



MAKING IT THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

Turkey roasting, cookies baking, and snowflakes falling – these are the images of the holiday season.

Holidays can be a time of joy. But too often they are a major source of stress for both children and parents. Here's what you can do to make the holiday season more joyous.

DON'T START HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES TOO SOON. Young children have trouble waiting. They are me-oriented and want things right away. They don't want to wait three weeks for the actual date of the holiday. If you hold off special activities until the holiday is near, you will avoid holiday "burnout."

KEEP SCHEDULES REGULAR. Young children find great comfort in routines, especially during times of stress. By keeping your daily routine constant during this period, you will help children cope more easily.

LIMIT TV VIEWING. Watching too many fast-paced, enticing toy commercials can cause children to become overly active and lose control. You can substitute other activities for television, switch to noncommercial stations, or show prerecorded children's shows on the VCR.

DON'T WAIT FOR HOLIDAYS TO HAVE FUN! Children love special activities all year round. Rather than pack everything into the period from October to January, save some of those special activities for the rest of the year. Children will be just as excited about making butterfly cookies in January as they were about making holiday cookies in December.

SET REALISTIC HOLIDAY EXPECTATIONS FOR YOURSELF. Doing three things you have time for and truly enjoy them is much better than racing through eight or ten stressful activities. First make a list of all the things you would like to do during the holiday season. Then decide how important each thing is to you and your family. Pick out three or four of the most important activities. You should make time for only these activities.

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