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Free Dec. Issue

San Antonio

Our Kids

Magazine

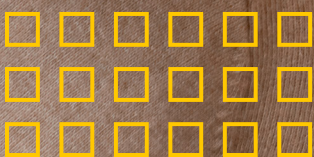
Handling
Holiday Stress



Holiday
Gift Guide

Holiday Edition

Gifts Kids Can
Give on A Small
Budget



December 2022 // Vol. 37 No. 9

ourkidsmagazine.com

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A note from the publisher

Happy holidays everyone! In this issue, I put together my first gift guide. I hope that you'll find some useful suggestions should you be stumped on gift ideas. I was also invited to the San Antonio Zoo for their holiday light display, remember to check out OurKids Digital for a video on the zoo's preview night. Thank you so much for being a reader! Cheers to a new year!



Andres Flores

Writer Sarah Lyons shows us how we can make the holiday season easier to navigate by getting organized and choosing joy.

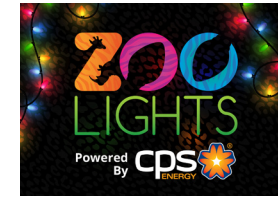
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Calendar

To see more upcoming events, follow the QR code or visit our website at ourkidsmagazine.com



San Antonio Zoo: Zoo Lights All Month
sundown: 5:30 pm - 7:00

stroll through acres of twinkling wildlife trails with exciting surprises along the way! Sleigh through the 124-foot light tunnel, explore an outdoor museum of illuminated animal portraits, and carol through the park on the holiday sing-a-long.



Free Family Nights at The DoSeum Dec 5
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Explore The DoSeum's fun interactive exhibits alongside your family for free! A link for ticket reservations will be posted on thedoseum.org at 8 AM the morning of Free Family Night. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis.



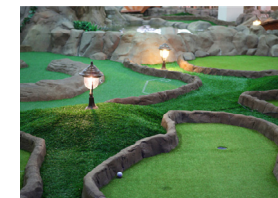
The McNay: Storytime Flow Dec 9
10:00 am - 11:00 am

Bring a blanket and enjoy fresh air and fun with your little ones. In this program, we'll make art and flow through movement paired with children's stories and books. Stick around afterwards and cool off indoors with a guided Museum tour.



Cinema On Will's Plaza: Elf Dec 9
Opens 6:30 pm

"Elf" Cinema on Will's Plaza – FREE EVENT The Will Naylor Smith River Walk Plaza opens at 6:30 PM. The movie begins at 7:30 PM. Full concessions and bar available. Please bring your lawn chair or blanket.



Kid's Day Out in New Braunfels Dec 21
7:30 am - 6:00 pm

Spend the day at the Landa Recreation Center with fun filled activities such as games, crafts, movies and more on your days out of school. Campers will delight in a variety of activities and adventures in Landa Park!

Reach the publisher:
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Story by
Sarah Lyons

What NOT to Give Kids for Christmas

My children began their Christmas lists in October. Curious to see what made the list this year, I read over my daughter's shoulder and was shocked to see that she had asked for a doll that spits up and wets itself, an expensive Lego set, and a live donkey. These items were NOT on my Christmas list for my children. When you begin your Christmas shopping this year, instead of asking what

the kids would like for Christmas, consider asking the parents what they do NOT want their kids to get for Christmas.

A million pieces

Everyone is likely to get frustrated with a toy that comes with "a million" pieces. In no time, the pieces tend to get spread across the entire house and it is nearly impossible to get them back together. "Once the

pieces are lost the whole toy is pointless because you can't do anything with it if certain pieces are missing," says Kassie Rew, Olathe, KS mom of three. Prior to giving, consider the ages of the children in the home. A nine year old may ask for Polly Pocket dolls or Legos but they can easily turn into a choking hazard for a baby brother and become a huge stress for the parents.



Some assembly required

Every parent cringes when their child opens a fun and exciting toy and the box has the words "some assembly required" which usually means the parent spends hours reading frustrating directions and assembling the toy late into the night. If you are giving a toy that requires assembly, please consider putting it together prior to giving.

A not-so-joyful noise

Loud toys have been irritating parents since toys were invented. Musical instruments, toys with hammers, and battery operated toys with no volume control all contribute to the already high level of noise pollution in the average household. When purchasing a loud toy for a favorite niece or nephew, please stop and imagine it being passed back to your own house when you have children. If that makes you shudder, keep shopping.

Batteries not included

While we are talking about battery powered toys, please consider a few things as you purchase a gift. Does the toy require batteries? If yes, are the batteries regularly available at a reasonable price? "We don't care for toys that require massive amounts of expensive batteries. Sometimes the batteries cost more than the toy itself," says Jessi Cole, mom of three. Check if the toy comes with batteries or if you must purchase them separately. Make sure to have batteries on hand when the

Sarah Lyons is a stay at home mom to six kids, including eight year old triplets. She writes from her home in Kansas City.



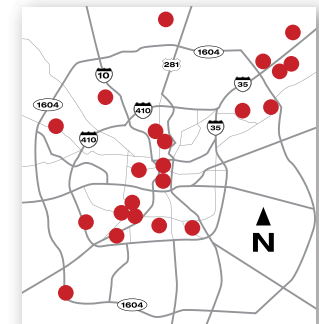
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Gifts parents LOVE to receive for their kids

- ◇ Educational toys
- ◇ Experiences - zoo membership, movie passes, classes, camps
- ◇ Complete gifts - a tablet, case, warranty, and gift card for apps
- ◇ Accessories - a train to go with a new train set, furniture for a new doll house
- ◇ Books
- ◇ Batteries
- ◇ Practical gifts - clothes, shoes, coats



child opens the gift, so they can begin playing immediately.

Toys that encourage violence

Lauren Heller, mom of twins, says “Anything that encourages hitting or violence against siblings is discouraged. They fight enough as it is.” Toys such as Nerf guns, swords, punching bags, and boxing gloves are not ideal for families that may not want weapons in the house. Amy Cameron, mom of three has a different perspective “A water gun, lightsaber, or Nerf gun for only one sibling is not desired. They need to be equally armed.” It is best to ask permission

before purchasing these items.

All that glitters isn’t always gold

Many families love to receive craft items as gifts and even ask for them specifically. Others may find them messy, stressful, and frustrating. Play dough, paint, markers, stamps, beads, and glitter all fall into this category. “It doesn’t feel like a gift when we are trying to get ink out of laundry, carpet, or off the walls.” says Bridget Estelle, mom of four. Keeping this in mind, some families do enjoy crafts. Double check with the parents to see what their policy on craft supplies is before you make

your purchase.

Purchasing a gift for someone is always challenging because you want it to be enjoyed. Ask the parents what they suggest, if anything is not permitted in the house, and if you have a great idea, run it by them first. Consider buying classic toys that are always a hit or an experience like a membership to a local attraction. Even if you have purchased one of the toys mentioned above or do in the future, don’t fret. Parents know that it truly is the thought that counts and are grateful that their children have generous people in their lives.



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Holiday Gift Guide



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Little Unicorn Infant Car Seat Footmuff - \$90.00



Safe and secure, this footmuff has a unique open back design which offers convenient access to your harness system and reduces the material behind your baby for a safer, more comfortable experience. The stretch fabric creates a universal fit for most car seats and the reflective tabs assist with easy alignment of the topper to the base. Four snap straps provide added security for the topper to the backing.

The insulated topper is both wind and water-resistant. A soft, quilted interior lining keeps baby cozy and has a non-slip back so it stays in place

Comotomo Natural Feel Baby Bottle - \$14.99

Comotomo baby bottles are designed to most closely mimic breastfeeding to reduce bottle rejection. Ultra wide neck design allows easy cleaning by hand without a brush. Safe in microwave, boiling water, and dishwashers.



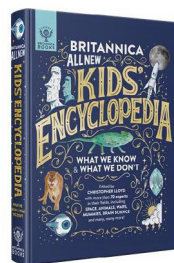
Lil Nipper Automatic Nail Clipper - \$49.99



When it comes to cutting delicate nails, always having a sharp blade allows a clean, precise sliver of a trim every time. Medical-grade stainless steel is just one more detail that put Lil Nippers a "cut" above the rest.

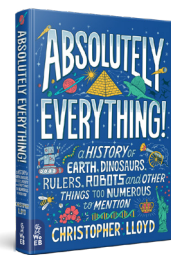
Brand Britannica All New Kids' Encyclopedia - \$30.00

An amazing 424-page compendium of knowledge to satisfy all curious minds



Brand Absolutely Everything! - \$21.99

A rollercoaster ride through 13.8 billion years – for children and adults alike.



Brand Connetix Connetix Tiles (100 peices) - \$109.95

Learning Through Play: Connetix Magnetic Tiles are a fun way to encourage STEAM learning, fine and gross motor skills, and cognitive development. The building magnets offer endless possibilities to foster children's creativity.



iPlay iLearn Toys
Pitching Machine - \$39.99

This is a 2-in-1 Pitching Machine that works for Baseball and Tennis. This set consists of a pitching machine, baseball bat, tennis racket and 6 balls.

Constant repetition is the most important step to becoming an expert! Automated pitching machine makes repetition and batting practice easy.

This version of the iLearn pitching machine adds the addition of an remote control baseball bat.



iPlay iLearn Toys
Bouncy Pals Cow - \$33.99

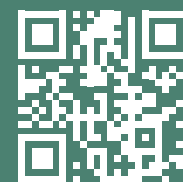
Inflatable hopper with removeable plush cover is safe and fun for your children. Take out the inserted white air stopper from the air hole; insert the tip of the air pump and inflate the hopper till the cover is taut around the toy, then quickly insert the air stopper back into the air hole.

Your kids will absolutely love this inflatable ride on pal! Just hop on, grab the long ears, and off you go! Suitable for indoor and outdoor play.



Smart Teddy
Smart Teddy- starting at \$199.95

Includes a one year subscription. Smart Teddy is a connected soft toy that helps parents teach and engage their kids as well as develop good habits. Smart Teddy connects to your WiFi to download updates!



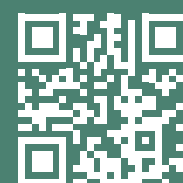
Little Unicorn
Cotton Muslin Swaddle Set- \$45.00

The Woolf swaddle set is crafted of 100% cotton muslin to wrap your baby in softness, warmth, and a feeling of security. The creative design of these playful puppies combined with a plaid and solid color will be loved by both boys and girls.



Comotomo
Silicone Baby Teether - \$6.99

Babies love to chew on their little fingers (and probably yours too). So Comotomo thought, why not copy? Comotomo teethers are designed to mimic baby fingers.



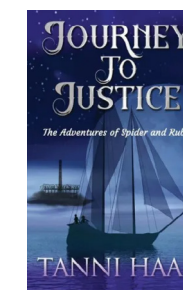
Little Unicorn
Skyline Backpack- \$139.95

This Skyline Backpack features a key leash, 5 interior storage pockets, a lightweight & durable design, and a sturdy base with protective feet. Don't forget to hydrate with this Skyline backpack, which fits up to two 32 oz. water bottles.



What on Earth Publishing
Gross FACTopia - \$14.99

In this disgustingly marvelous book, you will find facts about smelly sports, weird world records, horrible medicine, gory gastronomy, and more.



Journey to Justice: The Adventures of Spider and Ruby - \$12.95

Writer Tanni Haas, who is an ourKids contributor writes a suspense-filled novel!

Handling Holiday Stress

Story by Sarah Lyons



Parties to attend, errands to run, gifts to wrap, cookies to bake, and trees to trim are just a small part of our holiday to-do list. For some, the most wonderful time of the year quickly turns into the most stressful time of the year. Many of us kick off the holiday season with plans to enjoy some quality time with family and friends, but as the to-do list grows we find ourselves quickly overwhelmed. How can parents handle the holiday stress while still enjoying the season?

Get organized

Get a jump on the holiday to-do list by shopping early. “I start shopping for holiday presents the week after Christmas,” says Missouri mother of two, Rebekah Johnson. “I have what



I call my “magic present box”, which I add to throughout the year. I buy gifts when they are on sale and by Black Friday, I am usually finished shopping.” A little planning ahead makes holiday shopping easier when Christmas approaches. Amy Cameron, mother of three says “I keep a Christmas binder with all the measurements, gift ideas, how much food to purchase and more. I even take photos of my decorated house so I don’t have to reinvent the wheel. It helps me stay sane when I have a blueprint written by me, for me.” A little extra work in advance can take off the stress when the

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or situations that are out of our control. “I realize I can’t change people around me or their choices,” says Candice Zimmers, Kansas mother of three. “I can, however, change how I react to them. I keep an open mind, embrace the chaos, and keep in mind there are many more positive times than negative ones.”

Break out of the norm

Holiday stress often comes from trying to keep up with elevated expectations we create for ourselves. Sometimes a break from the norm is just what we need to reduce holiday stress. “A few years ago, we went away for a few days after Christmas and stayed in a cabin with no TV or internet access,” says Lisa Parrish, mom of three. “The kids loved it so much, we decided as a family to cut back on gifts and spend a few days away

holiday rush begins.

Simplify

If December has arrived and you realize you forgot to shop throughout the year, try simplifying the holidays. Choose the most important traditions to continue. Cut your menu down to the most beloved dishes. Only purchase the most meaningful gifts. Mother and grandmother Deb Madden says “The key is to simplify and prioritize how you spend your time and money.” By cutting out the things that are less important, your holidays will be more enjoyable and you will feel less stress.

Delegate

“Delegate. This helps tremendously,” says California mom, Sarah Brown. “If we host a gathering at our home, we send out a list of what we will be providing and then people sign up to bring food, drinks and games.” It

can be hard to reach out and ask for help, especially when feeling overwhelmed, but a shared load is much lighter. Chrissy Rousell, Louisiana mom of six says, “Last year was particularly crazy with sick kids, so I paid my babysitter to wrap presents for me. It sounds insane but it was the best money I ever spent.” People love to help others, especially during the holidays. Ask for help in the areas most needed and you might be surprised at who jumps in to help. It is possible you will be able to return the favor in the future.

Choose joy

A positive attitude can have a huge impact on how we view our circumstances. “I only do things that bring me joy during the holidays,” says Colorado mom, Kara Thomas. “Picturing the joy I am spreading to others makes a huge difference too.” Holiday stress often comes from people



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each year. They look forward to it every year. Even better, I have less to buy, less to wrap, and they get our undivided attention when we are there. Everyone returns with full hearts rather than feeling hungover from holiday stress.”

The source of holiday stress is different for everyone. For some it may be shopping for and wrapping gifts. For others it may be family situations and hosting holiday dinners. Some may be overwhelmed by all the expectations that go along with the holidays such as parties, baking, decorating, and creating family traditions. Try to define the source of your holiday stress and come up with a solution to simplify, organize, and prioritize that particular area. If the holidays are less stressful, they will be much more enjoyable.

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Introducing ourCommunity. Look for this section in each issue meet interesting people in our community and learn more about what happening in San Antonio

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San Antonio Zoo cut the ribbon on preview night for their 'Zoo Lights' display to members and the media on Nov. 18th.



Zoo Lights

an ourKids DIGITAL Interview by Andres Flores

Thank you to the San Antonio Zoo for inviting us to their rope cutting for their 'Zoo Lights' display. The zoo has hosted a light display since 2015, and is now larger than any year before.

I had the chance to talk to Tim Morrow, the San Antonio Zoo's CEO, about everything coming to the attraction. Morrow told OurKids that Gorillas are coming

back, and that a brand new entrance is coming within the next year. The CEO also told us that a membership for residents is less than 2 standard visits and will include entrance to this year's light display as well as next year's 'Zoo Boo!' and other summer attractions. San Antonio residents are welcome to visit the park on 'locals days' that

occur at least once a month for \$8.

In 2022, the zoo added a 4D theater where guests can watch movies such as The Polar Express like never before.

Watch our OurKids Digital coverage for more on the Zoo, as well as other topics covering everything San Antonio!

Attraction: San Antonio Zoo

Bigger, brighter, and WILDER than ever before – Zoo Lights, powered by CPS Energy, is almost here for the holiday season at San Antonio Zoo! Experience acres of dazzling lights, festive holiday snacks, and drinks for adults and kids, plus larger-than-life displays and photo-ops across miles of trails! Zoo Lights, powered by CPS Energy, will run from November 19 through January 1, 2023.

Make memories that will last a lifetime as you stroll through acres of twinkling wildlife trails with exciting surprises along the way! Sleigh through the 124-foot light tunnel, explore an outdoor museum of illuminated animal portraits, carol through the park on the holiday sing-a-long express, dance at the Lakeside Light Show, meet and ride a camel, and even hang out with Santa plus much much more!

With live music and parades daily, Zoo Lights, powered by CPS Energy, is truly the WILDEST holiday light experience around.

Martha and her child Johnathon on the opening preview night of San Antonio Zoo: Zoo Lights



Story by
Sarah Lyons

Gifts Kids Can Give on A Small Budget

There is nothing more heartwarming than a gift made by a child. Handmade gifts are affordable, fun to make, and can be given to grandparents to show your love and appreciation this Grandparent's Day. Here are some gifts that are sure to make your grandparent smile.

Prints

All you need is a child's

cooperation, some paint, and a little creativity to make a gift that will be cherished for years. Handprints, fingerprints, and even footprints can be used to make a variety of crafts and art. Try putting your child's prints on an apron, tea towel, oven mitt, or T-shirt to give to a special someone. Make sure to follow the directions on the paint to ensure that the design lasts for years. As a bonus, your kids will love getting messy

during the process.

Tasty Treats

Kids love to help out in the kitchen, so why not put together some tasty treats for some sweet people in your life? Get the kids involved in baking and put together a plate of cookies the kids can help deliver in person. Putting a homemade cookie mix into a mason jar also makes an easy gift that kids can help with.

Finish the jar with a holiday bow and instructions and it's ready to be delivered.

Frame it

Photos make a favorite gift for any proud grandparent. Get kids involved in picking out favorite photos from the past year and putting them into a collage with handmade drawings or a poem. Try making a scrapbook page that can be framed for a special

gift. Picture frames can be made with decorated popsicle sticks, clay, or an existing frame can be painted or decorated with mosaic tiles, buttons, or other craft supplies. Affordable frames can be found at local thrift stores or the dollar store.

Personalized Gifts

Nothing is more thoughtful than a gift made to fit the recipient's personal tastes. Talk to your



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child about their favorite hobbies and tailor the gift to their interests. For example, use permanent markers to decorate golf balls for the golf lover in your life, decorate a plain coffee mug for the coffee lover in the family, have your child create a special bookmark for the bookworm, or use fingerprints to decorate wooden utensils for your favorite chef. Kids can also use scrapbook paper, stickers, craft supplies, and cardstock to make custom stationery. Making personalized gifts also helps teach kids to be observant of others interests that may be outside their own.

Utilize Beads

Beads are an affordable and versatile craft item that can be used for a variety of gifts. Older children can make personalized jewelry or key chains for loved ones. Pony beads can be melted to make into a suncatcher, mobile, or even a bowl. With

beads, you can give your child some ideas and let their creativity lead them.

Spa at home

Do your grandparents need some rest and relaxation? Try mixing equal parts white or brown sugar and olive oil for an easy sugar scrub that is a great gift for a grandparent who deserves a day at the spa. There are many recipes for homemade soaps, sugar scrubs, and bath salts available online. Many can be mixed together in just minutes and cost very little to make. This luxurious gift may be quick and affordable, but it is sure to make your recipients feel loved and appreciated.

There is great value in teaching kids to give gifts to others. They learn to be generous, thoughtful, and experience the joy of giving. They also learn the important lesson that gifts do not need to cost a fortune to be cherished.

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