Parenting during the holidays

Stores come alive with displays, lights and music as dreams of cookies and toys fill children with excitement. As a parent, you might feel frantic during the holidays as you manage gift buying and events. Children can become stressed as well by the seasonal bustle. You can help the holidays run smoothly for everyone by following these simple tips.

Routine

Maintain stable bedtimes, nap times, mealtimes and other regular activities as much as possible throughout the season. Routines provide stability, prevent tantrums and help your child not feel overwhelmed by the excitement. If your kids are less stressed, you will be too.

Health

Avoid extra snacks, cookies and candies when you can. Sugar can cause bursts of energy followed by fatigue that leads to behavior difficulties. If you want to give your child a treat, offer it as a special dessert and limit the size.

Shopping

Keep shopping trips short or leave the kids at home if possible. Children can tire quickly and grow irritable. Gently outline expectations to your child and consider going out early in the day before stores get busy and crowded. The excitement of perusing toys while shopping in person can make managing your child's excitement difficult. Try buying your gifts online instead.

Safety

Take safety precautions. Use nonflammable and non-breakable decorations. With children in the home, you could consider separate rooms for adult and child festivities. Lock up alcohol, choose age-appropriate activities and stay watchful of your children while out in public spaces.

Values

Children often model the behavior of parents. Decide what kind of holiday season you and your family want to have. Set realistic goals and focus on the joy and community the holidays bring.

'Tis the season for fun and excitement. Parents who follow these tips may just find the season a little more manageable for themselves as well as their child.

The holiday toolkit

www.eaptoolkit.com/holiday