



# Wee Learn

Wee Beginners  
(0-18 months):  
Celebrating the Festive  
Season with Your Toddler



## Seeing the holidays through your toddler's eyes

At this stage, your baby understands a lot more than he's letting on. Of course, he's still too young to understand what the holidays are all about. But it's never too early to start your own family traditions, whether that means decorating your home with a *rangoli* or *diyas* on Diwali, preparing a feast for Eid, lighting the Hanukkah candles or decorating a Christmas tree together.

If you plan on taking your child to see Father Christmas, spend some time explaining who Santa is (an 18-month-old will understand more than a one-year-old) and familiarize your child with his appearance by looking at pictures in books. Don't force your child to sit for a picture with Father Christmas if he doesn't want to - there will be plenty of time for Santa in the years ahead.

It is the season for tantrums, too. At this age, your child's ability to understand what's going on around him outpaces his ability to communicate, resulting in frustration and meltdowns when you don't respond to his needs. It may be sensible to leave him at home with a relative or friend while you do your Christmas shopping to avoid having to deal with a tantrum in a crowded public place or mall.

From 12 to 18 months, your child will be testing you at every turn. Say "No" when he tries to reach for a lighted candle, for example, and he'll pause and look at your face - maybe even shake his head "No" in return - but he'll also test your responses to his behaviour by doing it again. Think about celebrating in your own house this year, where you'll have more control over the environment.

The holiday festivities will keep you busy too, but try to spend some quite time "alone" with your baby. Give him lots of hugs and cuddles and your baby will be reassured that "mummy's around." Try putting your feet up for some time too - you could use some much needed rest and it is a great way to bond with your baby amidst all the hustle and bustle.

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