

November 2009



The Stressful Joy of the Holidays

The holiday season is a wonderful time of year for many, but it can also bring added stress to families – on time, finances, hectic days and nights, trips, guests, etc.

It's a good time to remember that kids feel the stress too and will act out in a number of ways. Younger kids may exhibit stress by crying, tantrums, clinging, excessive energy, temporary regression such as thumb sucking and many other ways. Older kids may be feeling overwhelmed, get cranky, and have what many call, "an attitude." Hopefully, the following suggestions can help reduce some of the stress in your lives and the lives of your children.



Tips to help younger children cope with stress:

- ◆ Establish predictable routines. **EAT** regular meals. Make sure that children get enough sleep. Plan for **REST** times. Tired, hungry kids are cranky kids.
- ◆ Take time to **EXPLAIN** the day's activities. Children need to know what is going to happen.
- ◆ **PREPARE** ahead for a hectic day. Plan for **SNACKS**. Quick, take-along snacks such as crackers, veggies, and fruit require no refrigeration and can be shared when shopping lines are long or hunger makes tempers flare.
- ◆ **SLOW DOWN**. If the family is always rushing, consider cutting back on the number of planned activities or schedule them over several days.
- ◆ Allow time for children and you to **PLAY** and **MOVE**. Most shopping activities are boring to children. Allow them time to use some of their endless energy!
- ◆ Set a **GOOD EXAMPLE** yourself. Avoid overextending yourself by trying to do too much. Plan quiet times and "get away" activities for yourself.
- ◆ Share **HUMOR** in difficult situations. Take a "step back" and relax. **BREATHE**.
- ◆ Express positive appreciation for cooperative behavior. Provide **LOTS AND LOTS OF HUGS!**
- ◆ **DISCUSS** any changes in routine. Plan ahead for travel or if you are expecting guests.

Tips to help older kids and teens to cope with holiday season stress:

Older kids not only have the stress of hectic schedules, family gatherings, and shopping (and paying) for gifts, they are also wrapping up the end of their school quarter or semester and have extra school work, projects, tests, and are worrying about their grades, they may be applying to colleges, or working extra hours. Here's some suggestions to help teens:

- ◆ Be sure to **ASK** your teens what they need to get done and by when so that activities aren't overscheduled. Remember that most teens have homework and projects they need to complete over weekends and holidays.
- ◆ **HELP** your teens **PRIORITIZE** projects and break them down into manageable chunks to complete so they are not too overwhelmed. Planners and calendars can be a great help.
- ◆ **SMILE!** Don't overreact when along with the holiday cheer comes a bit of holiday attitude - It's really to be expected.

Free Workshops

- Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention
- Mandated Reporter Training—Learn how and when to report suspected abuse or neglect
- Keeping Safely Connected—Online Safety and Cyber Bullying

ACAPC Meetings

November 2, 2009
Committees meet-10:00
at Health & Human
Services, Room C

November 16, 2009
Council Meeting-10:00
at the GSA Building

Thank you to all who responded to the "Interest Survey" for parent support groups. We've added you to our email list and will keep you posted on upcoming events.

Amador Child Abuse Prevention Council

Offering free prevention
educations programs.
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