

SENCO Newsletter

December 2025

Christmas can be a tricky time of year for neurodivergent young people and it's easy for families to feel pressured into creating a 'picture-perfect' Christmas. Remember Christmas looks different for everyone and there is beauty in making it your own.

Routines

Try to keep some routines the same – maybe bedtime or allowing your young person to eat in their usual place.



Down Time

Christmas can be really busy with lots of expectations to visit or be visited. Plan some quiet days when you can all have some recovery time or do a favourite activity together that you all enjoy.



Gifts

Christmas presents themselves can bring challenges. The excitement, or sometimes the uncertainty, of what might be under the wrapping paper can be intense. If this is the case, you could add clues on the gift tag, leave a peep hole in the paper, or wrap gifts in clear cellophane. And some young people might prefer opening gifts quietly or without an audience to minimise any social pressure.



Social Scripts

Scripts can also be a good strategy, especially at times when anxious feelings might affect communication. Preparing a few phrases in advance can support your child's confidence in what may feel like tricky social situations.

Sensory Differences

The sensory aspects of Christmas – flashing lights, scented candles, bustling shopping centres, and busy gatherings – can sometimes overwhelm children with sensory sensitivities. Consider having a space that is a Christmas free zone. The same applies to what your family eats over the holiday period. Who says chicken nuggets dipped in cranberry sauce aren't festive if that's what works for your young person?



Helpful websites

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/professional-practice/christmas-resources>

https://www.sensorydirect.com/blog/10-tips-for-supporting-neurodivergent-children-at-christmas/?srsltid=AfmBOoqw_9Rbi05I-junTBcJjq7d3CSsAgBnCVms88TtIUMMxX9TDyrt

<https://www.adhdcentre.co.uk/tips-for-an-adhd-family-christmas/>

