

Holiday Tips for Children with Autism

Turn Holiday Outings into Learning Moments

- ★ Plan the outing together: time, place, and what to expect.
- ★ Keep outings short and positive: one store or one event at a time.
- ★ Break it down into simple steps: drive → pick tree → drive home → decorate.
- ★ Bring sensory supports: for bright lights, music, or crowds.
- ★ Give your child choices and small responsibilities (carry the tree tag, pick one ornament).
- ★ Keep meal and rest times consistent when possible.
- ★ End with something familiar and relaxing (movie, favorite snack).
- ★ Celebrate small wins ("You picked the tree – great job!").



Family Gatherings Made Easier

- ★ Talk about the day ahead using "first-then" language and visuals ("first dinner, then playtime").
- ★ Communicate sensory needs with hosts in advance (noise, lighting, food, preferred communication).
- ★ Bring a comfort kit: headphones, favorite toy, fidgets, snacks, small activity.
- ★ Arrive early to settle in and get familiarized with the environment before it gets busy.
- ★ Create a quiet area (guest room or corner) with favorite items and headphones.
- ★ Give your child a low-pressure role to feel included (set utensils, pour juice, wipe table).
- ★ Praise specific successes, no matter how small ("you said hi!" "you tried a new food, that's great!").
- ★ Return to routine when home, like following the same bedtime, watching a favorite show, etc.



Travel with Confidence

- ★ Create a visual timeline of travel day with simple icons or photos and go over them in advance.
- ★ Contact airlines, hotels, and destinations early for accommodations like early boarding.
- ★ Pack a comfort kit (headphones, fidgets, familiar snacks, cozy blanket, or favorite toy).
- ★ Keep mealtimes and bedtime routines consistent whenever possible.
- ★ Visit the airport or do a short practice drive before travel day to increase familiarity.
- ★ Use visual schedules or countdowns to show what's next.
- ★ Let your child choose small decisions (snack, seat, music, or activity).
- ★ Praise flexibility and effort throughout the trip, like asking for a break.



Did you know? You can ask your Behavior Frontiers team for extra support on holiday skills or even accompany your child during an outing. Contact us to learn more or enroll now!



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