



Family and Consumer Sciences

Family Ties

Family and the Holidays

THANKSGIVING, THE NEGLECTED HOLIDAY



When you hear the phrase “holiday season,” for most people, the images that come to mind are of Christmas or Hanukah decorations in stores, shopping, family gatherings, and music. Thanksgiving gets barely a thought unless it is associated with Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, when the Christmas shopping season goes into full swing. In fact, Thanksgiving might get no thoughts at all if it were not for the traditional turkey dinner and football games on TV. Even the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade ends with the Santa Claus float marking the beginning of the Christmas shopping season.

However, Thanksgiving can be a wonderful family time because it is so low-key. This year, why not take some time to focus on Thanksgiving and make this holiday one that your family will enjoy and remember? Here are some tips for making your Thanksgiving Day a special day for your family.

- Keep your focus on spending time with your family.
- Instead of planning your day around the traditional dinner of turkey and dressing, have a Thanksgiving brunch after everyone sleeps in.
- Make time to be thankful. Let every family member share one thing for which they are thankful before you begin your meal.
- Establish Thanksgiving as a “no-gripping” day. Family members can pledge to avoid negative comments or complaints.
- Do something as a family for those who are less fortunate than you, such as helping to serve dinner at the homeless shelter, providing groceries for a family in need, raking an elderly neighbor’s yard, or visiting a nursing home.
- Make a personal list of the things for which you are thankful and post it where you can see it frequently throughout the next few weeks. Refer to it when things start to get hectic or difficult.
- End your day by doing a fun activity with your family such as playing a board game, assembling a jigsaw puzzle, reading a short story aloud, or watching a favorite video together.

Remember that Thanksgiving week has been designated as National Family Week. What better way to celebrate both the week and the holiday than by making Thanksgiving a special time with family?

Teaching Kids To Give During the Holidays

Kids Get What They Give

Ninety-four percent of Americans believe "parents play a key role in getting children involved" in charity efforts, according to a new poll, The 2000 Cone/Roper Raising Charitable Children Survey. Yet 70 percent of parents admit their children are not involved in any charitable activities.

In the survey, parents cited time, family commitments, and concern about how their contributions will actually be used as reasons (or excuses?) for not doing more.

"There's lip service, but the pedal still doesn't hit the metal, so to speak," says Carleton Kendrick, family therapist. "The holidays are a chance for families to assess the notion of gratitude as a way of life."

As Kendrick sees it, giving children the chance to give to others - whether by raking leaves for an elderly neighbor, or stocking shelves at a local food pantry - is one of the best ways to build a strong sense of self.

"When you ask children or adults, 'when do you feel best?' " Kendrick says, "the answer almost always is 'when I give to others.' If that's what makes us feel good, why not do more of it?"



Six Ways to Get Going on (Guilt-Free!) Giving

1. **Get honest.** Okay, so your kids have never seen the inside of a homeless shelter, nor donated a single item for a charity toy drive. Talk about it! "You know, we really haven't made this a priority as a family, and that was a mistake, so now we're going to." Done. Now move on...

2. **Remember the 2 Gs: gratitude and giving.** "You can't have one without the other," says Kendrick. "They go hand in hand." Giving kids a chance to help others is how they learn to appreciate what they have (and children who appreciate what they have are not only happier people, they are less likely to whine and moan for every last item they see in the mall!)

3. **Giving doesn't begin and end with charity work.** Kendrick remembers his grandmother making cookies for the neighbors, which he would then distribute. Others help their children keep a bird feeder filled throughout the winter. These small acts of kindness are forms of giving that send the same message to children as a trip to a soup kitchen

4. **Let kids decide how to give.** You may think that helping the homeless or contributing to the fight against cancer are the most important ways to make a difference. Your five-year-old may want to donate more money to the zoo so that the lions will have a bigger supper. The type of giving matters less than the opportunity to empower kids.

5. **Be concrete.** Dropping coins into a collection box can indeed make a difference, but most young children can't understand where the money goes beyond the pail. "Take as many steps into the act of giving as you can," advises Kendrick. In other words, although it's easier for you to write a check, it's easier for kids to "see" what they're doing when they buy items to donate with you, then deliver them to a food bank, and put them directly on the shelves.

6. **Give non-material gifts.** Making donations is a wonderful way to give, but children can make a valuable contribution just by spending time talking with an elderly neighbor. Make sure they understand the value of "gifts of time" by asking questions like, "Which do you think meant more, the groceries we delivered today or the nice time we had talking with the woman who needed the food?" As Kendrick sees it, those follow-up chats are an "emotional bookmark." By marking the moment and talking about it with kids, he says, "you're engraving family currency. Your kid's picture is on the currency. And you're giving them a chance to spend it, to give themselves away."

For more information and ideas to use with your children, go to www.familycares.com

Compiled by: Matt Devereaux, PhD. Extension Specialist - Early Childhood

Christmas Shopping Strategies

Looking for some ways to spend less money and still give those special Christmas gifts? Whether you are doing last minute shopping or you're shopping ahead of time. . . you'll find these ideas helpful in avoiding the crowds, spending less money, and still giving gifts that everyone will really appreciate.



Shop Online

Most major retail and specialty stores have a website and offers **online shopping**. If you're familiar with the quality of the products of the company, go for it. You can take care of all your shopping on one or two sites and find something for everyone. Books, plants, small appliances, toys, and clothing are easy to find. Most companies will gift wrap your purchase, add a card with your personal greeting, and send it in time for Christmas.

Buy in Bulk

For work colleagues, teachers, neighbors, or a group of friends that you give gifts to, **consider giving everyone the same item**. It can be a yummy food gift, a seasonal decoration, a favorite book you've just read, or some piece of apparel. You may feel awkward doing this. If so, get several things and give one to an individual in each group. Then they won't know that you've bought several of the same gift.

Other suggestion: Shop just after Christmas, when bargains are everywhere.

Add to Someone's Collection

You can buy the gift any time of year, pack it up, and have it ready when Christmas comes. Christmas is a wonderful time to **add to** a newly-wed's set of dishes or a collector of memorabilia's menagerie. If you're looking for something unique or hard-to-find, contact antique dealers or retailers in your community and ask them to call you throughout the year when they get the item.



An Evening Out

If you have a group of friends you socialize with, consider buying a ticket for each one and yourself. Visit your local movie theater or concert hall and purchase a pair of tickets to an upcoming big event. You'll be able to **spend time together** and you'll be giving everyone a gift at one time.

One-of-a-Kind Gift Certificates



For a gift that lasts long past Christmas, **plan to share** a lunch, tea, afternoon, shopping spree, day skiing, lesson on sewing, day of decorating, drive to the beach or mountains, or walk in the park with someone you love to be with. Create a personal and unique gift card that they can redeem with you for the occasion.

Helping Children with ADHD

(and those around them) Enjoy the Holidays



The holidays are an exciting period for all children, but they can be overly stimulating for children with ADHD. This can lead to behavior problems that can mar the holidays for the child and those around him or her. If you have a child or children who have been diagnosed with ADHD, there are some things you can do to prevent or reduce problems throughout the holidays.

- Maintain a normal schedule as much as possible. Children with ADHD usually do much better with regular schedules and structured activities. Try to keep to a typical school schedule, even when your child is off from school. This means taking medications on schedule, going to bed and getting up by the school schedule, and even providing meals according to the school schedule. Though this may be inconvenient for family members, it is probably better than dealing with the behavior problems that may result from schedule changes.
- Anticipate changes you cannot avoid. The holidays are filled with special events, travel, house guests, and other disruptions. When these cannot be avoided, be sure to talk with your children about what to expect and how they are expected to behave.
- Create a calendar to keep everyone on track. Help your child know what to expect by preparing a calendar with all of the events listed. You might even post notes on the bathroom mirror on the day before or the day of a special event as a reminder.
- Plan ahead for travel. Plan for frequent stops, when traveling by car, to allow for stretching and releasing pent up energy. Pack games, books, toys, and healthy snacks to help keep your children occupied while you travel.
- Prepare for visits to others. If you plan to stay with relatives or friends over the holidays, talk in advance with your hosts and help them to child-proof the areas where your children will be. Also show your children where they may or may not go or what they may or may not touch to help them get accustomed to the new surroundings.
- Avoid shopping woes. If you must shop with your children, try to shop during slower times, when the stores are less crowded. Make sure they are well-fed and rested before you shop. Plan your shopping trip ahead so that you will not have to back-track. Let your children know what you expect when you are in the stores. Reward your children's good behavior.
- Control the frenzy on Christmas morning. It may be better to spread out the opening of gifts throughout the day or even some on Christmas Eve, to help keep things under control. Children with ADHD often have difficulty maintaining their composure when there are so many things to grab their attention.
- Give to others. Children with ADHD may have difficulty keeping their wish-list to a reasonable length. Because they are impulsive, they tend to want everything they see. Help them to curb that tendency by allowing them the chance to help someone else. Help them choose gifts for children who do not have much or make up food baskets for needy families.
- Set limits on your activities. Be selective about the invitations you accept. If you are concerned about how your children might act, don't go, or limit the amount of time you stay at the event.
- Schedule a quiet time each day. Make sure you plan a few minutes into each day to sit quietly with each of your children and just talk, read together, or make simple decorations. These may be the best times of your holiday season.

For more information about ADHD and other learning disorders, visit LD Online at <http://www.ldonline.org/> and SchwabLearning.org at <http://www.schwablearning.org/>.

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CHRISTMAS PRESENTS FOR TEENAGERS

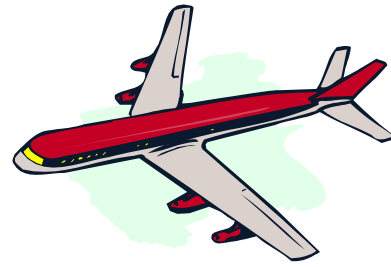
Since teenagers are adults in making, they still have childish selfishness and so they can let you see the disappointment of getting a regular Christmas gift or an unwanted “thing” as a gift. Here are some suggestion to make your teenaged kids happy this Christmas:

- ❑ Wrap your teen’s presents in unusually papers/bags and make them look really special.
- ❑ Specialized T-shirts with unusual messages and your teenager's face on it will certainly be a cherished gift for a college going teenager.
- ❑ If you have a fund set up for your teenager for college. . .this is a good time to let people know it. Some people set up a TAP program for the children and then they can give the account number to grandparent, relatives, and anyone who asks.
- ❑ Buy them a designer dress, watch, purse, wallet or accessory and see your prince or princess glow on Christmas with delight.
- ❑ Camping gear, study tour packages, movie tickets, and tickets to a music concert, can be awesome Christmas gifts.
- ❑ Today's techno-kids love latest gadgets such as their own PCs, mobile phones, music systems, home theater systems, iPods, DVD players and video games.
- ❑ Heart shaped pillows and key chains, lovebirds and a book of charms also find their way to teenager's heart.
- ❑ If your teenager has collectibles such as stamps, models, angel figurines. . .Christmas is a great time to add to their collection.
- ❑ One-on-one time with you is very valuable. Give them a personal certificate which invites them to “make a date with you for lunch and shopping or dinner and a movie.”
- ❑ Gift certificates and money seems to always put a smile on a teens face.



By: Judy Cloud Berryhill
Area Specialist - Adolescent Development

Plane Advice About Kids



Flying with kids takes a certain amount of forethought. You not only need to be aware of applicable customs rules and appropriate federal regulations regarding child safety seats but you also need to plan with common sense.

Think of everything that's made past flights less than pleasurable for you and your child and how to overcome these situations in the future. You can't magically avoid bad weather delays, but you can pack enough toys, food, snacks and money in your carry-on to turn an unscheduled layover into enjoyable time together with your kids.

Here are some ideas about what might make your plane travel easier:

- Start at the beginning. Whenever possible, book a nonstop flight. This streamlines your trip and prevents change-of-flight problems. Traveling at nonpeak times--late at night, midday and Mondays to Wednesdays--gives you a good chance of getting on less-crowded flights. On these take-offs you're more likely to find room for your kids to stretch out and sleep and a free space for your child safety seat.
- Arrive at the airport early. Sprints down an endless terminal are difficult enough but they are nearly impossible when packing a baby on your back and holding a preschooler's hand.
- Dress for comfort. Put the good-for-grandma clothes in a carry-on and let your kids change into these after your arrival. On board, let your kids wear comfortable play clothes, and don't forget to pack an extra set of clothes in your carry-on, especially when traveling with little ones. Since airplanes tend to be cold, make sure all children have an extra sweater or jacket at their seat. Don't forget to grab blankets and pillows as you board; there won't be any left later on when your kids want them.
- Don't forget to talk with your child about the trip, explaining each stage of the boarding process and the flight. Make sure young children realize that the bumpiness and engine noises are normal and not a signal of an impending crash. You may even want to visit the airport ahead of time.
- To build on the excitement of the journey, create a countdown calendar and put it on the refrigerator.
- The biggest concern among parents flying with young children is, "Do I need a car seat?" Both the airlines and the Air Transport Association say "yes" for kids up to 40 pounds. Safety seats have been proven to prevent and reduce the severity of injuries suffered by small children during turbulence, rough landings and other situations. No matter how tight your grip on your child nestled in your lap, you won't be able to hold onto her in an emergency, and the weight of your body could actually crush her.

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Moments Parents Can Use To Make a Difference



Parents have a huge responsibility in teach their children/teens how to make good choices and the consequences of bad choices. The holiday season provides parents with wonderful chances to spend quality time with their children so why not take advantage of this time together to begin or continue a dialogue about preventing drug use?

Studies show that kids who learn about the risks of drugs from parents or other caregivers are 36 percent less likely to smoke marijuana than those who don't. Surveys also show that most teens that have rejected marijuana credit their parents for their decision over any other influence.

Health communications expert Sandra Wills Hannon, Ph.D. says that parents do have a tremendous influence over their kids' decisions. "Kids really need their parents' guidance to teach them the difference between right and wrong. By keeping the lines of communication open, parents can talk to their kids about how to cope with stress in healthy, constructive ways and they can let their children know that they're always there for them."

Here is a list of some great activities that parents and kids can do together this holiday season to encourage communication:

Volunteer as a family.

The holidays are a time for us to give thanks for our blessings. What better way to pay homage than to give back to those less fortunate? Volunteerism the perfect way to show children that giving is just as important as receiving. Your family can work with local non-profit organizations to adopt a family during the holidays, bake for a soup kitchen, or write holiday greetings to military personal away for the holidays. Visit www.volunteermatch.org to find a cause in which you'd like to involve your family.

Build a scrapbook or online photo album.

Pictures capture memories for all of us and digital cameras are at the top of many gift lists this year. As fun and easy as they are to use, what is a family to do with a stockpile of digital images? Why not build an online photo album with your kids? You'll help them learn more about technology while taking a trip down memory lane. You will, of course want to keep online safety in mind.

MyFamily.com allows you to upload pictures in a password-protected environment. This way you can share your photos with only those family members and friends you wish. Also, one web site, Hallmark Stories, allows users to compile their digital photos in fun, creative templates and then have the online version converted into a hard copy album, magazine, or wallet-sized books. If you're using a standard camera, visit About.com's Scrapbooking site for some great ideas for creating fun, unique scrapbooks.

Create a new holiday song.

Whether you're a kid or just a kid-at-heart, music is a universal way to share and communicate with one another. Sit down with your children and write a song that describes your family's holiday traditions and memories. Whether it's silly and wacky or touching and tender, song is a time-honored way of expressing our love for one another during special times throughout the year. Need some inspiration? Visit The Holiday Zone for ideas for almost any holiday.

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