sometimes we forget how all the hustle and bustle can create a continual time of stress for our children.

You can help reduce the holiday stress by following these seven simple tips:

1. **Limit TV** – The advertisers use this time of year to hype the children up about their products. Limiting the time they watch will help you and the child not feel the need to have all the latest toys.
2. **Holiday gift planning** – Give the children a spending limit and help them choose what they can buy before going to the mall. If they go with a list of items to buy for family and friends, they will be more likely to stick to the budget you set together.
3. **Family traditions** – It is always fun to create new traditions, as well as following the old ones. Some suggestions include – baking cookies, making gifts for grandparents, visiting a nursing home, volunteering at a soup kitchen.
4. **Nutrition** – It is extra important to keep in mind good nutrition at this time of the year. Sweets are in abundance and easy to eat. Children, as well as parents, need healthy, nutritional meals to help reduce stress. Besides it is important to keep family mealtime as part of the daily routine.
5. **Rest** – If your child is not rested, they will more than likely be irritable. Help your child be happier by ensuring that they get proper rest. Try to schedule some rest and relaxation time for the whole family.



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6. **Normal routine** – Try to limit how much you disrupt your child’s normal, day-to-day, routine. If they are used to having time to play outside, read a book before bed, or have a family meal together, it is imperative that you keep this routine as normal as possible to avoid creating stress for your child and the family.
7. **Laughter** is good medicine. When all else fails try laughing about the situation. Laughing is a good way to change everyone’s unhappy moments to happier ones.

Following the above steps will help make your holiday season a time to enjoy and remember. ■

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