

# Modern *Holiday* Guide 2012

**5** TIPS FOR *Holidays*  
with a Toddler

Infant & Tot  
*Sleep Tips*

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of the  
*Best:*

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# Happy Holidays

from  
Modern Mama &  
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[www.stephaniepasutto.com](http://www.stephaniepasutto.com)

Stephanie is a natural light portrait photographer specializing in awesome kids. As a mom she knows first hand how hard it can be to photograph your own children, which is why her clients trust her to capture great images of their kids. She has a knack for capturing a child's true personality in an environment that is more like a play date than a chore.

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# 5 TIPS FOR *Holidays* with a Toddler

By Ann Douglas

**T**is the season to be merry. Or stressed out. Yes, mom, you're the one who gets to decide how the holidays play out for you and your toddler.

If you take a relaxed, let's-go-with-the-flow approach to merry-making (taking each day as it comes, not over-committing yourself or your toddler to too many seasonal obligations), your toddler will be more inclined to embrace (or at least tolerate) the changes to his usual routine. If, on the other hand, you get so caught up in the holiday hoopla that your toddler slips to the bottom of your holiday priorities list, you shouldn't be surprised if he morphs into a pint-sized version of The Grinch. Moderation is the name of the game when you're in toddler parenting mode.

**Here are some other tips to keep in mind as you head into the holiday season.**

**1** Keep your toddler's needs in mind when you're setting your holiday travel itinerary. Not only does your toddler need regular rest-stop breaks—he needs to be fed and changed on a regular basis—he needs time for cuddling and play, too. Trying

to cram too much travel into a single day may get you to Grandma and Grandpa's house a day sooner, but the entire family is likely to arrive in a less than festive mood.

**2** Don't be afraid to break with tradition—or to put some holiday traditions on hold while you have a young family. Instead of travelling out-of-province with a toddler, invite out-of-town relatives to visit you. Or shift your annual family get-together to a day during the holiday season when it's easier for everyone to get together. (It doesn't have to be The Big Day, like it's always been.) Dream up some new ways of celebrating the holiday season that are uniquely meaningful to you. Part of the fun of starting a family of your own is creating holiday traditions of your own.

**3** Consider your toddler's interests and abilities when planning holiday activities. Aim for a variety of activities: activities that allow him to exercise and blow off steam (playing in the snow) and activities that allow him to enjoy some quiet one-on-one time with you after a busy day of visiting with friends and relatives (reading stories, baking together).





**4** Keep your toddler's basic routine in place as much as possible. While there will be some nights when you'll want to allow him to stay up late, he'll be happier (and you'll be happier!) if he is well rested. You'll also want to encourage him to eat healthy meals and snacks at their regular times. Doing so will help to keep his body clock on track, despite all the exciting things going on around him.

**5** Take good care of yourself, too. Try to stay on top of your own needs for sleep, healthy food, exercise, and relaxation. Your toddler picks up on your mood. One of the best gifts you can give him this holiday season is the gift of a happy, healthy, less-stressed-out you.

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Ann Douglas is the author of numerous books about pregnancy and parenting, including *The Mother of All Toddler Books*.

[www.having-a-baby.com](http://www.having-a-baby.com).



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# Christmas Countdown!



## DECEMBER

### Week ONE

- Write Christmas Cards
- Put up the Tree & decorate the house
- Start the Advent calendar
- Set your gift budget and create a spreadsheet

### Week TWO

- Set up a wrapping station somewhere in the house
- Make a date with friends for a bake exchange party

### Week THREE

- Pick up a dress for the work Christmas party
- Take the kids to see Santa

### Week FOUR

- It's CHRISTMAS - enjoy!
- Take the kids sledding and enjoy a hot chocolate
- Lounge around with the kids and watch holiday movies



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# Infant & Tot *Sleep Tips*

By Heather Plante

Holidays are amazing and full of excitement! Whether you are travelling or staying at home, many little ones will have sleep disturbances from the excitement and changes to their routines. Here are a few tips to help the whole family enjoy this wonderful holiday season.

- 1 Watching your little ones' sleepy cues and getting them to bed when their bodies are tired is always the best time to get them to sleep - well-rested children have better behavior and are more adaptable to variations in their routine.
- 2 When staying away from home for several days - keep your schedule, naps, bedtime routine, and reactions to any new night wake-ups consistent and as similar to at home as possible. Little ones don't like change but will quickly adapt to new surroundings with predictability from Mom and Dad AND consistency. We never travel light with children so bring as many familiar sleep associations as possible (loveys, books, white noise machines, special blankets, and even your own crib sheets, etc.); this will help with the transition to a new environment.



- 3 Travelling during naptime may help get in more sleep; it is a light sleep but it is better than no sleep and will help with everyone's sleep that night.
- 4 Toddlers: explain the expectations for sleep when you are somewhere new (sleeping in the same room, co-sleeping, etc.) and that everything will return to normal when you go home. They can understand more than we think.
- 5 Do NOT worry if you stray from your routine or break some rules; simply return to your regular routine as quickly as possible. Do your best not to return to old or bad habits or to create any new ones
- 6 Take all opportunities that you find to take a breath and enjoy! Holidays are hectic and full of family and friends who would love to take the baby or spoil your toddler. They may not get him/her to sleep the 'right' way but it is only a 'hiccup' in the routine.



You may meet some resistance to getting back into the swing of things after the holidays or when you return home. This is because babies/children do NOT like change and are letting you know that they realize this is home but it is different than last night. Little ones are very smart and will try their best to hold onto any new sleep associations that they have learned and may prefer. Be patient and be consistent as you return to your regular daily routine.

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Heather is a mom of 3 daughters who is passionate about *“helping sleepy angels get their rest”*.

[www.soothingangels.ca](http://www.soothingangels.ca)

# Best of the Best Holiday sites!

## BEST TOY GUIDES

- [besttoysguide.com/hot-toys-for-christmas-2012](http://besttoysguide.com/hot-toys-for-christmas-2012)
- [canadianfamily.ca/2012/11/175-amazing-christmas-gift-ideas/](http://canadianfamily.ca/2012/11/175-amazing-christmas-gift-ideas/)
- [oompa.com](http://oompa.com) for classics and wooden toys
- Mastermind toys for an amazing selection  
[www.nxtbook.com/dawson/mastermind/holiday2012/#/12](http://www.nxtbook.com/dawson/mastermind/holiday2012/#/12)

## DIY AND CRAFTY BLOGS

- [Prudentbaby.com](http://Prudentbaby.com)
- [Poppytalk.blogspot.ca](http://Poppytalk.blogspot.ca)
- [Makeit-Loveit.com](http://Makeit-Loveit.com)
- [theDIYMommy.com](http://theDIYMommy.com)
- [Sayyestohoboken.com](http://Sayyestohoboken.com)



## OTHER:

- The beautiful [pizzazzerie.com](http://pizzazzerie.com) is filled to the brim with Christmas goodies
- [marthastewart.com/Christmas-worshop/](http://marthastewart.com/Christmas-worshop/) for everything Holiday!
- A ton of cookie recipes at [chatelaine.com/ingredient/holiday-cookie-collection/](http://chatelaine.com/ingredient/holiday-cookie-collection/)

## PINTEREST PINNERS YOU SIMPLY MUST FOLLOW:

- Stacy {kinda} Crafty - Thousands of Christmas Trees
- Kathy Hackman Hutchison - Amazing colours and lots of holiday boards
- Courtney Whitmore - founder of pizzazzerie and tons of great holiday pins
- Martha Stewart Living - with fun guest pinners and piles of holiday inspiration

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