



The NYC DADS Holiday TO-DO-LIST

Santa may have his list which he's checking twice. Well, so should dads: Here is a list of ten great things to do with, or for, your kids during the holiday season.

10. ATTEND THE CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

The annual lighting of the Christmas tree in Rockefeller Center will be held on Tuesday, November 30. The enormous Norway Spruce is something to see throughout the season, but being there on the momentous moment with a giant crowd is just a special way to announce, "the Holidays are here!"

9. GO ICE SKATING

There are a lot of great places to go skating. Some people like the crowds at Rockefeller Center, but for the best skating, head to the Wollman Rinks in Manhattan's Central Park and Brooklyn's Prospect Park. There's also uptown's Riverbank State Park, Staten Island's War Memorial Skating Park and the pretty pricey rinks at Chelsea Piers.

8. DON'T STRESS OUT

With all the good Holiday cheer, there comes a fair amount of opportunities for stress: there are arrangements for meals, high expectations for good times, and plenty of possibilities to disappoint. Get a handle on what your kids want from you, and do the best you can for them.

7. GIVE A GIFT

Kids want stuff 24/7, 365 days of the year, but around this time, they get crazy. Depending on your resources, try to give them at least one great gift. If that's not possible, then see if you can get a donation from a local church, the Salvation Army or a community organization. Or, just give the gift of you. It might sound corny, but, long term, they'll appreciate it.

6. EAT A GOOD MEAL

If you are not going to be with your kids for Thanksgiving or Christmas, then pick another day to be your Special Holiday Meal with Dad. Go out to a place that satisfies everyone, or make a meal at home. Make sure you and your kids take the time to recognize your importance in each other's lives—and then break bread!

5. UNDERSTAND HOW THEY ARE FEELING

This time of year can be confusing, stressful and upsetting to some children, especially if their parents are not together. And kids are too young—they just don't have the tools—to understand why they are surrounded by advertisements and TV shows that present perfect, happy families. Help them see the difference between reality and what's on TV—but do it in a way that is loving and supportive.

4. SEE THE HOLIDAY WINDOW DISPLAYS IN MANHATTAN

This is some old school entertainment. No Sponge Bob here. Take the kids for a magical outing, walking to see the delightful Holiday window displays at Macy's (34th & Broadway) and Lord & Taylor (38th and Fifth) that go up in November. They're free, and it's a special way to spend an afternoon. If those two stores aren't enough, you can head further uptown to see the displays at Saks Fifth Avenue, Bloomingdales, Bergdorf Goodman and the pretty wacky Barneys.

3. SPEND TIME WITH THEM

Don't let work get in the way. Don't let friends get in the way. Don't let the game get in the way. Nothing should get in the way of spending time with your kids during the Holidays.

2. VISIT SANTA

It's a rite of passage. Visiting Santa is quite a special treat. The trick is, you have to get your kid there before he stops believing, but after sitting on Santa's knee is going to make him cry. 3-6 is around the right age, but every kid is different. The most popular spot to go is Macy's, but the lines are so long, you might prefer going to Bloomingdales or, better yet, ABC Carpet (19th and Broadway).

1. TELL THEM YOU LOVE THEM

It's simple. And it's free. But telling your kids you love them can fill them with more joy than all of the Christmas TV Specials and Toys R' Us purchases in the world. And it'll last longer. And if you have a hard time saying those words, show your kids in different ways: a hug or a kiss, sometimes a high-five, will do.