



## **Hales Corners Health Department**

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### **HOLIDAY MENTAL HEALTH TIPS**

- Take care of yourself - Just like they say on the airplane, "In the event of an emergency, put your own oxygen mask on first, and then help children travelling with you to put theirs on." Children respond to the emotional tone of their important adults, so managing your emotions successfully can help your children handle theirs better, too.
- Make a plan to focus on one thing at a time - Try a few ideas from "mindfulness" as a strategy to balance the hustle and bustle of things like shopping, cooking, and family get-togethers during the holidays: stop and pay attention to what is happening at the moment, focus your attention on one thing about it, notice how you are feeling at the time, withhold immediate judgment, and instead be curious about the experience.
- Give to others - Make a new holiday tradition to share your time with families who have less than you do, for example, if your child is old enough, encourage him or her to join you in volunteering to serve a holiday meal at your local food bank or shelter. Help your child write a letter to members of the armed forces stationed abroad who can't be home with their own family during the holidays.
- Keep routines the same – stick to your child's usual sleep and mealtime schedules when you can to reduce stress and help your child and you enjoy the holidays.
- Keep your household rules in effect. Adults still have to pay the bills and kids still need to brush their teeth before bedtime!
- Teach the skills that children will need for the holidays in the weeks and months ahead. For example, if you plan to have a formal, sit-down dinner, practice in advance by having a formal sit-down dinner every Sunday night.
- Don't feel pressured to "over-spend." Think about making one or two gifts instead of buying everything. Help your child make a gift for his or her other parent, grandparents, or other important adults and friends. Chances are, those gifts will be the most treasured ones and will teach your child many important lessons that purchasing presents can't.
- Most important of all, enjoy the Holidays for what they are - time to enjoy with your family. So, be a family, do things together like sledding or playing board games, spend time visiting with relatives, neighbors and friends.

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- See more at: <http://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/news-features-and-safety-tips/Pages/Holiday-Safety-Tips.aspx#sthash.90aUXYjC.dpuf>