



Holiday 2008

Meet Kristi Miller



Kristi Miller, MA, CAPI, and Solutions in Parenting Founder, is a [Certified Aware Parenting Instructor](#) and Parenting Consultant who offers a distinctive form of parent education coupled with hands-on training for parents and their families. For more than a decade, Kristi has been dedicated to a specialized form of parent education she developed, [Bond Strengthening Parenting®](#), which honors and encourages parents and helps them define and maintain their own personal styles. This, in turn, allows children to thrive in a loving and collaborative environment.

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Parenting Center

Speaking of Parenting...

Not sure what to get that special mom, dad, step-parent or grandparent on your list? How about a Solutions in Parenting Gift Certificate? [Contact us](#) today for the perfect parenting gift this holiday season.

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We can bring a Parenting

Holidays

Sometimes we all get so busy with our lives, it is easy to forget to be really conscious about how and when we give thanks. November is an annual reminder to be thankful, and December is a time of giving and receiving, but how do you remain thankful and retain the giving spirit all year long?

At Solutions in Parenting, we help parents tackle a huge spectrum of topics all year long. Most of our families struggle with balancing the stress of everyday life and keeping a strong connection among its members at the same time. Homework, chores, after school activities, social lives, and work keep families from being able to pay attention to the details of relationships. Holidays tend to pressure already stressed families even more.

It is our goal to provide all of your families with information to help you feel peace and happiness throughout the year-even during your holiday seasons. Following are tips to help give thanks, as well as remain connected during the holidays as well as throughout your year.

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10 Tips for Holiday Peace and Joy

- 1. Only a little for the 'Littlest'.** If you have very young children (babies to four years old) remember that less is more. This age group is easily overwhelmed by excitement. If they won't sit still for Holiday pictures, tantrum, whine or seem a bit out of control, that is normal behavior for little ones who feel stressed-out or who are affected by your stress. Know when it is time to leave the party, choose another day for posing on Santa's lap, or call it quits after a day of shopping (even if you just got to one store). Carefully choose your outings, remembering their short attention spans. Give plenty of choices when appropriate and allow plenty of time for necessary expression of feelings.
- 2. Less is more.** Before you go out and spend extra money on the biggest turkey or ham or buy that name brand pair of jeans for your teen, make sure you have set a holiday budget for your whole family. Talk about how much you each want to spend on each other and compare that to your actual finances. Who can afford what? Will you put any gifts on the credit cards or pay cash for it all. Do those jeans fit into the budget this month or do you need to pay for half this month and buy the other next month? Have conversations about the dangers of charging gifts on credit cards and decide if your family is willing to pay that interest rate for a gift or not. Children need not receive everything they want at Christmas and holidays. Try to resist the temptation to buy everything on their wish list, and risk feeling "taken advantage of" or feeling "buyer's remorse". Instead of many gifts, choose only one or two that will encourage learning, exploring, moving or cuddling. Concentrate on one or two things that they really want or need and give them the additional gift of a light-hearted parent, instead of one filled with financial woes. There may be fewer gifts to open, but your family will avoid debt, be happier, and will be deliberate in giving what is within your budget. That is a gift for everyone.
- 3. The Gift of Giving.** Regardless of the ages of your children or family members, focusing

Expert to you! We can speak to your parent groups, schools, daycares, preschools, churches, or other groups, about:

- Sibling rivalry
- Discipline
- Co-parenting
- Effective Conflict-resolution
- Or any other parenting issues

Please [contact us](#) with questions or to schedule your event.

[Visit Solutions in Parenting](#) to see our website and learn what we can do for you.

[Visit useful parenting links and resources](#)
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Monthly Parenting Challenge

How are you and your kids relating this past month? Even though holiday celebrations are supposed to be happy and bright, families tend to spend less time together and more time preparing for the soon-to-be over celebration. Our challenge to you this month is to slow down spend at least 20-minutes a day expressing gratitude and appreciation to your children and significant others in your lives. Appreciations such as, "I appreciate how you just helped me unload the dishwasher without me asking you to. Thank you", or "I am so proud to be your mom (dad, grandma, aunt, etc)", "I enjoyed being with you today because..." can help your family feel loving and connected during these extra-busy times. We are curious...let us know how it goes.
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What is Parenting Consultation?

We are offering personal parenting education and consultation for committed parents who want to raise confident, compassionate and responsible children.

It is now possible to bring an experienced consultant into your family life on a regular basis. Either by phone or in person, your consultant can help you create solutions to your daily parenting challenges with loving and effective lifelong parenting techniques. Start being the very best parent you can be **today**.

[Call us](#) today for your free 30-minute gift session to see if parenting consultation is for

on giving and sharing rather than receiving will be the gift that really matters. Model for your children that there is real joy in sharing with others no matter how little you have. Help children recognize how fortunate they are by visiting local pediatric hospitals, homeless shelters, soup kitchens or nursing homes. Donate to "Toys for Tots" programs, throw a holiday garage sale and give proceeds to a local school or donate your lemonade stand profits to the local Red Cross. Whatever your family decides, make sure all members have a voice in choosing what to share and with whom. A gift is an expression of love and when children can share a gift with someone who really needs it, they feel like they are making a real difference.

4. Don't Over-Schedule. No matter the age of your children, over-scheduled kids tend to be unhappy kids. If there are too many parties, holiday pageants, ballet practices, band performances and family gatherings, you may be inadvertently stressing-out your kids. By limiting your kids and family to fewer, more quality events, you may be able to enjoy the events you have chosen to attend more without worrying about jumping to the next event right away. As a family, decide which events to attend, and who will be attending them and stick to that schedule. You may just find there will be more time for connecting and less time spent on arguing and managing stressed-out kids.

5. Avoid Too Much Junk Food. This may be one of the toughest challenges of the season. This time of year is exciting enough without being fueled primarily by gingerbread houses, cupcakes, Grandma's fudge, candy canes and plates of christmas cookies. Too many empty sugar calories can make anyone feel terrible, but especially kids. Extra treats this time of year is not only unavoidable, but also can be a fun part of celebrations. However, too much sugar, fat, artificial colorings and additives (not to mention alcoholic beverages) are not good for anyone. Make a point to provide fresh, healthy foods for your family and save the sugar, etc. for the more special occasions. You will be doing your family a favor by keeping them healthier during the holidays, and hopefully saving yourselves from having to lose the extra holiday weight that may have become an annual tradition for you, too!

6. Create or Carry-on Family Traditions. Traditions can be very comforting to kids of all ages, and can lend to a feeling of security and excitement. Involve your kids in establishing traditions unique to your own family as well as talking about older family traditions and how they came to be. Traditions are meant to carry-on customs or beliefs from generation to generation. Use these holidays as an opportunity to re-connect with family beliefs and values and reiterate what is most important to your family. Your kids may surprise you when they say family and friends are just as important (and maybe even more so!) than that new cell-phone or video game they have been begging for.

7. Don't Forget About You. Social obligations, financial stress, relationship issues and emotional fatigue are all common stressors this time of year. It is easy to lose sight of what the adults might need to help alleviate some pressure during the busy holiday season. Remember to schedule in some time to relax, exercise, go on a date with your partner, have peace and quiet, or whatever will help you feel more centered and less stressed. Managing your stress and meeting your needs will help you be more available to help your children manage theirs.

8. Move it. As families get busier planning for their Holiday celebrations, it is easier to let video games, TV, and computers serve as "babysitters". Give your kids the chance to get plenty of physical exercise. Not only will this help run-off the extra sugar they will be eating, but it will help them to sleep better, feel healthier and benefit from fresh air. As a family, you can take neighborhood walks to see the holiday displays, ride bikes, go sledding, play a family game of tag, or other activities you enjoy. Having an active family is an ideal way to stay fit, enjoy family time and increase holiday peace and happiness this season.

9. Family Life. Families come in all shapes and sizes. Holidays can sometimes be painful or even terrifying for some families if there has been a divorce, separation, death or other tragedy. Family members, especially children, will need extra-special attention during the holidays. Holiday traditions can cause kids to remember times when mom and dad were together, or a loved one was alive. In these cases, holiday arrangements must make space for sadness, rearranging past celebrations, making new traditions and remaining in-tune with what family members may need. Remember that holidays are not necessarily happy times for everyone and families may need to talk, cry, rage or celebrate in ways that feel right for them. Regardless, be present for your kids, let them talk or not talk about their feelings and let the peace and love of your family, whatever it may be, carry them through the holiday season.

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We want to hear from YOU

Are you struggling through some parenting "rough spots" right now and need a bit of advice? We are always here for you. Whether you are in the middle of a divorce, potty training your toddler or screaming at your teen, we can help. Send us an [email](#) and we will respond with some helpful guidance to get you through.

10. Holidays around the world. It is easy to become focused on how your family will celebrate the holidays and forget about what the rest of the world is up to. Expand your holiday celebrations to include learning about all of the celebrations happening in the world this time of year. Let your children discover the traditions of Hanukkah, Las Posadas, Boxing Day or Kwanzaa for example. This can be a fun way to learn about how other kids and families celebrate their traditions, and can help to teach kids the deeper meaning of holidays and celebrations. They can learn that holidays don't have to include snow, Santa, lots of presents, christmas trees or maxed-out credit cards in order to be considered fun.

Whatever you and your family decide to do this holiday season, try to heap heavy doses of peace and happiness on your children as well as others you love. The daily love and support you give to your children will be the gift that they will continue to enjoy not just during the holiday season, but for the rest of their lives.

Happy Holidays from Solutions in Parenting. See you in 2009.