



Minimizing Holiday Stress with Infants and Toddlers

This time of year can be fun and exciting for us and the infants and toddlers in our care, but it can also be busy and stressful. During this time of year, there are many activities going on both in child care programs and in the personal lives of the infants and toddlers that we care for daily. While it is great that there are so many activities, we have to remember that the hustle and bustle of the season has an effect on daily schedules and routines. It is inevitable that the infants and toddlers that we care for, as well as ourselves, may be impacted by some holiday stress.

Here are a few ideas that you can do to help minimize holiday stress for you and the infants and toddlers in your care:

Routines are still important. During this time of year, daily routines can easily be interrupted. This can lead to more stress and anxiety in the child care environment. To minimize the effects of holiday stress on the infants and toddlers in your care, try to return to any daily routines as soon as the special event is over. Infants and toddlers find comfort in what they know, so keep as many routines as possible in place during this busy time of year.

Keep your infants and toddlers moving. Physical activity and fresh air are great for boosting our mood and reducing stress and may work with infants and toddlers too. Make sure that your schedule includes gross motor development and opportunities to be outdoors when appropriate.

Overscheduling can increase stress. As exciting as it may be to try to squeeze every possible holiday activity into the daily schedule, avoid overscheduling yourself and the infants and toddlers in your care. Be thoughtful about the activities that you choose, ensure that they are inclusive and developmentally appropriate.

You are the example. The infants and toddlers in your care rely on you to model for them. Since it is important that we model this skill, it is equally important that we practice some self-care. Practice breathing techniques, schedule some personal time, or use a strategy that will help you reduce any holiday stress that you are experiencing.

Enjoy the time that you have with your infants and toddlers this time of year. Remember to take a deep breath, slow down, and play!

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Resource Spotlight:

The [National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness](#) has developed four infant-toddler focused webinars on nutrition, safe sleep, environmental health, and tummy time. These resources can be found [here](#).

Upcoming PD Opportunities

The Virginia Association for the Education of Young Children (VAAEYC) has scheduled their [Annual Conference](#) for March 11-13, 2021. They are planning an amazing line up of keynotes, and a robust selection of workshops that cover the vast range of current topics and resources. PLUS a few interactive surprises and some fun!

Over 70 workshops have been selected. The first confirmed keynote speakers are Kim and Jason Kotecki in “A Chance of Awesome: How Changing the Way You See Changes Everything.”



Did you know...?

there is a blog section on the [VA ITSN website](#)?

The VA ITSN has a tab which has blogs for caregivers and parents. There are numerous caregiver topics including proper diapering techniques, choking hazards, cleaning and sanitizing child care programs, to name a few. A few of the blogs for parents focus on topics such as separation anxiety, choosing a child care program, and overcoming sleep challenges. Take a moment and check them out! If there is a topic that you would like to see included, please let us know by emailing it to info@va-itsnetwork.org.



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