

**Family Living
Focus**
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Extension



**Kids — Stress And
The Holidays**

While we talk about adults having stress during the holiday, kids can also be stressed out!

How often have you been to the mall and watched children go right into the rebellion mode with wails of crying while par-

ents insist on sitting them on the lap of some over-weight, white bearded, funny-looking suited stranger? Now doesn't that sound like fun?

Or how about insisting that kids go along shopping in an over-crowded clothing department, or the tool section, or bet-

ter yet the fine dinnerware area where crawling under and over everything in sight or playing hide and seek is the only thing a kid can think to do.

Or how about at the family traditional dinner where relatives the children haven't seen in a year want to hug, pinch a cheek, or ask a series of questions the child has no clue how to answer.

I get stressed just thinking about it. So how does a child manage not to be stressed?

Generally, the holidays often means missed naps, delayed meals, and over-stimulating activities. It may also mean a change of routines, traveling, missing events, and being tossed into unique situations that can be uncomfortable. Children can respond to all this excitement just

as we do — rebel, except they are usually a little more demonstrative than we adults do.

While adults are busy getting things ready — cleaning, shopping, planning, talking, etc., we tend to forget that children of all ages still need the same amount of attention as before the holiday season. Here are some suggestions that may be helpful for your family:

• **Keep a Routine**

Children need to have a sense that there is continuity in their lives. During the holiday season there are more activities, more relatives, more confusion, all of which breaks the routine of everyday living. When possible keep mealtime and bedtime as close to normal as possible to reduce some of the stress.

• **Discipline Matches The Child's Age**

During the holiday season, discipline can become a problem. Children are excited about all the events and we need to remember certain behaviors are natural and appropriate for certain age groups.

For example, expecting a 2- or 3-year-old to stand still while you

look for anything but toys isn't going to happen.

Children still need attention and will get it one way or another, which often means misbehaving. Make the discipline appropriate to the child's age and behavior. Having children miss a meal because they misbehaved would be inappropriate. Which lead me to the next suggestion.

• **Quiet Time**

Taking time out is a good idea for both children and adults. If it is discipline matter — the rule of thumb is one minute for each age of the child. Quiet time can also be used to settle family members down after a busy day or event. Children need us to spend time with them, listening and reflecting on what they say and feel. It is easy for us to say, "Wait until after I finish what ever," but avoid that if possible.

There's no better way to really enjoy the holidays with your family than to sit and relax with one another. One of my favorite times is about a half an hour before scheduled bedtime. Reading a story or telling each other about your day. Perhaps that can be one of those unwrapped presents that will last all year.

**1999 Farm Fatality Figures
Show Overall Decline
But Children's Rate Rises**

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — The summary of fatal farm accidents for 1999 has just been completed and it shows some dramatic changes in the total number of fatalities, as well as fatalities related to tractors on Pennsylvania farms, and fatalities involving children.

The total number of fatalities dropped from 45 in 1998 to 30 last year. Until this recent drop-off, the fatality numbers have remained rather constant with 46 fatalities in 1997 and 44 fatalities in 1996.

The biggest factor in this dramatic decline is fatalities from tractor overturns. Seven deaths occurred from overturns in 1999, compared to 20 fatalities in 1998 from overturns, and 14 the year before.

Deaths involving children, however, rose steeply in 1999. Ten kids, age 14 and under, died in accidents last year, up sharply

from our fatalities in 1998. Accidental deaths involving machinery declined in 1999, with six machinery-related deaths last year, opposed to nine in 1998.

Fatalities involving animals stayed roughly constant with three fatalities in 1999, and two deaths involving animals the previous year. Deaths from non-tractor and machinery stayed at six in 1999 from six in 1998.

The summer months were the most deadly on Pennsylvania farms in 1999, with five fatalities occurring each month in May, June and July.

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