Helping Your Child Cope over the Holidays

Audio can be heard at the end of the 11/21/11 ME interview

Too much going on + Disruption to regular routines = Stressed and over-stimulated kids

Here are some ways you can help your child cope over the holidays:

I. Talk to your child in advance about what is going to happen over the holidays

- Discuss where you will go, who you will see, etc. – using pictures can be helpful
- Be aware of family dynamics or changes that could add stress or worry and communicate to kids beforehand

II. As the sights and sounds of the holidays begin around you, talk to your child about what it means

- Explain your own values/beliefs as well as the values/beliefs of others they might encounter
- Be open to starting new family traditions that include your child's ideas – let your child be part of the holiday planning
- Mirror your family values through an activity with your child (i.e. deliver food/gifts to those in need)

III. Stick to your child's routine as much as possible

- If traveling, bring important items from your child's routine – familiar snacks, a stuffed animal, favorite books, etc.
- Offer at least one item from your child's preferred diet at every meal and pay attention to nutrition
- Stick to regular sleep schedules

IV. Set parameters around how much you can do

- Let your child have plenty of "kid time"
- Limit holiday parties based on what your family can handle
- Designate plenty of time for your smaller family unit

V. Prepare for "post-holiday letdown"

- Talk to your child about transitioning back into his/her regular routine – many children are ready for it!