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Ways to Get the Most Out of Holiday Events

By Gena Hymowech

From *A Christmas Carol* to *The Nutcracker*, 'tis the season for family-oriented holiday concerts, plays, and ballets. To make sure your child enjoys your favorites as much as you do:

- Think about his attention span. If he's able to sit through a church service or a full-length movie, he's most likely ready for a holiday show. If he tends to get fidgety, you may want to wait another year.
- If possible, let him choose. Narrow the options to events that will hold his interest (a musical, say, instead of a symphony performance), check to make sure tickets are available, then describe what he can expect to see at each.
- Make sure he's well rested but not antsy. If he's tired, he's liable to get cranky midway through the event. On the other hand, if he's been cooped up all day, let him run off excess energy before you leave the house.
- Have him wear comfortable clothes. A new holiday outfit could spell disaster if it's tight or scratchy.
- Bring distractions. Pack a quiet plaything or two, such as crayons or a favorite toy car, in case he starts to lose interest.
- Consider inviting a well-behaved friend. During intermission, the two can chat and help keep each other interested in the show.
- Don't hesitate to walk out. If your child isn't having a good time or is disturbing other audience members, just leave. You can always try again next year.

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