

# Getting Through the Holidays

## Tips & Tricks

Young people in foster care have unique challenges, especially around the holidays. Feeling lonely because of separation from family, feeling forced to take part in different holiday activities/traditions, or feeling uncomfortable due to increased attention and gifts are common. Holidays are never easy, so FosterClub's PeerUp! youth created these 8 tips and tricks for youth in care. Our hope is child welfare professionals, foster parents, and guardians can use these to support youth. **Together we can make foster care suck less.**



### 1. Advocate for yourself

Let your guardian, foster parents, or caseworker know what kind of support you need around the holidays. Advocating for your needs and wants helps and may even open up doors to receive more support.

**Ask for phone access to call your loved ones or for an extra visitation with your family.**



### 2. Take time for yourself



It is never easy to celebrate the holidays with new people. It is ok to ask for time alone. Our mental and physical health is important, so take time out for you. **You are worth it.**

### 3. Staying well-rested

Make sure you are getting enough rest. If you aren't, take a nap. Lack of sleep can contribute to the stress and anxiety around the holidays.



**It is best to get as much rest as possible to maintain good mental health.**

### 4. Honoring your Family

We know holidays are especially tough when we aren't with our family. **Ambiguous losses are tough to grieve and process.**

If you have photos, clothing, or anything that resembles your family and is meaningful to you, carry those items with you throughout the day.



### 5. Peer Support

Spending time with friends or siblings is important to young people, no matter the time of year. Being around peers who share a similar life experience as you help make the challenges youth face less stressful. **Connection matters.**



### 6. Keeping traditions alive

Many youth in foster care come from different cultures and celebrate different holiday traditions than their foster families. **It is important that youth feel empowered to share their holiday traditions and have a safe space to celebrate.**



Whether it is celebrating Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Día de las Velitas, or Solstice. Some youth may decide not to celebrate holidays at all and that is okay too.

### 7. Be budget aware & friendly

Gift-giving/purchasing can be stressful. Know the cost of items you request and set an amount for your spending. **You don't need to spend lots of money, it's the thought that truly matters.** If you are unable to purchase a gift, consider making something instead.



### 8. Holidays with strangers

For some youth, the holidays can feel like they are celebrating it with strangers depending on when they entered the home. It may be tough to receive gifts from new people or sometimes due to reasons outside of our control not receive anything at all. It can cause unneeded stress and discomfort.



It may be helpful to ask for a board game or a deck of plays cards like UNO. Something you enjoy playing. It will help break the ice.

**Be sure to communicate with your caseworker your worries around the holidays.**



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