

Helping your child self-regulate during the holidays

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3 tips to help your child self-regulate

during the holidays.

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I feel like there should be a warning for all parents around mid-November that reads: Caution. Self-regulation may be limited.

As the season's shift and the store shelves begin to burst with the latest toys and flashy gadgets, kids dream of candy, Santa, and getting gifts for doing absolutely nothing.

That's a lot of excitement to manage.

We feel it in ourselves – hurrying around, trying to get everything ready for the holidays – we're running a little faster than normal.

Unfortunately, our kids are at a disadvantage.

They are still in the process of learning how to [self-regulate](#). Knowing how to stay cool under pressure and be calm when a big wave of emotion hits.

This learning curve may mean [big meltdowns](#), overwhelming [anxiety](#), an overabundance of [energy](#), and an increase in

[power struggles](#). Especially this time of year.

So how to do you help your child handle the holiday chaos?

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Before you threaten to take away presents or tell them [Santa](#) isn't coming unless they "shape up," check these three categories:

Be mindful of their needs. What does your child need to manage their big feelings or actions well?

- Maybe it means letting them be more rambunctious during the day or letting them run outside before a big gathering.
- Maybe it's limiting sweets.
- Maybe it's preparing them in advance for the holiday party.
- Maybe letting them have some say in what they wear to the event.
- Maybe it's practicing some things they can say to Great-Aunt Mary, who they only see once a year.

Increase your connection. How can you spend some special time together in the midst of chaos?

- Maybe it's spending 10 minutes playing a game before

leaving for an event.

- Maybe it's giving a few extra hugs throughout the day.
- Maybe it's prioritizing bedtime snuggles.
- Maybe it's singing silly holiday songs.
- Maybe it's doing a random act of kindness together.

Give them a little more patience. What do you need to help your child through this exciting time of year?

- Maybe it's lowering your expectations.
- Maybe it's asking for help.
- Maybe it's saying "no" when you cannot take on another task.
- Maybe it's carving out 5-10 minutes to do some [self-care](#).
- Maybe it's giving yourself permission to simplify.

The answers will be different for each person.

Be curious about it, rather than jumping to conclusions or assuming that it "won't help."

It may seem counterproductive to play with your child when they are bouncing off the wall with uninhibited excitement or to offer a snuggle when your child is refusing to put on their fancy dress. It can feel like you're giving attention to the wrong things.

But let's just assume that your kids are going to have a really

hard time self-regulating over the next couple weeks.

Instead of expecting them to step up and be more self-regulated in a stressful, overstimulating environment, let's be more available for them.

Let's meet the needs they don't know they have.

And let's be their self-regulation when theirs is a little bit... limited.