

★ AUTISM FRIENDLY ★ HOLIDAY TIPS

Dear Families:

The holidays can be an exciting, yet stressful time for all of us. Holiday events are a part of this fun and busy season. This stress can be magnified for your children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Here are some tips to help ease the holiday season:

- Create a visual calendar and prepare in advance for ALL activities that are additional to every day activities.
- Teach rules for events and review them often. Contact people hosting the event so you know what to expect in advance to help prepare your child and let them know what to expect.
- Discuss the rules around gift giving and receiving. Practice giving a gift to another person, opening a gift, and saying “Thank you!” Create social scripts social stories, role-play, and model appropriate behaviors!
- Have realistic expectations for your child. You can make modifications to the event in order to set your child up for success. If your child is a picky eater, eat before the event. If your child has difficulty transitioning from an electronic, consider not bringing it!
- Give yourself as much time in advance the day of the event. Try to avoid running around the house and rushing before event.
- Take whatever proactive strategies work for your child and continue them at the event. Behavioral, communication, and social strategies should not be put on hold and should just be modified for the event.
- Use a visual timer and provide your child with the estimated time frame for the event.
- Be clear to your child what food items they can and cannot have. Set limits. If possible, stay in another room/area where food is not located if your child struggles with accepting no or has food restrictions. Bring your own snacks/food that your child can have.
- Identify a quiet/calm place for your child to retreat to. Tell them they can ask to take a break in that room when needed and take them there on occasion periodically to reinforce positive behaviors!

Have fun!

We hope you have a safe and enjoyable Holiday Season!

From our family to yours,

Pacific Child and Family Associates