Holiday Tips!

The holiday season is a joyful time of the year, but it also can be stressful for kids with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and other neurodevelopmental disorders. Here are a few tips from our Behavior Intervention team!

**Provide Concrete Information & Clear Expectations for your Child**
- Create a calendar of events. Include beginning and end times of activities.
- Explain to your child what behaviors are and are not expected.
- Provide opportunities to “reward” your child for expected behavior through verbal praise, stickers, high-fives, etc.
- Roleplay and practice new social situations. Work together to create a “social story” that incorporates all elements of an upcoming event or visit to better prepare them for that situation. Social stories: Click here

**Provide Information Visually**
- Take pictures of relatives and friends you will visit and practice names.
- Video modeling is considered an evidence-based way to teach your child. Take videos of how to unwrap a gift the right way, or thank a family member, or greet new people. Role play with your child and practice ahead of time.
- Use pictures to help your child communicate or make choices of what they would like to have or say.

**Reduce Anxiety**
- Plan ahead when possible. Create a list of activities that can help your child during downtime.
- Provide a quiet place for your child to retreat and relax when needed.
- Relax and have a good time. If you are tense your child may sense that something isn’t right.
- Don’t shield your child from the extended family. Family members need to understand the challenges you face.

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**Stay Connected!**

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