

MENTAL HEALTH MEMO: TAKING THE STRESS OUT OF THE HOLIDAYS

While we usually look forward to the holidays, they can also be a source of stress for both ourselves and our children. Changes in routine, unstructured time and the demand for travel and behavioural expectations on special occasions can be difficult for children – and frustrating for parents.

Here are some tips to help minimize stress and make the holidays more fun and relaxing:

- Stick to routines - try to keep normal mealtimes and bedtimes during shopping, travelling and visiting
- Provide warnings - give your child a schedule for the holidays so they are prepared for what's going to happen each day
- Schedule a break - set aside time to read, play games, talk or watch movies
- Exercise - go for a walk, play in the snow, dance to holiday music
- Just say “no” – set reasonable expectations for what you (and your kids) can manage to attend and do
- Focus on what really matters – enjoying time with friends and family is more important than the perfect meal or gift

To minimize anxiety in children during the holidays, make sure you handle your own stress and anxiety. Often the way adults handle an issue sets the tone on how kids will behave. Take time to take care of yourself!

Happy Holidays!

For more information, please contact the RRDSB Mental Health Leader: tracey.idle@rrdsb.com

