



HOLIDAY TIPS FOR STUDENTS WITH ASD



1. Decorating tips - some children/youth with autism may be anxious when their surroundings at home change; be mindful of blinking lights, different sounds and clutter in their environment. Consider adding a new decoration or change one day at a time, having your child/youth participate in where it goes in the home
2. Reduce the stimuli as much as possible if your child/youth is more sensitive to lights, sounds and smells.
3. Plan ahead for travel and celebrations by marking individual events on a [calendar](#) and striking each day off as you near the event.
4. Provide a visual of what it may look like, who will be there and even how you will go there.
5. Use previous family photos of the people you will be spending time with so your child/youth can predict who will be there. Consider a video call beforehand to familiarize them with family and friends again.
6. Communicate your plan with others. You are not alone in supporting your child/youth during the holidays so ensure to communicate your child's food preferences, have a quiet space available where you'll be visiting in case your child/youth needs a break and some quiet time to self regulate.
7. Pack additional preferred items that support self regulation and calming activities that can be done at someone else's home.
8. If gift giving and receiving is difficult for your child/youth to participate in, consider practicing ahead of time, writing out the rules of how to wait and take a turn. Minimizing the expectation to one gift in the large group and then the rest on their own may help to make it more successful and pleasurable.
9. You know your child/youth best. Share your tried and true strategies with those around your child/youth at the holidays. Consider a [mini tip sheet](#) of preferred items, activities and sayings when your child/youth is starting to get anxious or overwhelmed.
10. Enjoy yourself! The holiday season can be a wonderful time to be with family, friends and most of all your child/youth. Take the time to rest, communicate and be together both inside and outdoors.

