Merry Christmas & Happy New Year From My Family to Yours!

A Note from Kimberly

I'm very thankful to have the next 2 weeks off to take a break and spend some time with family and friends. I'm such a homebody that I really look forward to just being at home!

Whatever you'll be doing and whoever you'll be with, I wish you lots of love and laughter. This time of year is truly a time to cherish family and loved ones and reflect on all that has happened in the year. We've all had good, bad and ugly occur in our year but the promise of a new year brings us lots of hope and new beginnings!
The holiday season is one of the most wonderful times of the year...and for children with anxiety and their families, the most stressful. Amid the swirls of lights, color, sounds, laughter, parties, gifts and special events, the comfort of routines can get lost and the increased stimulus can put everyone on edge. Below are five ways, shared on the blog The Chaos and the Clutter, to help your child cope with the anxieties the holidays can bring, so you all can focus on the joy of the season:

1. Maintain your Routine
2. Give your Children Choices When You Can.
3. Say, "No."
4. Stay Calm with Role-Playing
5. Carry a Little Comfort

[Read more details about the 5 Ways to Reduce Holiday Anxiety HERE.]

Help Your Child Cope with Holiday Social Stress

If you have a sensitive child in your life, there are some easy ways to support your child during the holidays.

PBS Kids Holiday Resources for Parents!

PBS Kids shares some great Holiday resources!

It's the most wonderful time of the year! While the holiday season provides a time for us to focus on loved ones, share good food and participate in family traditions, this time can also be a very stressful one for many. Check out these tips to learn how to simplify holiday stress, entertain your child with snow day activities, and cherish the memories you create with your family.
Researchers found that kids who know a lot about their family history tend to be more resilient in the face of challenges. In fact, knowing about family history was a strong predictor of children's emotional health and happiness.

As we all take time to celebrate the holidays this season, it's a great opportunity to help your children connect with their family heritage. Here are some easy ways to help kids learn more about their own history.

**Embrace Holiday Traditions:** Kids love holiday traditions, and if these annual rituals happen to be connected to your family history, culture, or religion, these fun activities can become a way of linking children to something larger. If you don't have any strong family traditions, you can start some!

**Interview a Relative:** One day when my kids were asking me about farm life, I suddenly remembered that we had an expert in the family: Grandma grew up on a ranch! Through FaceTime, Grandma gamely fielded a dozen questions about milking cows, gathering eggs, making butter, and riding horses. Both grandmother and grandchildren were delighted by the exchange.

**Look at Photos and Videos:** The holidays are a great opportunity to pull out old photos or family movies and explore them together. Your kids will love seeing what you looked like when you were their age. Details in the photos will naturally lead to conversations.

**Try a Recipe Together:** Food is a great connector. Grab a family favorite recipe and as you cook with your kids, talk about your memories. If you don't have any go-to family recipes, look up a recipe that reflects some aspect of your family's culture and try it out!

Feeling connected to our family’s larger history is one of the most important gifts we can give our children. As the author Bruce Feiler wrote, “if you want a happier family, create, refine and retell the story of your family’s positive moments and your ability to bounce back from the difficult ones. That act alone may increase the odds that your family will thrive for many generations to come.”

~Deborah Farmer Kris

*Deborah Farmer Kris is a writer, teacher, parent educator, and school administrator. You can read more of Deborah's parenting advice on PBS KIDS for Parents.*
Christmas Crafts

DIY Christmas Ornaments for Kids

DIY Wrapping Paper

10 Fun Christmas Party Games for Kids of All Ages

ESC-20's FREE Parent Trainings & Webinars start back up on January 15, 2020! Check out the January offerings below & make plans to participate!
January Parent Trainings & Webinars

Check Out the Websites Below for Ideas on Keeping the Learning Active During the Holiday Break!

ESC-20 Academic Resources

Summer Resources
I know it's not summertime, but there are GREAT activities on this page that can be done anytime!

Child Development & Parenting Resources

Dyslexia Resources
May the magic and the wonder of the holiday season stay with you throughout the coming year.

Questions? Comments? Feedback?
Let Kimberly know!

Please share any questions, comments or other feedback with Kimberly!

Your answer

Questions? Comments? Feedback?
Click HERE if you can't access the form above and you'd like to leave Kimberly a comment, question or other feedback. Thanks!
Kimberly Baumgardner, Consultant, Education Service Center, Region 20

Kimberly has worked in the field of special education for 19 years. She has been on staff at ESC-20 for 10 years. She spent 7 years as a special education curriculum specialist and is currently the Family Engagement Consultant.

Kimberly has become quite passionate about empowering families to be more involved in their child's education and future as well as challenging and supporting schools to increase their efforts to involve families in their child's educational journey and focus on Family Engagement as an instructional tool that improves student's academic outcomes.

Kimberly enjoys living out in the country with her husband, Tyson and two daughters, Lynette & Lucy Sue.

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