

# Keeping Your Cool



## Feeling crazed? Try these tips to take it all in stride.

Spring holidays, school breaks and family vacations are all looming—on top of your usual day-to-day tasks. Protocol consultant Melissa Leonard offers quick checklists to keep you cool and collected in stressful situations.

**Pressure Is On:** You've planned a big party at your house.

**Stay-Cool Strategy:** Prepare early so you don't feel overwhelmed by last-minute mishaps:

- Three weeks prior, create a guest list, and e-mail invitations or call to spread the news. Ask everyone to bring a dessert or beverage and RSVP.
- Two weeks before, make a meal plan (consider guests with special needs) and order food. Prepare recipes that you can freeze in advance.

- One week to go: Shop for party supplies, and organize tableware and linens. Assign tasks to family members, such as greeting guests, refilling drinks and helping with the decorations.



**Pressure Is On:** The kids constantly demand your attention.

**Stay-Cool Strategy:** Set rules. "My kids know when to say 'Excuse me'—these two words can make my day feel less hectic," says Leonard. Here

are some ways to keep calm:

- Explain to your kids why you need them to be quiet—it works wonders.
- Carve out an hour-long break for them to read or draw.
- Praise always gets positive results. If kids play quietly for the time it takes you to make an important call, let them know how helpful they've been.

**Pressure Is On:** You're traveling on a family vacation.

**Stay-Cool Strategy:** Whether you're on the road or in flight, be prepared with these tricks to keep you and the kids at ease:

- Bring plenty of paper, crayons, stickers and other portable activities.
- Pick up new toys at the dollar store and wrap them in gift wrap or foil. Kids love to open gifts!
- Play kid-friendly tapes or CDs that have proven soothing at home.
- Stock plenty of healthy snacks and special treats for major mile markers.

## FRESHNESS YOU CAN COUNT ON



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