



Tips for Preparing for the Holidays






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Why holidays can be challenging

-  Change in Routine
-  Unsure of when something will happen
-  Sensory Overload
-  Difficulty predicting what will happen
-  New people, different expectations















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Strategies that can be helpful

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Calendar with visual reminders

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Labor Day 					
						
						
						
						

Printable Calendars by Betacalendars.com



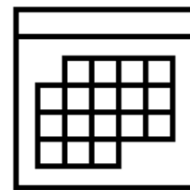
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The amount of advanced warning you give depends on your child's needs.

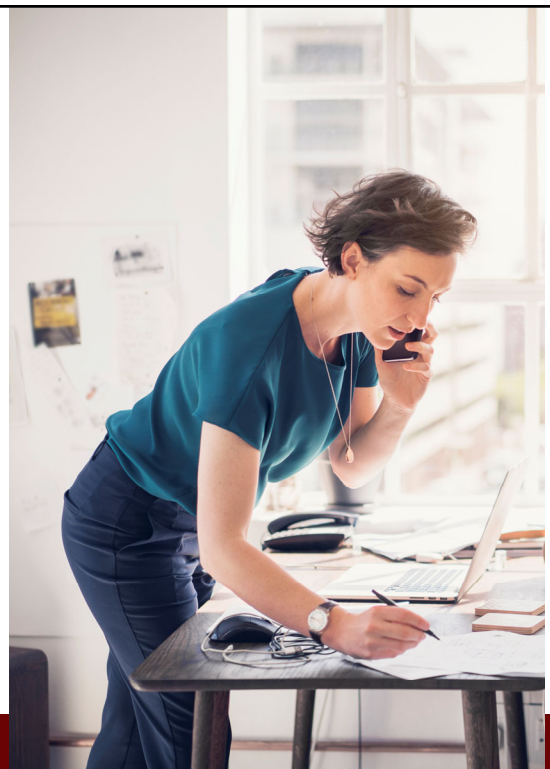


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Make a plan with your family and friends

- Talk about activities and expectations
- Helps you know what to bring
- Gives you time frames



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Make a personal Schedule



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Schedule

1 st	Next	Then
Bank	Grocery Store	Home



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Visuals for the sequence of events

1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
				



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Cards for sequence of events



Drive to Grandma and Grandpa's House.

Say hello to my family. I will see Grandma, Grandpa, Auntie Mandy, and Uncle Mike.

Eat dinner at the house with my family.

We will play games after dinner.



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Look at pictures from past holidays



Activities



Feelings



People



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Social Story

- A short narrative (or story) about what to expect, how to behave, and how people will feel.
- Written in first person at the child's language level.
- Often include pictures, but don't have to if the child can read independently.



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Visiting Santa Social Story

Autism Little Learners

https://drive.google.com/file/d/13_I6RkXsTIJ-W3GS10JW2mxuqJvL9BDM/view



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Can be found in the
**Holidays and
Celebrations**
section of IRCA's
Visual Supports
Resources

Easter

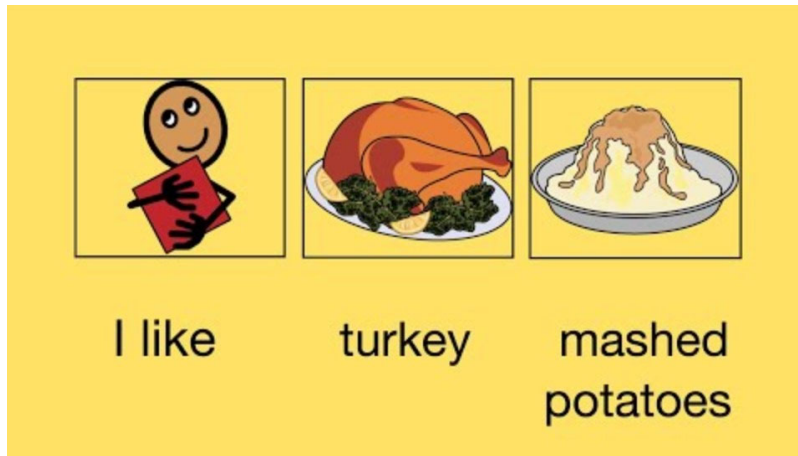
	Easter is a holiday that is celebrated every year. Easter is celebrated in the spring. Sometimes Easter is in March and sometimes Easter is in April.
	Some people celebrate Easter by going to church. Some go to Easter egg hunts. Some people celebrate Easter by having a family dinner. Other people do not celebrate Easter.
	Some people celebrate Easter with baskets. Some celebrate by coloring eggs. Sometimes people have Easter parties or parades.
	Some people like to eat Easter candy, like jelly beans or chocolate. Easter is a happy and fun holiday every spring.



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Thanksgiving FOOD song



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Tips for Halloween

- Emphasize pretend
- Make a Trick or Treat plan – schedule or map
- Plan trick or treat times with family and friends
- Practice wearing costume
- Role Play
- Have a candy plan

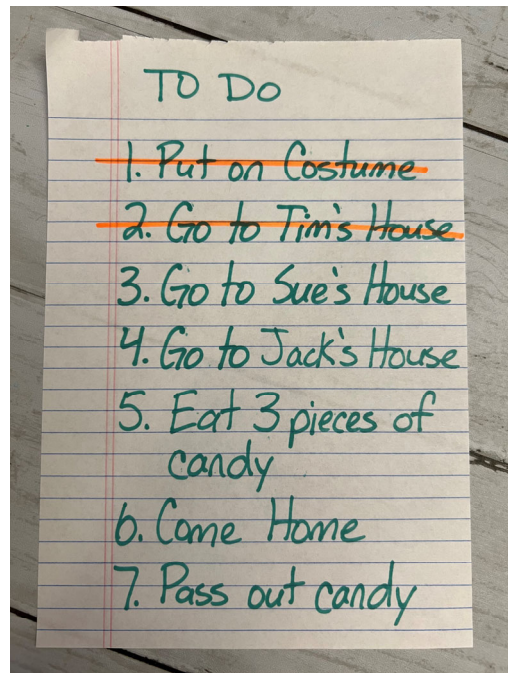


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Write a To Do List for the event

- Can be written on any piece of paper
- Add whatever info is important to the child
- Cross off as you go



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Watch a Video

- This is called Video Modeling

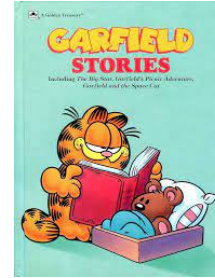


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Bring a “waiting activity”

- Something engaging
- Something calming
- Something easy to transition away from



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Consider the Sensory Experience



Smells

Cook a few foods ahead of time to prepare
Step out for fresh air breaks



Sounds

Bring headphones
Earbuds for music
Identify a quiet place to go to



Environment

Look at pictures
Visit a few times before the big event
Identify a safe place to hang out



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Food

- Bring food your child will eat
- Not the time to try something new
- Practice saying "no thank you"
- Bring a favorite cup or plate
- Make a plan for when to leave the table
- Visual for good manners and topics for conversation



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Review Social Expectations for activities

- Sometimes we do activities with family and friends
- Sometimes we do things by ourselves
- What activities does your child like to do...crafts, games, movies, sports



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Gifts

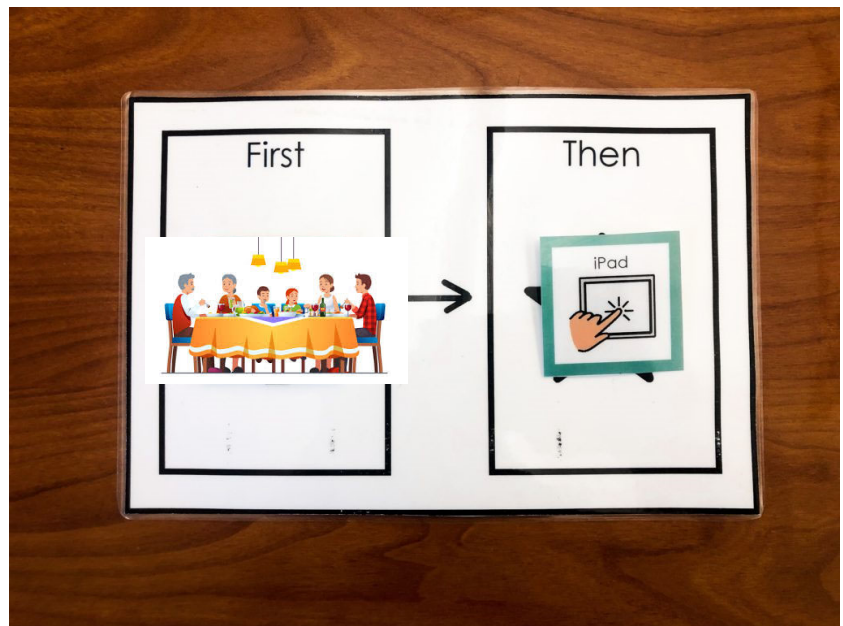
- Practice opening
- Practice taking turns
- Give phrases to use for a thank you
- What to say and do if you don't like the gift



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First - Then Reinforcement



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Have an Exit Plan

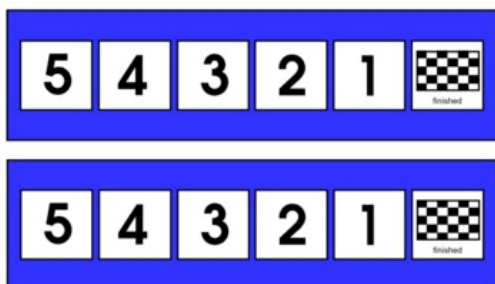
- What will finished look like?
- When is it time to leave?
- What's the emergency plan?



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Use a Countdown



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Heads Up...there's a change!

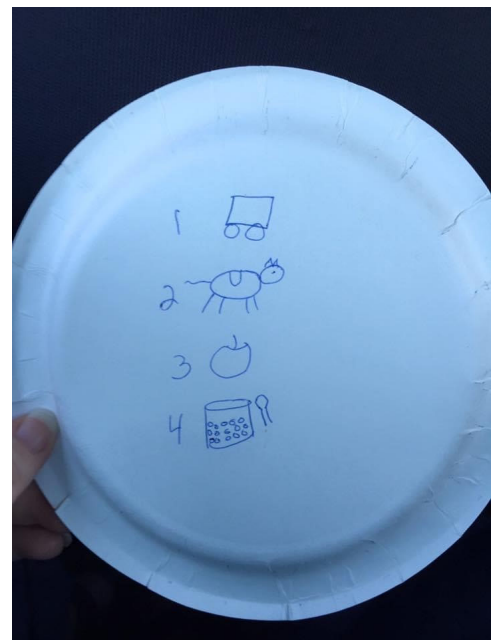


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Be ready to revise the plan

A paper plate will do just fine 😊



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Define Fun

- What are the expectations for an enjoyable time...this is different for everyone.
- Plan to be flexible with a plan



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Remember...

- Put the event on the Calendar
- Review Expectations & the schedule
- Prepare to have favorite and needed items
- Know the exit plan
- Be ready to have fun!



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**Best
Wishes!**

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