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Christmas Tips FOR SEND EDUCATORS

#CHOOSESEND



Christmas Calendar

Print out a calendar

showing the whole of December and mark on it everything coming up in the next few weeks.

Use pictures to link the calendar to students current interests. This will help them to connect.



Communicate with Parents

Meet with parents

to plan how you can help their child cope with the challenges coming up.

Keep communication going throughout the Christmas period with home-school books.



Communicate with Student

Go through the calendar with the student

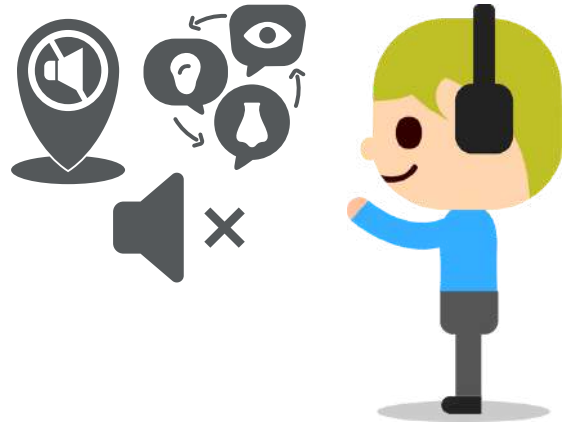
Many people worry that letting children know in advance will make them anxious, but it is better to manage stress in a quiet place with no demands other than during a Christmas nativity play!

Highlighting the next event on the calendar and crossing it off afterward helps to focus on one thing at a time.



Quiet Place

Identify a quiet place that the student can go to if everything gets too much. Ideally, this should be Christmas decoration free.



Picture Preparation

Look through pictures of Christmas

Remind the student what Christmas looks like by showing them pictures.

We can often take for granted what autistic students know but social information is not always stored well so frequent reminders can be helpful.



Social Story

Create a social story

showing the student what to expect and do in each Christmas activity.

Social stories are particularly helpful for activities that only happen at Christmas time, e.g. meeting Father Christmas.



Christmas Play

Talk through the Christmas Play

and offer a restricted choice of what the student can do.

Offer no more than 3 things as too much freedom may become stressful. Include a supporting role e.g. making costumes etc.



Rehearsals

Set up a private rehearsal

for autistic students who love performing. Ensure that you give them extra opportunities to rehearse in private. Most are likely to be brilliant at remembering their lines but may find working in a group challenging.



Involve Students in Activities

Put up Christmas decorations with students

Control can sometimes become an issue for autistic students. Allowing the student to become involved in the change of appearance at school during Christmas time makes it less of a surprise and easier to cope with.

Normal Routines

Keep up with normal routines

Some schools find that keeping one or two non-Christmas days a week or restricting Christmas activities to the afternoon work well.



Performance Day

Nativity Play Day

Give students an object to focus on or fiddle with. Fiddle objects or sensory toys are real stress busters for autistic students.

Be aware that even students who have flourished in rehearsal may suddenly lose confidence when presented with an audience so stand them next to a trusted adult to walk away with them if necessary.



Pantomime Outings

Show the students pictures of actors and set in advance.

Ideally, visit the theatre when it's empty and try to sit towards the back where it is quietest so that you can exist without interrupting the show if necessary.

Alternatively, visit theatres who do special shows for autistic students or those with special educational needs and disabilities



Visual Timetable

Provide a visual timetable showing daily activities. Autistic students find visual information much easier to process when they are stressed. Being able to check a timetable independently helps with anxiety. Add info to older students planners.



Christmas Party

Ensure that there is food that the students will like or are familiar with.

Try to include quiet games as autistic students can be sensitive to noise.

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**Axcis Education
wishes you a very**

Merry Christmas

and

Holidays! HAPPY

If you are not currently working in the
SEND education section sector, but thinking about it,
then please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

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