

# THE HOLIDAY STRESS LESS EXPRESS

## Tips for Parents during the Holidays

The holidays can be a stressful time. These tips will help keep the holidays a more pleasant time of year.

- **Be realistic** – Perfect holidays only happen in the movies. Don't overcommit your time and resources. Don't try to do it all by yourself. Be willing to ask for help.
- **Stick to a budget** – Don't let the holidays place undue financial strain on your family. Be honest with what you can afford to spend during the holidays. Have the discussion with your family to create realistic expectations. As an alternative to buying gifts, give homemade gifts. Or buy gifts at consignment stores, used bookstores, or at stores that offer great deals.
- **Eat for energy** – While you may be tempted by all the holiday treats, they won't fuel your body for long. Opt for nutritious, healthy foods and indulge in moderation in the holiday cookies, candies, and treats.
- **Get sleep** – Aim for 7-8 hours of quality sleep even during this hectic time. Lack of sleep can create a host of problems.
- **Consider stress less supplements** – Chamomile and caffeine free/herbal teas can help you relax. Essential oils such as lavender can foster calming energy. Magnesium and Omega 3's are stress busters and can help with mood.
- **Call time out** – Often times adults go overboard doing for others during the holidays. Take time for yourself. Get a massage, take time for a bath, take a yoga class, or make time for a cup of tea.



## Tips for Parents Continued

- **Do something for others** – When you help others less fortunate you get lots of positive feelings in return. Volunteer at a homeless shelter, read to the elderly at a nursing home, or donate unused items to charity. After all, this is what the holidays are all about.
- **Acknowledge ALL your feelings** – The holidays can remind us of family members no longer with us, make us homesick, or can bring up less than pleasant memories. Don't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holidays. While you don't have to be a Scrooge and sour the holidays for others, take time to honor ALL your feelings. You can journal, express yourself with art, or take quiet time to process those feelings.

## Want to craft with your kids during the break?

Check out these websites for holiday craft & other ideas you can do at home.

- ❖ [www.kidsholidaycrafts.com](http://www.kidsholidaycrafts.com)
- ❖ [www.dltk-holidays.com](http://www.dltk-holidays.com)
- ❖ [www.allkidsnetwork.com](http://www.allkidsnetwork.com)



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## How to Keep Your Child Worry Free During the Holidays and Break from School

Children love routines and when there is a long break from school it can wreck havoc on those routines. This can lead to feelings of worry and anxiety. Here's how you can make the holidays and break from school stress free for your child.

1. **Set a calm example.** If you get stressed during the holidays your child will pick up on it and may become stressed themselves. They may learn to associate the holidays with anxiety.
2. **Set up conditions for good behavior.** If your child is tired or hungry or gets overstimulated easily don't take them to shopping malls, large gatherings, or other places where manners and good behavior are expected.
3. **Keep up routines.** Stick to regular bed times, eating times, and activities that your child is involved with. If the schedule is disrupted because of a holiday event, make sure the next day has lots of down time and get back to the regular schedule as soon as possible.
4. **Get your child moving.** Exercise boosts your child's energy, helps get rid of stress and regulate their mood. Go to the park, ride bikes, dance around the kitchen.
5. **Avoid overscheduling.** Cramming too many activities into a day can easily overwhelm children. Don't be afraid to say no if you think it's going to be too much for your child.



**Don't Worry! Be Happy!**



## Worry Free Kids Continued

6. **Set up realistic expectations.** Don't be afraid to let your child know that this year there may not be as many gifts or outings. Keeping in mind their age let them know what they can expect this holiday and during the break.
7. **Schedule one on one, quiet time with your child.** It's easy to get caught up in all the activities and not spend quality time with your child. Read a book, do a craft (see opposite side), watch a movie, or take a walk together.
8. **Remind your child, and yourself, what the holidays are really about.** Children won't remember the gifts, and will remember the family traditions and spirit of the season that you impart to them.

## Holiday Happenings!

**Check your local newspaper, the local library, and ask your neighbors about activities you and your family can enjoy this holiday season.**