



Indiana Association for Infant & Toddler Mental Health

Although joyful for many, the holidays can be a source of stress for some. Not everyone has happy memories related to the holiday season, and parents' feelings may affect young children. Others over extend themselves, leading to feelings of stress that drain the fun out of this time of year. Families with young children may find the holidays more stressful than those without children, according to a 2006 Gallup poll. **First Steps mental health professionals can help!**



Fortunately, some simple reminders can help families with young children experience a pleasant holiday season:

- * Keep core routines the same
- * Make sure everyone gets enough rest
- * Eat special treats in moderation
- * Support babies or young child to feel comfortable with new or unfamiliar people, such as visiting family and friends
- * If a young child needs to wear a special outfit, bring more comfortable clothing for later
- * Resist taking young children to elaborate holiday events or programs
- * Be patient with difficult behavior
- * Take time to notice and talk about lights and decorations to encourage communication development
- * Follow the child's lead – if holiday activities such as gift opening become overwhelming, take a little break and try again later
- * Contact your **First Steps mental health professional** for help when young children and families experience extreme responses to holiday time.

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