

Parent Talk

DECEMBER 2024

Managing Stress During the Holidays

Caregivers can experience an immense amount of stress over the holidays. In many cases, the primary caregiver in a household is expected to host family, cook a meal, and generally make sure everything is running smoothly. That is a lot of pressure to put on someone, especially when kids are involved! Below are some tips to help you make it through the season and normalize not doing everything yourself.

Ask For Help

The absolute best thing you can do is not be shy about asking for help. Have other family members or friends step in to assist with things like cleaning, gift wrapping, cooking, and taking care of kids. If you want to take it a step further, you can use the holidays as an opportunity to give your kids more responsibility. Introduce a chore chart to slowly get your kids used to taking on tasks around the house. You can also make it a fun experience for them by assigning them things they may already have an interest in such as baking. You can also phrase your requests in certain ways to help build excitement. If you know your kids are looking forward to family members visiting, you could say something like “Grandma will be so happy to see you cleaned your room when she gets here!”



Take a Break

With multiple tasks to juggle, it can feel impossible to take a break. For your own mental health though, it’s imperative that you step away from time to time. Make sure that in-between your busy schedule you make room to get enough sleep, relax with a movie, or just get some alone time to decompress. As in just one, asking for help it’s very important here. Have your partner take the kids out for a fun seasonal activity while you take a day off to refresh and recharge, especially right before a big holiday gathering.



Manage Expectations

If all else fails, there’s nothing wrong with lowering expectations! Not every holiday gathering needs to be the same as in previous years. If it’s too stressful, give yourself the flexibility to have a smaller event this year or if you typically host at your own home, consider making plans to go somewhere else. If cooking for a large group seems too much, change the expectation so that each family member coming to your gathering is responsible for bringing a specific dish. Put boundaries up when it comes to any potentially high stress interactions at your gathering. It can be helpful to have a list of ground rules to ensure everyone (including yourself) is feeling safe and happy.



Need more help?

Resources at The Baker Center are just a click away

Therapy & Treatment Services

CENTER FOR EFFECTIVE THERAPY →

Special Education

MANVILLE SCHOOL →

Therapeutic Summer Camp

CAMP BAKER →

College Preparation

NEXT STEP →

Featured Resources



Managing Grief During the Holidays

In this seminar, we discuss common symptoms of grief, why grief can be particularly challenging during the holiday season, and useful skills for interacting with your grieving child and family at any time.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Supporting Kids in Grief During the Holidays

When a family is managing grief throughout the holiday season, the demands of the holidays may be overwhelming. It can also be a really confusing time to manage, especially for kids, as they are forced to balance the joy that normally comes with the holidays and their feelings of sadness and grief from a recent loss.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Celebrating the Non-Dominant Holiday

Some children may experience teasing for not celebrating the dominant holiday, or they may feel left out or ashamed by not engaging in the same holiday traditions as their peers. For young kids, seeing signs of the dominant holiday all around them in these months, but not having that incorporated into the family environment can be emotionally challenging, and it is important to have open conversations with your kids about the reasons why your traditions might be different.

[LEARN MORE](#)