

## TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL

# THANKS GIVING

WITH  
*Special Needs Kids*

### Reminders:

- Talk Turkey with your Clinical Team and ask for their recommendations to help set up your child for success that is in line with their treatment plan.
- If you are cooking, enlist help from a trusted family member or friend to keep your child on track and help with breaks when needed.
- After the day is over, take time to reflect on what worked and what needs tweaking and write down for future holidays.
- Breathe! You got this! Kudos to you for being the best parent you can be by making the best day possible for your child.

### Before Thanksgiving

- Create a visual schedule or social story about Thanksgiving activities.
- Practice key scenarios like greetings, mealtime behavior, or trying new foods.
- Prepare a sensory kit with items like headphones, fidget toys, or a weighted blanket.
- Identify potential sensory triggers in the environment (e.g., loud conversations, unfamiliar smells).
- Pack familiar foods or preferred items to bring comfort in a new setting.

### Creating the Environment

- Set up a quiet “Turkey Timeout Zone” with calming activities.
- Arrange seating to pair your child with a supportive family member.
- Blend familiar elements into the festivities (e.g., a favorite dish or toy).

### During Thanksgiving

- Offer familiar foods alongside small portions of new dishes.
- Use positive reinforcement for any participation, such as sitting at the table or trying new foods.
- Allow breaks when needed in the designated quiet zone.
- Provide structured activities, such as Thanksgiving crafts or a gratitude tree activity.
- Incorporate movement breaks like a short walk or dance session to manage energy levels.
- Thanksgiving is about gratitude, not perfection! Neither you nor your child needs to achieve an impossible standard. The holiday can be joyful even with its hiccups.

