

Parents: Mentally prepare for the festive season



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As we approach the festive season, every parent carries a mixture of excitement, responsibility, expectation and sometimes, hidden anxiety. This long holiday brings children and relatives home for weeks to celebrate the festive season together, and it quietly raises the question: What should I, as a parent, be thinking about right now? As the season starts, planning early is key.

The way you prepare your home, heart, and time in these weeks will shape your child's emotional well-being, behaviour, and memories long after the season ends.

EMOTIONAL AVAILABILITY

Prioritise presence over presents. Many children are coming from a stressful academic term, some disappointed, some relieved, and others simply exhausted. As a parent, the first thing on your mind should be reconnection. Not the kind that asks for marks, reports, or comparisons... but the kind that says: "I'm glad you are home. I want to know how you are doing."

Your child needs emotional safety before they can open up about their true experiences of the term. Take time to reconnect together, create a relaxation mood for everyone to enjoy the festive season, and parent with both heart and wisdom.

PEACEFUL, PREDICTABLE ENVIRONMENT

The festive season often disrupts routines, yet children still need some level of predictability. Think ahead: How will the days look? A peaceful home does not just happen; it is nurtured through intentional communication, shared responsibilities, and modelling the behaviour you want to see.

Plan to use this holiday to evaluate together how each family member will model family values and identity and ensure home is home and everyone runs to for peace.

BALANCE FESTIVITY WITH DISCIPLINE

The holiday spirit easily tempts children into excessive screen time,

late nights, over-eating or idleness. As a parent, it is wise to set boundaries. The festive season is not a break from parenting; it simply invites more creativity.

Set gentle rules, agree on screen schedules, and guide your child in making healthy use of their free time without turning the home into a battleground. A home is a product of behavioural formation and character building.

BUILD SKILLS, STRENGTHEN CHARACTER

This holiday is a rare opportunity for children to grow in ways school cannot offer. Nurture life skills: cooking, cleaning, budgeting, public speaking, helping in family

business, volunteering at church or in the community, or learning something new like a musical instrument or sport. These activities build confidence, responsibility, and character. The festive season should shape who your child is becoming and not only how much they are celebrating.

SPEND MEANINGFUL TIME TOGETHER

During the holiday rush, gifts are easily remembered and quickly forgotten. What lasts are moments. Moments of walking together, sharing stories, preparing meals, praying as a family, or visiting relatives. As you think about your plans this season, prioritise presence over presents. Don't only think Christmas season will be enough to cover up that gap. Start now as school holidays have started. Your child may not tell you directly, but your attention is one of the greatest gifts they long for. Your presence speaks louder than Christmas presents or expenses you are planning.

SAFEGUARD AGAINST HOLIDAY RISKS

This holiday also comes with political campaigns across the country. A parent's mind should be alert; where will your child be? Who are they

spending time with? What are they doing online? Are they also part of campaign grounds where we have seen tear gas, among others? Is your child safe from any political harm in your community?

Risks like peer pressure, exposure to harmful content, unsafe environments, reckless behaviour, and unhealthy influences still exist. Open your mind to think beyond the usual guards or fence at home.

PURPOSEFUL NEW YEAR PREPARATIONS

While enjoying the celebrations, think also about the transition into a new year. How will you support your child to grow academically, spiritually, emotionally, and socially? What habits do you want them to build? What family conversations should happen now before the next school term arrives or during the Christmas long break which happens once a year with other family members?

The festive season is not just a break; it is a window — an opportunity to strengthen your child's heart or family's bond, shape their behaviour, and deepen your ties.

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