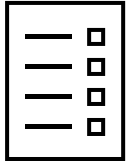


PREPARING FOR AN AUTISM FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS...

- Use a calendar to countdown and prepare for Christmas, marking it with any specific events e.g. putting the Christmas tree up
- Talk about Christmas and what it means
- Use social stories to support understanding of Christmas
- Show photos of people you might see e.g. Father Christmas, and any places you might visit





DAILY SCHEDULES FOR AN AUTISM FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS...

- Using daily schedules adds structure & maintains a sense of routine - keep your daily schedule the same, as far as possible
- Include a Christmas themed activity into your daily schedule e.g. advent calendars, switching on Christmas tree lights, Christmas crafts etc
- Ensure some 'Christmas free time' or quiet time to minimise overload and anxiety





DECORATIONS FOR AN AUTISM FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS...

- Include your child in making changes to the home environment so that it is all less of a shock e.g. let them handle decorations, ensure they see them being put up or help putting them up
- Decorate the home environment gradually so that your child can adjust to everything in stages
- Be mindful that too many flashing lights can be overloading & that having chocolates on the tree can be distracting!





PRESENTS FOR AN AUTISM FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS...

- Having a large number of presents can be overwhelming – introduce presents one by one instead of all at once. You could also open presents gradually over a number of days rather than all in one day.
- Leave presents unwrapped or use gift bags if your child dislikes the feel or wrapping paper or dislikes the uncertainty of not knowing what is under the paper
- Make sure gifts are ready to play with e.g. already built, ready with batteries charged etc, to reduce waiting & frustration





FOOD FOR AN AUTISM FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS...

- Having Christmas dinner and eating at different times can be overwhelming – try eating at the same time as you usually would & allow your child to have a ‘special dinner’ of their favourite foods
- Sitting around the table with lots of people and lots of noise can cause sensory overload – let your child have access to quiet space and eat in another room if they are more comfortable
- Allow your child to sit in their normal space at the table, without crackers & decorations

