



Ultimate Holiday Survival Guide

TIPS AND SCRIPTS TO HELP PARENTS
OF TODDLERS PREVENT HOLIDAY TANTRUMS



Holidays are supposed to be the BEST, but when you have a toddler, they can feel less like a gift and more like finding coal in your stocking.

Not only are you trying to make this the hap-hap-happiest season ever, but you're also trying to manage your kiddo's big feelings without becoming a modern-day Ebenezer Scrooge.

You don't have to settle for misery and meltdowns this year! Use the tips and scripts inside this Holiday Survival Guide, and you'll "sleigh" the holidays as a cool, calm, and capable warrior parent.



HOLIDAY SURVIVAL TIP #1

PREP your Toddler for Success

The holidays are full of out-of-the-ordinary experiences, and toddlers do NOT appreciate surprises. That means the secret to limiting meltdowns is to prepare your toddler for what's going to happen **before it happens**.

Now, we totally understand the holidays may look different this year. Maybe you're opting out of your over-the-river-and-through-the-woods tradition and limiting your celebration to your quarantine pod or simply staying home. Whatever you're choosing to do, PREP PREP PREP. Yes, even if it'll just be YOUR family in YOUR living room opening YOUR gifts. Excitement + not the normal routine = increased probability of meltdowns.



SO HERE'S WHAT TO DO:

- + Make a list of the new experiences, people, and places they'll encounter during the celebration. (Peep our suggestions below.)
- + For each item on your list:
 - a. Tell them step-by-step what's going to happen.
 - b. Show them what it'll look and sound like.
 - c. Practice together during playtime.
- + Rinse and repeat. You can't overdo it when it comes to prepping the toddler brain, so keep talking, keep practicing, and keep giving them the full 411.



PREP FOR THE WHERE

If you ARE going to a different house, talk about where they'll be staying and sleeping.

"When we go to grandma's house, you, me and daddy will all sleep in the same room together. You'll get your own special bed on the floor, and mommy and daddy will be right there."

Even if it's just grandma's house down the street, show them pictures or videos of the things they'll see when you get there.

"We're going to Grandma's house. This is her house and backyard. Remember her doggie Goldie?"

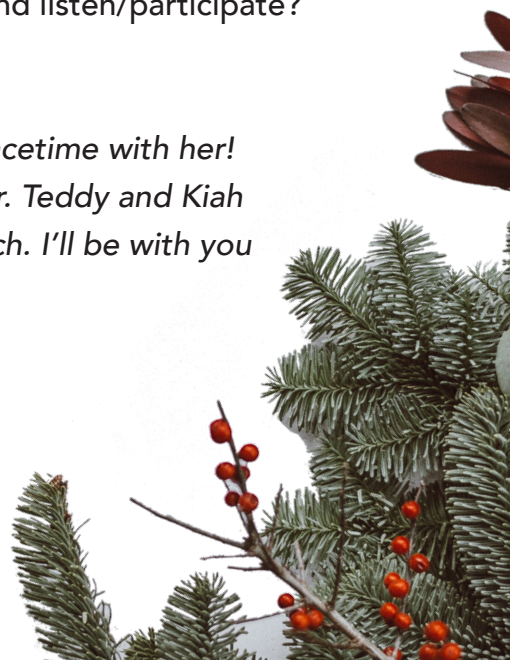
PREP FOR THE PEOPLE

Talk about the people they'll see—whether or not they've met them before. Remember, even if it feels familiar to you to see Grandma/cousins, it's still out of your toddler's day-to-day routine. When in doubt, the more PREP the better! Show them pictures of who will be there.

"Tomorrow, Grandpa is coming to our house! Your cousins Sam and Noel will be there too. "

Talk about any Zoom/Facetime plans in advance. This may seem silly, but a bunch of people talking on a screen while asking your toddler to sit still and listen/participate? Zoom calls can be overwhelming and trigger city for toddlers.

"This year, instead of seeing Grandma, we are going to facetime with her! She will be on the screen right here and we will talk to her. Teddy and Kiah will be on the call too. You can say hi, or you can just watch. I'll be with you the whole time."



PREP FOR ALLLLLLL THE THINGS

- + Travel: If your holiday plans involve a road trip, prepare your kiddo for the sights, sounds, and length involved.
- + Clothing: If you're hoping to snap some family pictures as part of your celebrations, PREP your toddler for wearing something they aren't used to—like that super adorable, and *incredibly* itchy beanie.
- + Food: You can bet Aunt June is going to insist on offering her “yummy” jello mold again this year. Let your toddler know mealtimes may look and smell different, but they still get to decide if they want to try it, no presh. (And don't forget to bring the “no thank you bowl” we talk about in our [online course](#)!)





Psst: Don't forget to PREP yourself.

Trying to make every holiday Pinterest-perfect and Instagram-worthy is a one-way ticket to disappointment-ville. Give yourself grace, and choose activities best for your family. And if your toddler melts down mid-present opening or mid-dinner? Give yourself points for trying, and remember: overwhelming situations = increase in tantrums. Your toddler's tantrum says nothing about you as a parent.





HOLIDAY SURVIVAL TIP #2

Decide In Advance How You'll Respond to Parenting-Related Criticism

You've worked soooooo hard to become the cool, confident leader of your home. You've been okaying your toddler's feelings, you're consistently reinforcing the bumpers (aka boundaries), and you're doing an amazing job at raising a healthy, well-adjusted little human.

And then you head to a family gathering only to be faced with:

- + Relatives who aren't down with your parenting style and don't mind saying so to your face.
- + And/or relatives who are totes cool with your parenting buuuuuut still manage to say and do things around your toddler *completely* contrary to your wishes.

HERE'S WHAT WE RECOMMEND:

Take a deep breath, remember this is *your* family, and decide what *you* think is right. Hold the boundary... or don't. We know you're worried that Grandma's, "Eat those YUMMY veggies!" is going to undo all your hard work. It won't. *Promise*. You've built a super strong foundation, so Grandma (or whoever) saying something from time to time here is totally okay.

And when Uncle Bob comments about your "overly sensitive" kid? Again: This is *your* call and *your* family. So you can smile and excuse yourself to the appetizer table oooooo you could say something like, "We parent Charlie in a way that works for our family, thanks so much" or "I'd prefer if you let me handle this, thank you."





Remember: You're the best parent for your child, even if your relatives don't understand or agree with your approach.



HOLIDAY SURVIVAL TIP #3

Be Ready to Talk About Hugs, Kisses, and Consent

Family and friends gathered for celebrations may expect your toddler to give them hugs, kisses, and high fives. While there's nothing wrong with appropriate physical affection, forcing your toddler to touch an adult can be confusing for them.

When you say, "C'mon, kiddo. It's OK. Give Uncle Steve a hug!" even though it's clear they don't want to, your toddler is thinking, "Mama says I don't let anyone touch me if it makes me feel bad. Right now, I don't want to touch Uncle Steve, but it seems like I'm supposed to so Mama and Uncle Steve are happy." Confusing, right??

The bottom line is we want to teach our kids to listen to their bodies and to empower them to be brave enough to never, ever let anyone touch them if it makes them feel uncomfortable. Respect your toddler's no.

Instead of "Give auntie a kiss," try, "Would you like to give auntie a kiss goodbye?" If they opt out, offer a non-contact alternative: "Okay, let's tell auntie goodbye with a wave. Bye-bye auntie!"

Instead of "Sit on Grandma's lap for the picture" say, "Would you like to sit on Grandma's lap or sit next to her?"

Make sure you talk to your relatives in advance to avoid any hurt feelings. You might say something like:

"We're teaching Cameron the importance of body consent. We are listening to her when she says 'no' to unwanted physical touching. Don't worry, though! We'll offer a high-five or a wave goodbye!"





When it comes to how they use their bodies, we recommend giving your toddler a choice.



HOLIDAY SURVIVAL TIP #4

Make Transitions Smooth with the Timer Trick

Toddlers aren't great with transitions (DUH), and never is this more obvious than during the holidays. Who wants to stop playing with their new toys or their cousins to go take a bath? Can you blame 'em?

Thankfully, you don't have to be the Grinch who drags your kid away from their joy. All you need is a *sliver* of patience... and a phone timer.

Let's say it's time to leave Grandma's house. Right before you start gathering up all your things, get down at eye level with your little one and say:

"You can play with your cousins for two more minutes, then it'll be time to go home. I'm going to set the timer for two minutes. When you hear it go off, you'll put on your coat. Come press the timer to start your two minutes!"

When the timer goes off, say:

"There's the timer. Come turn it off, and say bye-bye to your cousins. Bye-bye cousins! We love you!"

If your toddler resists, acknowledge their feelings and hold up the bumpers:

"I see you feel sad because it's time to leave. It's okay to feel sad. The timer went off, so it's time to stop playing and put on your coat. Would you like to hug your cousins bye-bye or wave bye-bye?"





HERE'S YOUR TIMER TRICK CHEAT SHEET:

1. Set the time for two or three minutes.
2. Prepare your toddler by telling them exactly what will happen.
3. Give them some age-appropriate power by letting them start and stop the timer.
4. Honor and acknowledge any disappointed feelings while still holding to the original boundary.

BOOM. You're a holiday rock star.



HOLIDAY SURVIVAL TIP #5

Manage Meltdowns without Losing Your Cool

Fact #1: Holidays *will* generate next-level tantrums because of all the NEW! EXCITING! OUT OF THE ORDINARY! FOOD! PEOPLE! EXPERIENCES! (Yes, even if you're staying home this year!)

The key to surviving holiday drama? Expect it. Embrace it. Know it's coming. And PREP the heck out of EVERYTHING.

Fact #2: Prepping doesn't guarantee ZERO meltdowns. Who among us hasn't lost our shizz a little before, during, or after a big holiday event, even though we knew all the who-what-when-where details ahead of time? All the excitement, change, and heightened expectations can be overwhelming—no matter your age.

So for those moments when your child is melting down faster than Frosty the Snowman on a sunny winter day, you need tools and resources to help you keep your cool and manage your toddler's biiiiig feelings.

WE'VE GOT YOU, BOO!

Our online course, [Winning the Toddler Stage](#), offers a simple, step-by-step plan to help you reduce the intensity of a meltdown in progress, so the holidays can feel merry and bright for you and your toddler.





Feel fa-la-la-la-lawesome as you take on the holidays with your little one.

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