
Supporting children through holidays and celebrations

West Virginia Infant/Toddler Mental Health Association | www.nurturingwvbabies.org



READING CUES

Children can tell you a lot about how they are feeling, if we are willing to read their cues. It's important to remember, especially during the holidays, that children aren't "mini-adults". Cues that children are feeling overwhelmed include: crying, fidgeting, whining, rubbing eyes, or feeling irritable. It's ok for children to have downtime, take a nap, or leave the event early. Encourage them to participate, but don't force them.

A WORD ABOUT RELATIVES

Try to prepare children before meeting with relatives they may be unfamiliar with. Don't force children to give hugs and kisses to relatives they don't know. While children won't be able to sit for long periods of time and listen to family stories, they do like to participate as part of the group. By bringing books or small toys, the child can share and play.

PREPARING CHILDREN FOR HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

The crowds, the scheduled events, family and community gatherings! Whew! Celebrating holidays can be exciting, and overwhelming, especially for children who are often off of their regular routine, and around larger groups of people. Be accepting, patient, and kind during these times-not only to children-but to yourself. Let go of preconceived ideas and focus on creating memories, not having the "perfect" holiday.



TIPS AND TRICKS

- Bring a snack for the child, especially if you will be gone for a while.
- Try to stick to routines as much as possible, but allow for fun opportunities that may come up.
- Social stories can help in preparing children for family gatherings or holiday celebrations. [Here are some examples.](#)