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School Holiday Survival Guide

Helping you to understand why holidays can be tricky, with practical tips to help find your balance & calm.



For families who want less overwhelm and more connection



If your holidays don't look like Instagram...

You're not alone!

Every school holidays, many of us imagine slow mornings, happy siblings, exciting adventures and quality family time. Then reality arrives.

Children become tired, bored or overwhelmed. Siblings argue. Plans change. Someone has a meltdown in the supermarket. You wonder whether you're doing something wrong.

You're not.

School holidays bring huge changes to children's routines, expectations, social demands and energy levels. Even wonderful days can feel overwhelming when little bodies and busy brains are working hard to adjust.

This guide isn't about creating perfect holidays.

It's about understanding why behaviour changes, recognising what children might be communicating, and having simple ideas ready when your family needs them. Our hope is that, by the end of these pages, you'll feel a little more confident, a little less alone, and have a toolkit you can return to whenever things become tricky.

About This Guide

This toolkit has been created by the team at Bloom Behaviour Therapy & Supports.

It combines current understanding of child development, behaviour and neurodiversity with practical ideas we've found helpful as clinicians—and as parents ourselves.

Take what works for your family.

Leave what doesn't.

There is no perfect way to do the holidays.

*The most memorable holidays usually aren't the perfectly planned ones. They're the ones where children felt **safe, connected and accepted**—even on the messy days.*



Why Does Behaviour Sometimes Change During the Holidays?

School holidays can be wonderful... but they're also a big change.
Even exciting changes take energy.

Many children become more emotional, energetic or sensitive during school holidays. This doesn't necessarily mean something is wrong or that previous strategies have stopped working. For many children—especially those who are autistic, have ADHD, anxiety, sensory differences, or simply thrive on routine—holidays place different demands on their brains and bodies.

 Sometimes what looks like "misbehaviour" is actually a child trying to cope with change.



1. DIFFERENT ROUTINES

School provides predictability.

During the holidays there are often different wake-up times, meals, activities and expectations.

That flexibility can be fun—but it can also feel uncertain.



Try this: Keep one or two predictable parts of each day.



2. MORE DECISIONS

"What should we do today?"

"What do you want for lunch?"

"Which game?"

Children make far more decisions during holidays than they realise.



Try this: Offer two simple choices rather than lots of options.



3. MORE TIME TOGETHER

School holidays often mean siblings spend much more time together.

Even children who love each other need breaks.

More time together naturally creates more opportunities for disagreements.



Try this: Plan little opportunities for everyone to have their own space too.



4. BUSY BODIES

Without regular playground time, sport and movement breaks, many children simply have more energy sitting inside them.

That energy often comes out as: climbing, crashing, shouting, rough play. Their body isn't trying to be difficult—it may simply be asking to move.



Try this: Think movement before consequences.



5. BIGGER FEELINGS

Excitement, disappointment, boredom, tiredness and frustration can all happen in the same day.

Children don't always know what they're feeling yet.

They simply show us through behaviour.



Try this: Help name feelings before trying to solve them.



6. TIRED BRAINS

Later bedtimes. Busy days. Visitors. Travel. Extra screen time.

Even positive experiences can leave children feeling emotionally exhausted.

Sometimes the best strategy is simply slowing the day down.



Try this: Rest is not a reward—it's a reset.



Bloom Reminder!

Instead of asking, "What's wrong with my child?" try asking, "What might my child be finding hard right now?" That small shift in thinking often changes the support we offer.

Children generally do well when they can.

When they can't, they're usually telling us they need something—not trying to make life difficult.



BLOOM TIP:

Notice the clues, wonder what they might need, offer support and try again. You are your child's best behaviour detective. 



Become a Behaviour Detective!

Every behaviour gives us clues.

What you might notice, what it could mean, and things you could try.



YOU MIGHT NOTICE...



Becoming louder, sillier or constantly moving



Arguing more with siblings



Everything suddenly feels "unfair"



Meltdowns over small changes



Constantly asking "What now?"



Wandering or unable to settle



Saying "I'm bored" every two minutes



Fighting over toys or not sharing



Becoming emotional or tearful



Nothing seems to work



THEY COULD BE NEEDING...



BIG BODY MOVEMENT

Their body needs to get energy out.



CONNECTION OR A BREAK

They might need connection or space.



FOOD, DRINK OR REST

Their body might be running low.



LESS DEMANDS & MORE CHOICE

They need more predictability.



MORE STRUCTURE & DIRECTION

They are looking for what to do next.



SENSORY INPUT OR OUTDOORS

They might need more sensory experiences.



CONNECTION OR NOVELTY

They might want help finding the next thing.



CHANGE OF ENVIRONMENT

They may need a reset.



CO-REGULATION & CONNECTION

Their big feelings need support.



REST

Sometimes their body just needs less.



IDEAS TO TRY

- Trampoline, jumping, running
- Obstacle course, scooter
- Heavy work jobs

- One-to-one time with you
- A shared game or activity
- Separate quiet activities

- Offer a snack and water
- A cuddle or quiet time
- Reduce demands for a little while

- Offer two simple choices
- Give extra time
- Prepare them for changes

- Use a choice board
- Try a visual routine or timer
- Give clear, simple instructions

- Go outside
- Swing, dig, water play
- Deep pressure or heavy work

- Invite them to choose something together
- Offer a new or different activity
- Try a surprise game or challenge

- Separate play spaces
- Take it outside
- Try a different activity

- Sit close and breathe together
- Read a book
- Cuddle, hug, sensory comfort

- Quiet time or nap
- Slow down the day
- It's okay to have a low-demand day

REMEMBER



There isn't one "right" answer. Sometimes your child needs movement. Sometimes they need connection. Sometimes they need a snack, a cuddle, or simply a quieter day.

Start with curiosity rather than correction. ❤️

YOUR BEHAVIOUR DETECTIVE PROCESS



1 NOTICE

What is happening?



2 WONDER

What might they need?



3 SUPPORT

Offer choices and try something.



4 TRY AGAIN

It's a process. Keep going!

❤️ You know your child best. You've got this. ❤️



Build Your Holiday Rhythm

Children don't usually need every day planned.
They do need to know what comes next. ♥

School provides hundreds of tiny predictable moments.
During holidays, many of those disappear.
Children suddenly wake up wondering...



What are we doing?



When are we leaving?



Can I play?



What's for lunch?



Are we going somewhere?



When can I have screens?

Even highly flexible children use these predictable moments to feel safe and organised. 🌿

➤ A SIMPLE HOLIDAY RHYTHM ⬅



MORNING CONNECTION

Wake up, connection, morning routine and the same breakfast routine.
Eg. cuddle, chat, calendars, breakfast.



MOVEMENT & WAKE UP

Get bodies moving to regulate, energise and prepare for the day ahead.
Eg. outside play, walk, scooter, yoga.



MORNING ACTIVITY

A structured activity with clear start and finish helps everyone feel settled.
Eg. craft, baking, project, playdate.



LUNCH & NOURISH

Eat together when you can. Food helps bodies and brains stay regulated.
Eg. lunch, water, conversation.



QUIET RESET

Downtime to rest, relax and recharge. This is not lazy—it's regulating.
Eg. reading, quiet play, screens, nap.



AFTERNOON ACTIVITY

Another opportunity for connection, creativity or fun.
Eg. park, play, creative time, outing.



DINNER & WIND DOWN

Evening routine, calm connection and preparing bodies for sleep.
Eg. dinner, bath, story, gratitude.



SLEEP TIME

A consistent wind-down helps with easier bedtimes and better sleep.
Eg. lights down, quiet, goodnight.

WHY RHYTHM MATTERS ⬅

- ♥ Reduces anxiety and constant asking.
- ♥ Supports regulation and behaviour.
- ♥ Builds independence.
- ♥ Creates connection points.
- ♥ Helps tired brains know what comes next.
- ♥ Makes transitions easier.



MAKE IT VISUAL

Whether you're at home or away, a simple daily plan helps children know what's happening and when.

Use:

- ✓ A whiteboard
- ✓ A printed visual routine
- ✓ Icons or pictures
- ✓ A notebook or app



BLOOM TIP

Children don't usually ask for routine. They ask the same questions over and over instead.

Predictability helps them feel safe, confident and more able to enjoy their day. ♥



THE ACTIVITY CHANGES. THE RHYTHM STAYS THE SAME.
This is what gives children security.



BLOOM REMINDER



Plan your day together each morning.



Keep meals and bedtimes as consistent as possible.



Build in movement and quiet every day.



It's okay if the day looks different than you planned. Flexibility is part of the rhythm too. ♥

A rhythm holds the day together, so everyone can feel more relaxed, connected and ready for fun. ♥

Choice Isn't Always Freedom

Too many choices can be exhausting. ❤️

During holidays, children make hundreds more decisions than they do at school. Choosing what to do, what to eat, which game, where to go... it all adds up.

Every decision uses brain energy.
When that energy runs low, behaviour can change.

I don't know...

What looks like "being difficult" is often just overwhelm. ❤️



BEHAVIOURS WE OFTEN SEE WHEN CHOICES FEEL OVERWHELMING



"I don't know" or "Anything"
They genuinely can't decide.



Irritable, whingy or snappy
The brain is tired from too many decisions.



Refusing, avoiding or melting down
Overwhelm turns into big emotions.



Constantly changing their mind
It's hard to commit when everything feels like too much.



Checking in over and over
They need reassurance because the plan feels uncertain.

INSTEAD OF OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS... 🌿

Try offering:

Small, Simple Choices



TWO IS ENOUGH

Two choices feel manageable.
Twenty choices feel impossible.



KEEP IT POSITIVE

Offer two good choices, not a choice and a punishment.



KEEP IT CLEAR

Simple words, clear options and calm tones help their brain save energy.

EXAMPLES YOU CAN USE

- "Would you like to paint or build Lego?"
- "Shall we go outside now or after lunch?"
- "Do you want to read in your room or on the couch?"
- "Would you like pasta or rice for dinner?"
- "Do you want the blue cup or the green cup?"



What Is Choice Fatigue? 🌿

Choice fatigue happens when our brains get tired from having to make too many decisions.



Every choice uses brain energy.



During the holidays, children make hundreds more decisions.



Less energy is left for coping and self-control.



This can lead to meltdowns, refusal and big emotions.



Simplifying choices helps children feel calmer and more capable.



BLOOM TIP 🌿

Predictability + Choice = Calm

A predictable rhythm gives children security. Small choices within that rhythm give them control. Together, they create confidence, cooperation and connection. ❤️

CHOICE OVERLOAD CAN LOOK LIKE:

- ✓ Standing frozen and not deciding
- ✓ Saying "I don't care"
- ✓ Saying "Nothing sounds good"
- ✓ Getting upset or walking away
- ✓ Trying to control every detail
- ✓ Needing constant reassurance



REMEMBER

Offering fewer, better choices doesn't take away freedom—it gives your child the space to feel successful and enjoy their day. ❤️

Less choice. Less overwhelm. More connection. ❤️

Structure

Without Power Struggles

Structure doesn't have to mean control. ❤️

Many parents worry that routines will increase demand avoidance.

Often the opposite happens.

Predictability reduces uncertainty. Uncertainty creates demands.

INSTEAD OF MAKING DEMANDS, INVITE COLLABORATION.

The plan stays in place, but your child keeps their sense of choice and control. ❤️



When children feel included, they are more likely to cooperate. ❤️

INSTEAD OF... ❌



"Now we're doing craft."
(Telling)



"We're going for a walk."
(Statement)



"Come brush your teeth."
(Direct command)



"Eat your dinner."
(Demand)



"Pack your bag now."
(Demand)

TRY... ✅

"It's craft time."
Would you like paint or Lego?
(Choice within the plan)



"We're heading outside."
Shoes first or hat first?
(Choice of order)



"I'm heading to the bathroom."
Want to race me there
or walk together?
(Choice in how)



"Dinner is ready."
Would you like the blue plate
or the green plate?
(Choice within the routine)



"Let's get your bag ready."
What do you want to pack first:
drink bottle or snack?
(Choice of order)



FLEXIBLE STRUCTURE ⚡

The routine stays the same.
The choices move within it.



MORNING CONNECTION
Breakfast & morning routine



CHOICE A
Active / Creative / Outing

OR



CHOICE B
Active / Creative / Outing



LUNCH TOGETHER
Refuel & reconnect



QUIET RESET
Rest, read, screens or quiet play



CHOICE A
Active / Creative / Outing

OR



CHOICE B
Active / Creative / Outing



DINNER & CONNECTION
Chat, share, laugh



WIND DOWN
Bath, story, calm & lights out

WHY STRUCTURE HELPS ALL CHILDREN ⚡



Creates
predictability
and safety



Reduces
anxiety and
uncertainty



Saves brain
energy for
the important
things



Supports
independence
and confidence



Makes
transitions
easier



Creates
more positive
moments
together

Structure isn't about having every minute planned. It's about creating a safe container for the day. ❤️



BLOOM TIP ⚡

Children often don't resist routine.
They resist feeling powerless.

Predictability + Autonomy
= Cooperation ❤️

REMEMBER

You can be flexible and
still have a structure.

Adjust the plan,
not the whole rhythm. ❤️

PROGRESS OVER PERFECTION

Some days will be smooth.
Some days will be chaos.

The rhythm gives you
something to come back to. ❤️

A predictable day helps everyone feel calmer, more connected and ready for fun. ❤️



Lower the Bar



Sometimes the best thing you can do...
...is lower the bar.

Children don't remember perfect holidays.
They remember how they felt.



It's easy to feel pressure during the holidays.
Social media shows smiling children, elaborate crafts,
expensive outings and perfectly organised days.

Real family life rarely looks like that.
When everyone is tired, overwhelmed or dysregulated,
lowering expectations isn't giving up—
it's making space for connection.



Connection is
built in the
little moments.



THE HOLIDAYS **DON'T** NEED...

- ✗ A different outing every day 
- ✗ Pinterest-worthy crafts 
- ✗ Constant learning or educational activities 
- ✗ A perfectly clean house 
- ✗ Every sibling getting along all day 
- ✗ Saying "yes" to every invitation 
- ✗ Keeping everyone entertained every minute 
- ✗ Feeling guilty for slowing down 

YOUR CHILD DOES NEED...

- ♥ To feel safe 
- ♥ To feel accepted, even on hard days 
- ♥ Opportunities to move their body 
- ♥ Food, water and enough rest 
- ♥ Time for imagination and play 
- ♥ Moments of genuine connection 
- ♥ Calm, predictable rhythms 
- ♥ A grown-up who repairs after tough moments 

Remember...

Children don't measure
a holiday by:

- ♥ how much money was spent
- ♥ how many places they visited
- ♥ how many activities they completed



They remember...

- ♥ who played with them
- ♥ who listened
- ♥ who made them feel safe
- ♥ who helped them through the hard moments



BLOOM TIP

Connection is rarely found in the big moments.
It grows during the little ones...

- ♥ making toast together
- ♥ collecting leaves
- ♥ lying on a picnic rug
- ♥ laughing over burnt pancakes
- ♥ reading one more story
- ♥ sitting quietly after a hard moment



BLOOM REMINDER

If today didn't go to plan...
That doesn't mean
the holidays are ruined.

Take a breath.
Reset.
Tomorrow is another
opportunity to reconnect.



Progress, not perfection.



Curiosity, not criticism.



Connection, not control.





When Siblings Need a Break



More time together doesn't always mean more harmony.

During school holidays, siblings spend far more time together than they do during term.

Even children who adore each other can become each other's biggest trigger.



REMEMBER: More conflict doesn't always mean your children are getting along less—it often means they're simply together more.



WHY IT HAPPENS

School naturally creates built-in breaks.

During holidays they suddenly share:



the same spaces



the same boredom



the same toys



the same energy levels



the same adults



Even the strongest sibling relationships need breathing room.



the same routines



BEHAVIOUR DETECTIVE CLUES

What you might notice and what they might need.

1 EVERYTHING BECOMES AN ARGUMENT

"They touched me!"
"That's mine!"
"She's looking at me!"



THEY MAY NEED:

- ♥ personal space
- ♥ separate activities
- ♥ adult support before things escalate

2 FOLLOWING EACH OTHER EVERYWHERE

One child won't leave the other alone.



THEY MAY NEED:

- ♥ connection with an adult
- ♥ novelty
- ♥ one-to-one time

3 TINY THINGS BECOME HUGE



One sibling bumps another.

Suddenly everyone is crying.

THEY MAY NEED:

- ♥ food
- ♥ movement
- ♥ rest
- ♥ fewer demands

4 CONSTANT COMPETITION

Everything becomes a race.

Who goes first?

Who gets the biggest?
Who chooses?



THEY MAY NEED:

- ♥ clear expectations
- ♥ taking turns
- ♥ fewer competitive activities



INSTEAD OF SAYING...

"Just play nicely."



"Looks like everyone needs a little space."



TRY SAYING...



"Let's separate for twenty minutes and try again."



"You don't have to play together all day."



"You can love someone and still need a break."



BLOOM TIP

Don't wait until everyone is melting down.

Build little breaks into the day before anyone asks.

Even 20 minutes of separate play can completely change the afternoon.



Think of it like charging everyone's social battery.



BLOOM REMINDER



Children don't have to be best friends every minute.

The goal isn't zero conflict.

The goal is helping them repair, reconnect and enjoy each other more often than not.



Connection grows best when everyone gets space to breathe.



Your Holiday Rescue Toolkit

When everyone is getting overwhelmed...

Not every difficult moment needs a consequence.
Sometimes it needs a reset.

Take one slow breath, then work through this checklist.

You've got this.

Every family has hard moments over the holidays.

You are not alone.

1 CHECK THE BASICS FIRST

Before assuming it's "behaviour", ask...



☐ Have they eaten recently?



☐ Have they had a drink?



☐ Do they need the toilet?



☐ Are they tired?



☐ Have they been sitting still too long?



☐ Have they had too much excitement today?



☐ Have they had any one-on-one connection?



☐ Are there too many choices right now?



Behaviour Detective

Big behaviours often have small causes.

2 WHAT MIGHT THEY NEED?

Choose one support to try.

CONNECTION



- Sit beside them
- Read together
- Invite them into what you're doing
- Five minutes of child-led play

BIG BODY MOVEMENT



- Trampoline
- Bike or scooter
- Obstacle course
- Carry washing or groceries
- Dance party

FOOD & BODY NEEDS



- Protein snack
- Water bottle
- Fresh air
- Toilet break

QUIET RESET



- Blanket fort
- Audiobook
- Drawing
- Lego
- Calm screen time
- Sensory tools

MORE STRUCTURE



- "First... then..."
- Show today's plan
- Offer two choices
- Start a simple activity together

CHANGE THE ENVIRONMENT



- Go outside
- Another room
- Quiet space
- Car ride
- Different activity

3 LOWER TODAY'S BAR

Sometimes the best strategy isn't doing more.
It's expecting less.



Frozen pizza



Movie afternoon



Backyard instead of an outing



Earlier bedtime



Pyjamas until lunch



One planned activity instead of five



That isn't giving up.

It's protecting everyone's nervous system.



IF NOTHING IS WORKING...

Don't keep adding strategies.
Instead, reduce the demands.

Children rarely calm down because adults become more creative. They usually calm down because someone helped make the day feel safer.

BLOOM TIP

You don't need to solve the whole day.
Just solve the next 15 minutes.



One snack.



One cuddle.



One trampoline bounce.



One episode.



One walk.



One deep breath.

Small resets often stop big meltdowns before they begin.

You are doing better than you think.

The Holiday Behaviour Iceberg

What we see is just the tip of the iceberg.

Behind every challenging behaviour is a whole lot your child might not have the words to tell us.

Remember

Behaviour is communication.

Our job isn't to control it,
it's to understand it.

Compassion + Curiosity
Change Everything

WHAT WE SEE

The behaviours
(tip of the iceberg)

- ♥ Tantrums
- ♥ Refusal
- ♥ Aggression
- ♥ Screaming
- ♥ Whining
- ♥ Hiding
- ♥ Sass / Back chat
- ♥ Clinginess
- ♥ Shutting down
- ♥ Not listening
- ♥ Meltdowns
- ♥ Demanding
- ♥ Running away

Context matters.

Holiday environments
are different, and so
are our kids.

WHAT MIGHT BE UNDERNEATH

The feelings and needs
(the part we can't always see)

OVERWHELM

- Too much going on
- Loud / busy
- Changes in routine
- Too many people
- Too much talking

PHYSICAL NEEDS

- Hungry
- Thirsty
- Tired
- Sick / not feeling well
- Sensory needs

EMOTIONAL NEEDS

- Connection
- Comfort
- Reassurance
- Feeling safe
- Routines & predictability

BIG FEELINGS

- Anxiety
- Sadness
- Frustration
- Worry
- Excitement

UNMET NEEDS

- Wanting control
- Needs a break
- Needs space
- Bored / unstimulated
- Needing success

DEVELOPMENTAL

- Still learning
- Impulse control
- Understanding
- Perspective taking
- Communication

ENVIRONMENT

- New places
- Unfamiliar people
- Less structure
- Transitions
- Limited downtime

EXPECTATIONS

- Too many demands
- Pressure to perform
- Comparisons
- High expectations
- Rushed days

OUTSIDE FACTORS

- Family stress
- Parental overwhelm
- Conflicting routines
- Screen time overload
- Not enough rest

THE UNSPOKEN

- Grief / loss
- Big life changes
- Worries we don't know about
- Past experiences

When we look deeper, we can respond with empathy,
meeting the need instead of just the behaviour.

HOW WE CAN HELP

Stay calm
Co-regulation
comes first.

Get curious
Assume there is a
reason, not defiance.

Listen
Look for the
need underneath.

Reduce demands
Lower the bar,
not your expectations.

Offer support
Meet the need,
build connection.

Repair & reconnect
Connection after
is what heals.

Understanding today builds connection for tomorrow.

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Screens Without Shame

Screens are not the enemy.

They are a tool. Like any tool, what matters most is **how, when and why** we use them.



The goal is not "no screens".

The goal is *intentional* screens.

Sometimes screen time is the most regulated, realistic and compassionate option available. That is okay.

But children still need adults to hold the boundaries around timing, content, access and transitions.



What the evidence tells us

- ✓ How screens are used matters more than how much. Outcomes depend on content, context, timing, co-use with adults and what screens replace. (Madigan et al., 2024)
- ✓ Excessive or poorly timed screen use is linked to poorer sleep, higher stress and more emotional & behavioural difficulties. (Hale & Guan, 2015; American Academy of Pediatrics, 2023)
- ✓ Fast-paced, highly stimulating, reward-heavy media can increase overstimulation and reduce attention, especially in children with ADHD. (Paulus et al., 2023)
- ✓ For autistic children, screens can be supportive for rest, regulation, special interests and connection—yet some are more vulnerable to problematic patterns and sleep impacts. (Autism CRC, 2024; AAP, 2024)



The adult is the safety and filter.

Your involvement and boundaries are the strongest protective factors.



Every child is different.

Some thrive with more flexible screen use. Some need very clear limits to stay regulated. Watch your child not the clock.

Screens can help when...



They give a child a predictable rest break. They help a dysregulated parent cook dinner safely.



They provide a quiet reset after a big day.



They support connection, learning or shared enjoyment.



The adult chooses the content and timing.



The child can transition off without major distress.



Screens may need more boundaries when...



Your child becomes irritable, frantic or distressed when it ends.



They keep asking for "one more" and cannot shift.



They are watching fast-paced, loud, short-form or highly rewarding content.



They are using multiple screens or constantly switching videos.



Screens are happening close to bedtime.



They are replacing food, movement, sleep, play or connection.

Where and how screens are accessed makes a big difference.



Shared TV usually means:

- ✓ Adult-selected content
- ✓ Slower switching
- ✓ Easier supervision
- ✓ Natural family boundaries
- ✓ More balanced use



Individual device access can mean:

- ✗ Constant control by child
- ✗ Rapid switching & autoplay
- ✗ Binge loops and repeat episodes
- ✗ Harder transitions
- ✗ Less adult awareness



BLOOM TIP

Screens are easiest when adults stay in charge of the **when, where and what**—and children still get choice within those boundaries.

EXAMPLE:

"After lunch you can watch one episode. You can choose Bluey or Play School."

NOT:

"Here's the tablet, choose whatever."

CONTENT MATTERS

Lower dopamine, slower pace content supports regulation and easier transitions.



Live TV or movies



Educational shows



Stories & documentaries



Creative games



Fast-paced, loud, chaotic



Endless scrolling & short-form



Bingeing the same episode



Always-on autoplay



Screens don't raise good or bad kids. Our leadership, connection and boundaries do.



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Printable Visuals & Inspiration

Simple routines, choices & activities for calmer days

For families who want less
overwhelm and more
connection





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Our Holiday Rhythm

A balanced day helps our bodies, brains and hearts feel their best.

We don't need a perfect day.
We just need a rhythm that helps us feel good.

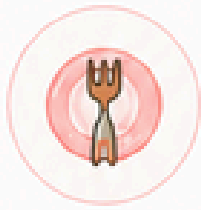
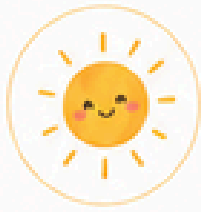


Remember: Every child is different.
Flexibility, patience and connection go a long way.



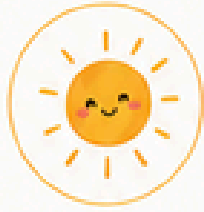


OUR HOLIDAY ROUTINE

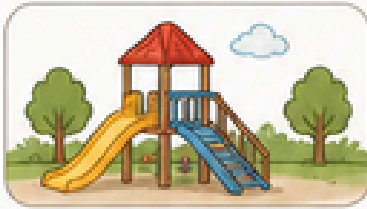




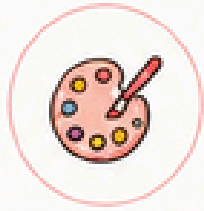
OUR HOLIDAY ROUTINE



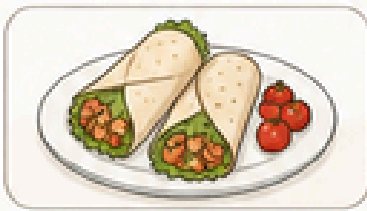
TV and cuddles



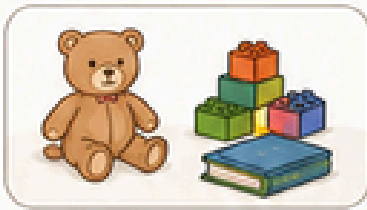
Go to playground



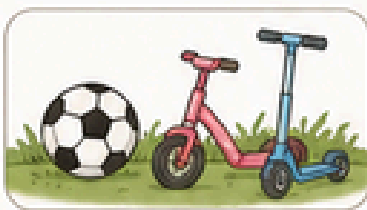
Art and craft choice



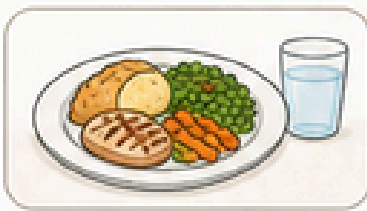
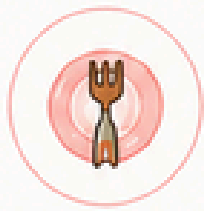
Chicken wraps



Quiet play choice



Outside play choice



Dinner



Book and bed

EXAMPLE



HOLIDAY ROUTINE CARDS



♥ Cut out, laminate and attach with Velcro to your Holiday Routine board. ♥
♥ Add your own drawings or photos to the blank cards to personalise your family's routine. ♥

BIG MOVEMENT



WHEELS PLAY



NATURE PLAY



HEAVY WORK



WATER PLAY



OBSTACLE COURSE



ART & CRAFT



PLAYDOUGH



BUILDING



BAKING



MUSIC & DANCE



SENSORY BIN



BOOKS



DRAWING



QUIET PLAY



AUDIOBOOK



PUZZLES



FIDGET TIME



TV & CUDDLES



BOARD GAME



FAMILY WALK



PLAY TOGETHER



WATER SENSORY



SWING



MORNING TEA



LUNCH



AFTERNOON TEA



DINNER



QUIET REST



NAP



BEDTIME



BATH



MY ACTIVITY



MY ACTIVITY



MY ACTIVITY



MY ACTIVITY



Cut along the outside edge of the cards



BIG MOVEMENT

CHOICE BOARD

When our bodies move, we feel better!

Pick one or two ideas to get your energy out, feel strong and have fun.

★ You can choose something on your own, with a friend or with family. ★

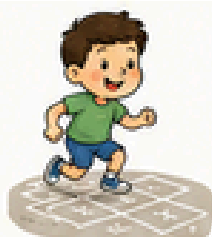
RUN & JUMP



Run as fast as you can



Jump as high as you can



Hop, skip or jump



Jump on the trampoline

WHEELS



Ride your scooter



Ride your bike



Skate or scoot



Ride your skates

HEAVY WORK



Carry something heavy



Push or pull something



Move, lift or build



Rake or sweep the leaves

CHALLENGES



Build an obstacle course



Throw to a target



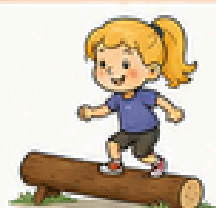
Go on a nature walk



Climb something safe



Kick or punch something



Balance like a ninja

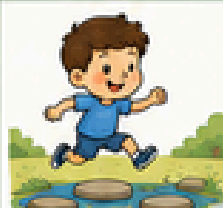
NATURE



Go on a nature walk



Climb something safe



Jump across stepping stones



Explore, dig or hunt

WATER PLAY



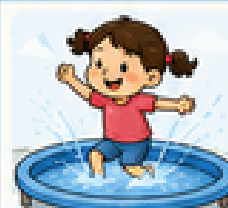
Run through the sprinkler



Water blaster fun



Water play station



Jump in the paddling pool

TIPS FOR GROWN-UPS

Big movement helps kids feel calm, focused and ready to learn and play.

Aim for at least 60 minutes of active play each day.

Join in when you can – it builds connection and fun!

Let them choose what their body needs most right now.

There's no right or wrong way to move!

A moving body helps a happy mind.



QUIET PLAY & REST



CHOICE BOARD



READ A BOOK



LOOK AT PICTURES



COLOUR OR DRAW



PUZZLES



BUILD SOMETHING



PRETEND PLAY



LOOK AT A BOOK TOGETHER



SOFT TOYS & CUDDLES



LISTEN TO MUSIC



QUIET TIME IN A TENT



SOLO SCREEN TIME



REST OR NAP



TIPS FOR GROWN-UPS



Quiet time helps bodies rest and brains recharge.



Even a little quiet time can help everyone.



Offer choices and let your child lead when they can.



It's okay to rest too—you can't pour from an empty cup.



There's no right or wrong way to rest!





SENSORY CHOICE BOARD



Things I can do at home



Check in with your body. What do you need right now?
You can choose one or two ideas to help you feel better.



MOVEMENT

Move my body

Jump like a frog



Dance to my favourite song



HEAVY WORK

Use my muscles

Push or pull something



Carry or lift something heavy



DEEP PRESSURE

Feel strong pressure

Squeeze a pillow or cushion



Wrap up tight in a blanket



PROPRIOCEPTION

Know where my body is

Wall push-ups



Bear walk around the room



VESTIBULAR

Enjoy movement

Spin in a safe space



Swing or rock in a chair



TACTILE

Feel different textures

Play with playdough or slime



Touch something soft or fuzzy



CALMING / SOOTHING

Slow down my body

Take deep belly breaths



Listen to calm music



VISUAL / FOCUS

Give my eyes a break

Look at a calm picture



Use a fidget or spinner



ORAL / CHEWY

Use my mouth

Chew on a chewy toy



Drink water through a straw



PARENT PROMPTS: WHAT MIGHT MY CHILD NEED?



MOVEMENT

They might:

- Fidget
- Wiggle
- Find it hard to sit still
- Seem restless

They might need:

Movement, jumping, dancing, active play



HEAVY WORK

They might:

- Seem busy
- Push, pull or carry things
- Seek deep pressure

They might need:

Pushing, pulling, lifting, carrying



CALMING

They might:

- Seem overwhelmed
- Anxious or worried
- Have big feelings

They might need:

Deep breaths, quiet time, music, cuddles



TUMMY / SENSORY

They might:

- Avoid touch
- Dislike textures
- Seem sensitive

They might need:

Textures, fidgets, soft or messy play



ORAL / CHEWY

They might:

- Chew on clothes
- Bite things
- Seek oral input

They might need:

Chewy toys, crunchy foods, straws



There's no right or wrong choice. Listen to your body. You know what helps you.





CREATIVE CHOICE BOARD



Use your imagination. Create, explore and express yourself!



You can choose one or two ideas.

DRAW & DOODLE



Draw a picture, doodle patterns or create your own comic.

COLOUR



Colour a picture, mandala or make a colouring masterpiece.

PAINT



Use paint, watercolours or make your own with kitchen ingredients!

CRAFT



Cut, glue, stick and create something amazing

BUILD & CONSTRUCT



Build with boxes, blocks, lego, cushions or recycled materials.

CREATE WITH CLAY



Sculpt with clay or playdough. Make anything you like!

MAKE MUSIC



Make your own instruments or create a song. Sing, beat or tap along!

COLLAGE



Cut or tear paper, magazines or fabric and make a collage.

CREATE A STORY



Write or draw a story, make a book or invent a new adventure.

BEAD & THREAD



Thread beads, make jewellery or create a keyring.

DESIGN & PLAN



Design your dream room, a new invention or the perfect playground.

MAKE SOMETHING USEFUL



Make a card, gift, decoration or something kind for someone.



PARENT PROMPTS: WHEN THEY MIGHT NEED CREATIVE TIME



TO CALM DOWN

They might:

- Seem overwhelmed
- Be anxious or worried
- Need a quiet break

Creative time can help:
Regulate big feelings and bring calm.



TO EXPRESS FEELINGS

They might:

- Be frustrated
- Struggle to explain how they feel
- Have had a big change or event

Creative time can help:
Express emotions in a safe way.



TO BUILD FOCUS

They might:

- Seem easily distracted
- Need help settling to an activity
- Have lots of energy

Creative time can help:
Improve concentration and attention.



TO BUILD CONFIDENCE

They might:

- Need a boost
- Feel unsure
- Get discouraged easily

Creative time can help:
Feel proud, capable and accomplished.



TO FEEL CONNECTED

They might:

- Want attention
- Feel lonely
- Want to share something

Creative time can help:
Strengthen connection and communication.



TO HAVE FUN!

They might:

- Be bored
- Need a brain break
- Want to explore their interests

Creative time can help:
Spark joy and imagination.



There's no right or wrong way to be creative. Have fun and enjoy the process!





HELPING JOBS

CHOICE BOARD



Helping makes our home happy and our family team strong.
You can choose a job to help, or make up your own!



TIDY & CLEAN



Put toys away



Wipe, sweep
or vacuum



KITCHEN HELP



Stir, mix or
measure



Set or clear
the table



HOME CARE



Water plants



Dust or wipe
surfaces



LAUNDRY HELP



Sort clothes



Fold or put
away laundry



PET CARE



Fill food
or water



Brush or give
cuddles



HELP WITH SHOPPING



Help make
the list



Carry items
or unpack



ORGANISE & PLAN



Organise books
or games



Help plan our
day or week



HELP OTHERS



Make a card
or note



Help a sibling
or family
member



ODD JOBS



Take out
the bin



Hang clothes
or peg out



When they might be ready to help:



Looking for
something to do



Having extra
energy



Feeling restless
or fidgety



Needing a break
from screens



Happy and
regulated



Remember: small jobs
build big skills.
Praise the effort,
not perfection!



Every little bit helps. You are a valuable part of our family team!





I'M BORED.

What can I do?



♥ Check in with your body and brain. Follow the flow chart to find what might help most right now. ♥

START HERE

I'm bored.



Have I had something to eat and drink?

YES

NO



Get a drink of water and a healthy snack.

Then come back and check in again.



Does my body need to MOVE?

YES

NO



Do I have lots of thoughts in my brain right now?

YES

NO



I might just need something to DO!



Does my body or brain need to CALM DOWN?

YES

NO



Does my body need SENSORY INPUT?

YES

NO

GO TO YOUR

MOVEMENT
CHOICE BOARD



GO TO YOUR

QUIET PLAY & REST
CHOICE BOARD



GO TO YOUR

SENSORY
CHOICE BOARD



GO TO YOUR

CREATIVE
CHOICE BOARD



There's no right or wrong choice. Listen to your body. You know what helps you.

