

De-stressing the Holidays for Your Kids

Holidays can be a wonderful, fun time for kids and families, but they can also be busy and stressful! Most adults find comfort in routines, and children are no different. Knowing “what comes next” helps kids understand their world.

However, during holidays, routines are often changed. While we may know a certain party is coming up, or that school will be closed, or that hot lunch on Wednesday will now be “holiday surprise day” instead of chicken nugget day, kids are not always aware of these changes. These unknowns can make children feel a bit stressed, causing them to act out during holiday season.

Here are some quick, easy ways to help your child feel more in control and at ease during the holidays:

1. Create a holiday calendar with them. Have your child help write or draw pictures on key days coming up. This helps them be aware of and involved in the change.
2. Show them pictures of where they will be going and who will be there. Providing a visual is a great way to decrease anxiety in kids!
3. Talk through and acknowledge their feelings at a level they understand. As simple as saying, “I know you feel scared/sad/nervous,” can be very helpful.
4. Find an activity that is calming for your child, such as coloring, listening to music, playing with Play-Doh, or sitting in a quiet corner with a special blanket. When you notice your child starting to become anxious or upset, encourage her to find her calming activity. This might be a great time to join them and work on managing your own adult stress!
5. Try writing a simple story with them to outline what will happen at an upcoming event.
6. Remember to take care of yourself, too! Kids are aware of our energy and stress level, and keeping calm can help them keep it together.
7. Try deep breathing. To make this fun for kids, try blowing bubbles or blowing up balloons!