



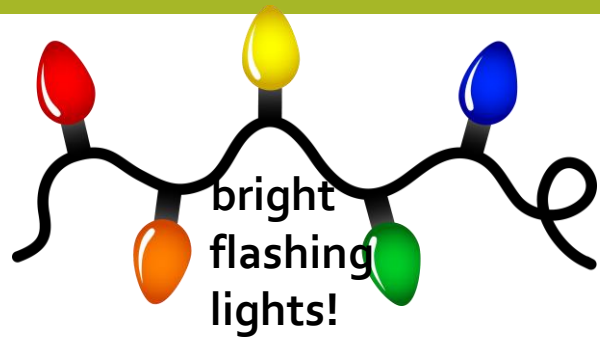
Supporting ASD children at Christmas time





What helps me to remain relaxed and regulated ?

- Routine: same bedtimes, mealtimes, school timetables etc..
- Planning for change- warnings about disengaging from tasks
- Environment: staying the same, a plain calming environment, belongings that are familiar to me, smells and textures that are familiar,
- Diet- likes the same food, low tolerance for different foods.
- Sensory environment that suites me- noises levels and the number of different noises, lighting.
- Control over who comes into my space- being close to direct family
- Quiet time on my own
- Predictability – expectations and social interactions.



bright
flashing
lights!



long car journeys
to see people



Invading
my space!



Different meal in a
different room,
squashed together!
Volume in the
room!



loud music



Unexpected
loud noises

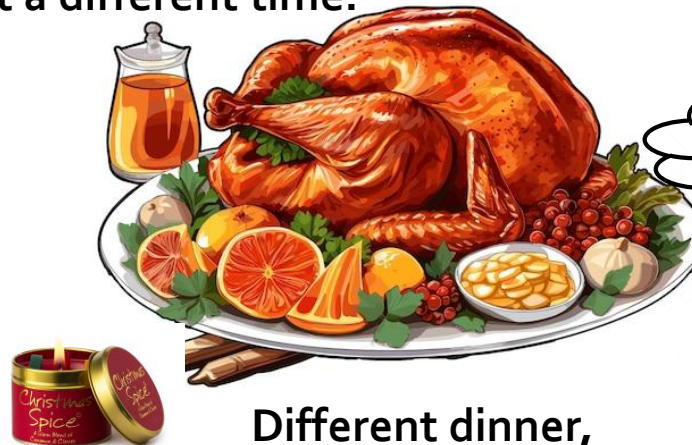


Unpredictable
Surprises!

Everything happening
at a different time.



The room looks and smells different!



Different dinner,
different smells.

What am suppose to
say? Just keep smiling.



Over-stimulating

Strategies- Christmas can be a happy time for *all* the family.

All children are different, so here are some suggestions that you could think about.

Routine: use visual/written timetables- for example

Between 7.00-8.00	Get up and open stocking presents.
Between 8.00-9.00	Play with new presents or have tablet time in bedroom
Between 9.00-10.00	Have breakfast, get dressed, brush teeth.
Between 10.00-11.00	Grandma and Auntie Doreen will arrive- as long as the traffic isn't bad. It could be later.

- Timetable in anchoring times- anything familiar, quiet times, calming times, alone time.
- Timetable in choices.
- Plan for change - note down any changes that might occur. Use 'oops' cards
- Use now/next language if that is what they are used to.

Environment

- Children to help select and decorate rooms.
- Decorate over a couple of weeks- adding to the environment so it doesn't change all at once.
- Leave decorations around first- so children can get used to them.
- Keep their bedroom the same- only decorate if they want to.
- Think about positioning of their seating at big crowded tables- are they better on the end, can they help clear the table- to give them a break between courses?
- Turn down/off music during dinner time chat and turn off flashing lights.
- Can they have their own plate of food- does it matter if they have their familiar food?
- Have a calm space to get away from it all if it becomes too much!

Unpredictable presents!

What's the behaviour expectation?

What is the expectation around the reaction?

What should be said?

What should your expression be 'saying'?



What's in the present?

Am I going to like it?

What did my social story say?

Having a Christmas list with presents chosen by the young person can take away some of the uncertainty of what is inside.
"it will be something off of your list"

How was
your
Christmas?

Brilliant, thank you!



Support

ASD Family Help – www.asdfamilyhelp.org
jayne@asdfamilyhelp.org 07733 601755 or rachael@asdfamilyhelp.org

Parenting Special Children – www.parentingspecialchildren.co.uk
helpline@parentingspecialchildren.co.uk 0118 963532

Wokingham ASSIST team - assist@wokingham.gov.uk 01189 088 053

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/parents> In the SEND section there are some helpful tips on how to deal with Christmas including an article by Christine McGuinness

National Autistic Society – www.autism.org.uk