

Thriving Through Winter Break



As the holiday season starts and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be felt, often we can experience moments of loneliness, stress, sadness and/or a general sense of feeling overwhelmed.

Below are **5 tips** to help your child navigate the holiday break...

Also, be sure to review additional recent mental health articles and tips from Child Mind Institute [here](#). Information is available in Spanish and English. Here are some recent articles: [Calm Voices, Calmer Kids](#) • [Parenting Disagreements During COVID](#) • [How Can I Get My Kids to Do Chores](#)

1. Help your child understand the importance of giving back to the community

The holiday season presents us with many opportunities for kindness. Often by brightening someone else's day, your day is also naturally brightened! Simple acts of kindness such as making a card for a friend, helping a neighbor with yard work, pitching in with family chores, or even just offering a compliment or a behind-the-mask smile to the people you encounter can brighten both the world around you and the one within you!

Research suggests that people who perform acts of kindness, without expectation of appreciation or rewards in return, receive all sorts of physical and mental health benefits, including an increased sense of meaning, better physical health, and enhanced self-esteem. Additionally, an altruistic mindset is often associated with a decreased sense of hopelessness, stress, and depression. In helping others, we unexpectedly help ourselves.

2. Make laughter a priority

There's a reason you've often heard, 'Laughter is the best medicine.' Individuals who laugh often tend to be more cheerful, have higher self-esteem and are more likely to develop close social relationships (the kind of positive relationships which can help us navigate stress). Humor can also help us defuse stressful experiences by putting life into perspective.

Did you know that laughing is even good for your physical health? It reduces muscle tension, increases oxygen flow to the blood, exercises your heart, and produces natural endorphins which decrease pain and increase your sense of well-being. Laughter as medicine? It's no joke!



3. Get moving

Exercise is an awesome stress buster. Whether walking a neighbor's dog (which also counts as an act of kindness), turn up the tunes and dance, throw a football, or join a virtual exercise class, make it a goal to get MOVING with your child at least 20-30 minutes each day.



4. Encourage sleep routines

Sleep allows our bodies to repair, refresh and prepare for the coming day. Help your child keep a sleep routine by setting a bedtime and wake time around the same time every day. Teens need 8-10 hours and school-aged children should get 10-11 hours of sleep each night.

TIP: Kids and teens should keep electronics out of bed. Studies show that as many as 34% of young people sleep near their smartphone. Electronic devices can be distracting and can keep you from getting a good night's sleep. Limit usage an hour before bed since devices stimulate the mind. Keep your devices such as your cell phone, tablet, and computers out of your bed. Put them away, turned off and out of reach. Use an alarm clock instead of your cell phone. If you must leave your devices on while you are sleeping, keep it out of reach on the other side of the room.

5. Help create resiliency

Visit Virtual MindPeace Rooms™

Virtual versions of the [MindPeace Rooms™](#) were launched to help children and young adults decompress and practice social-emotional and resiliency skills in a NEW digital space. Rooms include videos, activities, and even apps. Send stress packing! Open the [door](#) to peace of mind today.

Concerned about your child?

You are NOT alone. Whether they're feeling sad, lonely, overwhelmed and/or stressed, reach out for help.

Crisis Support

Local: Call **513-281-CARE (2273)** or text **4Hope** to **839863** for help

National Crisis Line: Text 741741 or call 1-800-273-8255 when in crisis. Available 24/7.

No hablas inglés? [Encuentra ayuda en el sitio web](#) de Suicide Prevention Lifeline o llamada [1-888-628-9454](#).

NOTE: Call 911 or go to the emergency department if you're experiencing a medical emergency, a life-threatening mental health crisis, or are directed to go there by a medical provider.

For non-life threatening mental health crisis, contact the CCHMC's PIRC department **513-636-4124** where they will help advise you on the most effective level of intervention to fit your needs.

For ongoing therapy needs, visit www.mindpeacecincinnati.com to find a school-based or community provider. Additional crisis resources are also available [here](#).