



HOLIDAY SURVIVAL GUIDE:

CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAY SEASON MELTDOWN-FREE



DAIRY-FREE, BALANCE 360 APPROVED HOT COCOA

Ingredients

- 1 cup almond milk (store-bought or homemade)
- 1 tablespoon cocoa powder
- 1 Tablespoon pure maple syrup
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch of sea salt

Instructions

1. Combine all the ingredients into a saucepan over high heat, using a whisk to break up any clumps. Keep stirring until smooth and piping hot, then pour into a mug and serve warm.
2. Top with dairy-free whipped cream and shaved chocolate, if desired.



The holidays are a whirlwind of excitement, especially for kids. While adults can feel over-extended by all of the parties and plans, kids can be downright overwhelmed. Before you know it, the most wonderful time of the year has turned into a time of meltdowns and misery—for them and for you. Find a calmer way of dealing with the holidays with our Holiday Survival Guide!

LOW-STRESS, RELAXING HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

- Decorate Cookies in Your Pajamas
([Check out this Balance360 Approved Gingerbread Cookie Recipe!](#))
- Watch a Funny Holiday Movie
- Start the Day with Yoga and/or Breathing Exercises
- Play a Holiday Themed Board Game
- Complete a Holiday Puzzle as a Family
- Listen to Your Favorite Holiday Songs in Classical Versions
- Cuddle in Front of the Fireplace with Healthy Hot Cocoa

Party Tip!

Before a party, find out who plans to attend and what kinds of activities will take place. Help your child plan conversations that will appeal to other people. This could create a more relaxed atmosphere that makes your child feel included and less anxious.



Watch kids closely to see if they're starting to become overwhelmed or establish a code word to use when overwhelmed and needing a break. Make a polite but hasty exit when you see a meltdown is imminent.



HOLIDAY SHOPPING LISTS TAILORED TO YOUR CHILD'S UNIQUE NEEDS

SENSORY NEEDS

- ☒ Weighted Blanket
- ☒ Swing Chair
- ☒ Calming Essential Oils
- ☒ Beading & Lacing Kits

DYSLEXIA

- ☒ Scrabble
- ☒ Boggle
- ☒ Phonics Firefly
- ☒ See & Spell Learning Toy

ADHD

- ☒ Puzzles
- ☒ Maze Books
- ☒ Board Games
- ☒ Tangle Jr.

Want more gift ideas? Check out our
"Holiday Gifts for Children with Neurobehavioral Disorders"
Pinterest Board!

FAMILY HOLIDAY PHOTO TIPS

- Pre-select 3 comfortable clothing options and allow your child to choose their favorite.
- Turn off the flash on your camera, and use an indoor mode if your device has one.
- Limit distractions.
- Lower your expectations and make your own perfect photographic memories.



COMMUNITY SERVICE IDEAS

Each child has unique qualities and strengths, so it's important to match your child to a community project that brings out this potential.

ADHD:

Focus on active projects that teach them to be patient and kind.

- Work with animals in shelters.
- Assist the different-abled with simple tasks.
- Participate in Environmental clean-ups in local parks.
- Help the elderly in senior communities.
- Make and take gifts to children in the hospital.
- Decorate a Christmas tree for those in need.

Sensory Issues/ Social Anxiety:

Focus on independent, quiet methods of giving.

- Make a care kit for a senior neighbor or child in need.
- Shop online and donate a gift via an Angel Tree or Toys for Tots drive.
- Participate in a book drive.
- Make and send a card to a veteran.
- Collect items for a holiday food drive.



HOLIDAY SCREEN TIME LIMITS

While it can be tempting to relax limits on screen time during holidays, these activities can have a negative effect on mood and behavior. Try these non-screen activities, instead!

- **Write and Illustrate a Story:** Older children can write a story and draw pictures to go along with it, while younger ones can tell it to you and have you write it down.
- **Indoor Games:** Board games are always a fun family option or try classic movement games that require close auditory attention like red light, green light, Simon Says or musical chairs. Build gross motor skills with freeze dancing to holiday music.
- **Creative Play:** Teach your kids about reusing and recycling while also engaging them in creative play by using cereal boxes and milk cartons to build a town or a house. This is also a great way to encourage the development of fine motor skills.
- **Fun Science Experiments:** Keep your kids' brains active with some fun science experiments to build on cognitive development! Blindfolded taste tests or musical water glasses will provide unique sensory experiences.

The holiday season doesn't have to be a stressful time of year for your child! We hope these tips help your whole family enjoy this fun time of year.

Brain Balance Achievement Centers is the leading drug-free program helping kids move beyond challenges to achieve greater success. This personalized program is designed to improve focus, behavior, social skills, anxiety, and academic performance. The program takes an integrative approach to strengthening the brain and its connections through sensory engagement, physical development, academics, and nutrition. Over the past decade, this comprehensive and effective program has helped thousands of individuals nationwide to improve the critical skills needed to create a brighter path for their future.

Learn more about the research supporting our program and our results: www.BrainBalance.com