

# Press Release

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## **HOLIDAY HASSLES** ***'TIS THE SEASON TO AVOID PARENTAL STRESS!***

NEW BRUNSWICK - November 15, 2004 - While the holiday season can be filled with joy, the perils of anxiety, depression, unrealistic expectations, and stress may be close behind. Experts in the family services profession report that distress calls from parents seeking help decline during the months of November and December but peak immediately with the arrival of January. This trend may be caused by parents' preoccupation with holiday preparation and shopping, followed by a startling return to reality following the holidays.

To keep the holidays merry and avoid a post holiday 'crash and burn', Prevent Child Abuse - New Jersey offers parents suggestions to help ease holiday tension:

Keep spending levels realistic to avoid the overwhelming debt that contribute to stress in the new year. If purchasing gifts results in financial distress, consider presents that can be created at home. Low-cost gift alternatives include baked goods, knitted items, or picture frames. A "Secret Santa" exchange, commonly used in the workplace, requires each family member selecting one person to receive a gift. Purchasing one gift rather than five or ten can be a particularly useful suggestion if you have a large family.

Seize every opportunity to attend free or low cost community events. An added benefit will be the time you and your loved ones spend planning the outing together. You may even get to meet neighbors!

Reaffirm the true meaning of happiness and joy for you and your family – celebrate your home and each other.

Volunteer to work with those less fortunate. This experience will teach children the true holiday spirit of appreciation and giving.

Plan all outings thoughtfully; stores and roads are more crowded than usual. Poorly planned shopping sprees can trigger holiday stress. Shopping trips that include children require age-appropriate preparation. If younger children are included, parents should limit the time spent in each store and total time spent at all stores. Older children require limits too -- particularly on spending. Trips to see friends and relatives may over-stimulate young children and disrupt schedules. Pack a "survival kit" that includes snacks, drinks, a pillow, and a blanket for resting in between trips.

For more information on successfully coping with the stress of the holidays please call 1-800-CHILDREN or 732-246-8060 or visit us on the web at [www.PreventChildAbuseNJ.org](http://www.PreventChildAbuseNJ.org). PCA-NJ maintains a resource center that provides tips and suggestions for a hassle-free holiday.

Prevent Child Abuse – New Jersey is a statewide, non-profit agency that is guided by the mission of eliminating child abuse and neglect in all of its forms. 2004 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> year of service to New Jersey.

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