

Christmas



CHILDREN
& FAMILY
SUPPORT



Let's get through Christmas...

Top Tips for 5-11 years



General Pressures



- Life can feel stressful especially with all that we have had to face this year.
- Finances - Spend within your means, set a budget for each child. Ask your children to make their gifts for extended family. Make use of local foodbanks, charity donations and community resources.
- Food - Get the children to plan a Christmas menu, they may make fun choices. Let them have a go at preparing mince pies or Christmas pizza. Let them explore different ideas. Ask your guests to 'bring a dish' to share with everyone.
- Routines - Be flexible but give 'wriggle room' and explanation for a positive outcome.
- Space - Give each other time alone to gather thoughts, play with new toys and gadgets. Give time to your children to talk and express themselves.



Routines and Behaviour



- Life is tricky and stressful sometimes but at Christmas it can be worse for some of our children, they will push boundaries and be more demanding.
- The build up could have a huge effect on how they behave.
- Have realistic expectations-be truthful and fair to yourself as a parent.
- Will your boundaries lapse a little bit with bedtimes or behaviour perhaps? Be flexible in your approach.
- Children in this age group could think about how their behaviour impacts on other family members, they could come up with their own solutions perhaps.



Routines and Behaviour



- Things *will* be a bit different but you can still create the magic and make new memories.
- Be prepared for extra noise and excitement, tantrums and tears that are the result of overtiredness and feeling overwhelmed.
- Praise is a powerful present...focus on the positives.
- Be prepared to deal with heightened emotions - The When and Then strategy is useful for these testing times; eg, "when you have finished screaming that Santa / Daddy is horrid, then we can have a talk about it when you have calmed down".



Family Dynamics and Co-Parenting



- Separation and divorce can be a difficult time for all involved especially at Christmas with sorting out arrangements and visits to extended families, (Covid bubbles to be thought about too !).
- It's all about compromise and communication, hopefully face to face, but email or phone calls can serve the purpose.
- Make your plans in advance so that you and your children know exactly *what* is happening and *when*. Children love routine even during chaotic times such as Christmas.
- Don't try to 'out do' each other as this will only create extra pressure you don't need.



Family Dynamics and Co-Parenting



- Once a plan is agreed then it's vital you stick to it to ensure that children feel listened to and that they feel emotionally safe and secure.
- Find a solution that works best for everyone. Even if you don't manage to see your children during this time, make special plans for yourself that you can look forward to and possibly share with your children.
- Think about what you and your children want to happen - listen to their wishes and reassure them that by making plans together then everyone can be happy.
- They may want to make different choices as they get older.
- Be prepared when dealing with sad or wistful feelings that your children may have at this time. Giving lots of reassurance and planning some 'special times' can often help with these emotional moments.



Also...

- Plan, Prepare and Play are the things we as parents can do to make Christmas manageable and fun for the whole family.
- Ask the children to arrange some entertainment. Your time spent with them is valuable to them.
- Reinforce positive values to your children in being thoughtful, kind and looking after one another. You can teach this age group to feel appreciative and perhaps think about what Christmas means to other children in the world.



Taking care of yourselves



- You are very important people to your children and your emotional well-being is a priority so that you can be the best you can be at this time.
- Make sure everyone has some fresh air and exercise, this is a good way for us all to let off some steam.
- Don't try to be 'super parent' - get the children involved in the making of Christmas cards, decorations and home made presents. Who doesn't love a 6 year olds wonky snowman made out of loo roll and cotton wool ??





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Thank you

