Kids Can Resist Holiday Traditions
(KAIR)--Holiday gatherings are a good time for people of all ages to come together for an extended amount of time. However, as children get older, these gatherings can become a challenge for the entire family. Kids typically want to spend time with their friends and social media, while their parents and other relatives want their undivided attention.

K-State Research and Extension youth development specialist Elaine Johannes says the job of children is to grow up, and they do that somewhat by pushing against the tradition of what the family has laid out. She says these kids are often trying to create a tradition for their own understanding of what the holiday is. They will more than likely want to spend the holidays with their friends rather than their family.

Most teens are willing to spend a day or two with the family, but asking them to go for an extended amount of time without seeing their friends is going to create some problems. Johannes says this is where free time comes into play. Free time can be planned, defined, and structured. Talk about it, plan a certain amount of time throughout the week that can be spent with friends, and plan for time that has to be spent at home with the family. It is normal for them to want to be away from their family and want to do something on their own.

Spending time with family does not have to be limited to just eating, talking, and texting. In fact, Johannes says that teens may want to unplug by playing a board game. She says "There's some science around having a family learn a board game...there is some real bonding and communication skills that can happen, let alone those stories of history. So that's an excellent way to switch it up. Our teens are so accustomed to technology, that we as adults can actually enthrall them and intrigue them with an old style board game".

More information on positive youth development is available at county and district extension offices and by going to the Extension website ksre.ksu.edu.

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