

# *CAP's Top Ten Tips for Avoiding Festive Debt*

- 1) Decide what you have to spend. Make a list and be realistic. Paying in cash may help you keep control. Let your children see your careful planning – you'll be teaching them a valuable life-long lesson.
- 2) Manage expectations early. If things are tight don't be afraid to say so to family members. You'll probably all be in the same boat and it may lead to a happier Christmas for them too!
- 3) See if relatives will club together with you to buy children what they would like, rather than individually over indulging them and all feeling out of pocket.
- 4) Buy fewer presents but cheaper trimmings like paper chains and crackers. They all add to the fun without costing very much.
- 5) Never take out a Christmas loan! Remember the possible consequences could be disastrous for you and your family.
- 6) Give ironing or baby-sitting vouchers or make presents as opposed to buying them. For example, delicious homemade biscuits, chocolates and fudge make a lovely gift and show you've spent time and care.
- 7) Remember - you can't buy love. Don't feel guilty if you can't afford the latest present for your children. Your love and affection will last longer in the memory than any toy can.
- 8) Don't fall into the trap of reciprocal gift giving and don't buy out of obligation.
- 9) Don't overspend in the January sales, in spite of how good a bargain you might see. Make a budget and stick to it and if possible, leave those credit cards at home.
- 10) Enjoy all the low cost things on offer – the lights in town; get together; making mince pies; playing family board games; seeing your kids in the school nativity.