

Counselor's Corner
Steve Abrams

As we approach the holiday season, I thought I'd pass along the best suggestions I've heard from parents about ways to reduce the stress and help us enjoy the holidays.

Managing the subject of **FOOD** is serious for many of us, who try so hard to set limits for ourselves and our children during the year. Food issues in general are a hot-button topic. I think the holidays are a time when we all share some trepidation about the food table. Maybe one of these ideas will sound good to you, and become part of your family holiday tradition:

- Eat something healthy before going out to a party
- Bring something healthy you like to eat to the party
- Keep a food diary during the holidays, just like a gift list
- Limit the amount you eat...watch the portion sizes
- Practice saying "The food is lovely, but I'm past my limit."

Kids do well with **ROUTINES**, which may help our children this time of year:

- skipping naps, late bed times, guests, fancy foods and preoccupied parents can make a child feel out of control. Routines help children feel safe by providing a sense of control. When they feel in control, children are less likely to act out to get attention.

Take care of your own physical and emotional needs:

It is very hard to survive all the conflicting demands of the holidays if we are tired or had too much to eat and drink. Stick with your own self care routines, know your limits and take breaks when needed. You will enjoy the holidays much more and have more patience for the unexpected if you take care of yourself. That includes asking for help and saying "no" as needed.

Please let me know if you have other ideas on this subject, and I'll be happy to include them next time.

(Counselor's Corner, written by our school counselor, Steve Abrams, will appear from time to time in our Wednesday newsletter.)