

Finding Balance this Holiday Season



Dear Parents,

As we approach the holiday season, it is obvious that the fever has already begun. Before the Halloween costumes were chosen, and before the turkey reached the Thanksgiving table, we were already bombarded with the holiday must-haves, must-dos, and biggest sales. How does this happen earlier and earlier every year? I would venture to say it is because we feel compelled to buy into it earlier and earlier every year. Life is busy enough, ask anyone at any time how they are, and they will say, “busy”, “not enough time”, “too many things to do.” Indeed, our world and that of our children is already fast paced. The media pressures us to think of more toys to purchase, more tech gadgets to explore, and more things and trends to add to our list. Thus, the cycle continues; we buy into material and sensory overload, which can result in stress for all.

Trying to find a healthy family balance in all this hoopla is indeed challenging, but it is worth the effort, as we all know we cannot reclaim time. In order to find that balance during this holiday season, we might consider the “less is more” adage and take a few “material” things off the list, and perhaps add some alternatives. Or, before adding more things, consider sorting through what we already have, decluttering, recycling and re-organizing to make more physical space and then relishing it. New lists could include making more time for family time, limiting screen time for everyone including phones, computers, video games and television. They can stretch to creating some new family traditions, playing board games, taking walks and enjoying nature together, including everyone in food preparation, and planning simple down time for all. Taking a simplified balanced approach will allow time to take more breaths, listen to, connect and interact with each other, and simply “be.”

To help simplify your family’s world and that of your children throughout the year, and when you get some down time for yourself, I recommend the book: *Simplicity Parenting: Using the Extraordinary Power of Less to Raise Calmer, Happier and More Secure Kids* by Kim John Payne. Payne shares many words of wisdom, among them being, “using simplicity as a framework, parents may be able to significantly reduce a child’s daily stress which can lead to happy, more successful children.” And, I might add, decrease one’s own stress.

Here’s to a relaxing and more simplified holiday season for all!

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