



# Holiday Stress Busters for Big and Little People

The holiday season is upon us. It is a time for family get togethers, decorating, shopping, gift wrapping, baking, and attending special activities. Holidays are supposed to be a time of enjoyment and happiness, but instead you and your family may feel stressed because of the extra demands placed upon already busy schedules.

Relieving some of the stress during the holidays can best be accomplished by getting the whole family involved in tackling holiday tasks and activities. The following ideas can help you and your family work together to reduce holiday stress.

- Sit down as a family and come up with a list of all the things that need to be done during the holidays (shopping, card signing, cleaning, etc.). Delegate or let family members volunteer to help.
- Make up a December calendar. Include dates and times of all activities to be attended, and a schedule of when tasks such as cleaning, baking, and shopping need to be done.
- Take a look at your family's holiday activities. Are there things that you do each year but really do not enjoy? If so, consider not doing the activity any longer or doing it in a different way.
- Plan easy meals. Double batch your favorite casseroles and put in the freezer for a quick meal on a busy day.
- Take a few minutes each day for yourself and do something relaxing.
- Keep eating and sleep routines as close to normal as possible to prevent children from becoming cranky or overtired.
- Expect young children to misbehave occasionally. Remember they have short attention spans and tire easily.
- Make time for family fun! Plan fun activities together such as baking cookies, trimming the tree, caroling, or taking a drive to see the local light displays.

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## Making the Holidays Special

Be sure to set aside some time to do special activities with your child during this busy month. Involving your child in preparing for the holiday festivities makes them feel important and can also provide an excellent opportunity for one-on-one time. Why not try letting your child make their own beautiful wrapping paper for gift giving this year?

### Making Homemade Wrapping Paper

#### Materials Needed:

brown paper bags (cut open), white or colored tissue paper, or butcher wrap  
household sponges cut into a variety of shapes (triangles, squares, circles, etc.)  
tempera paint, crayons, or markers  
paper plates

#### Directions

Together, cover a large table with newspaper. If using paint, help your child spread a thin layer of paint in each plate. Crayons and markers may also be used to draw designs if paint is not available.

Slightly dampen sponges. Encourage your child to select sponge shapes and press them into the paint, then place them on the paper and press down to print shapes. (Your child might want to wipe paint on the paper with sponges rather than making prints. That's OK.)

Let your child make several sheets of wrapping paper. This would be a wonderful way to package those special gifts for Mom, Dad, Grandpa, Grandma, or any other special people.




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Sources: Holiday Stress by Gerri Wolf, Family Information Service, Minneapolis, MN 1992.

The Preschool Years: Family Strategies That Work — From Experts and Parents, Galinsky, E. & David J. 1988

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