

# Celebrating the Holidays

## Tips for Parents with Children in Child Care



Holiday time is a wonderful and exciting time for young children. But it can also be very overwhelming. It's important for parents and child care providers to guard against over-stimulating youngsters. It might be best to keep activities low-key, and to try to stay within your routine as much as possible, since children thrive on structure and predictability. Adults, too, should try to guard against becoming overly frazzled, because the young ones will sense the stress and react to it.

In the child care setting, there should be a respect for the holiday celebrations of other cultures. Talk to your provider about incorporating information about Hanukkah and Kwanzaa, for example, in some of the planned activities. Offer to be a resource to the family child care home or child care center by providing books or materials on your holiday. Or, if you can arrange it, do a presentation for the children in the program. Focusing on common themes can be a meaningful experience for the youngsters.

It's a good idea to find out, in advance, what to do about exchanging gifts at your child care program. Do you give presents to the other children in the child care? Do you give the provider a personal gift or something that the day care collectively can make use of? How many staff members at the center should you give gifts to? The key to avoiding awkward situations is for both sides to communicate intentions.



Perhaps parents and providers might want to think about adopting a needy family, helping out a homeless shelter, or making a donation to a charity in lieu of exchanging presents. Again, the important thing is to talk about it and make a decision with enough time to implement it. Sensitivity, planning, and forethought will go a long way in avoiding awkward moments, hurt feelings and stressed-out children.

