

## TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL

# WINTER HOLIDAY

WITH *Special Needs Kids*

### Timers: The Unsung Holiday Hero

Whether it's counting down to dinner or wrapping up playtime, timers ease transitions like a sleigh gliding through the snow.

### Holiday Dress Rehearsals

Practice big moments like greeting guests or unwrapping presents. A little prep goes a long way in building confidence for the big day!

### Create a Cozy Calm Cave

Transform a quiet corner into your child's North Pole Recharge Zone. Add sensory favorites like noise-canceling headphones, soft blankets, or fidget toys for an instant retreat.

### Family-Friendly Tips

Send out a festive "Holiday Needs List" to clue family in on your child's preferences. It's teamwork with a sprinkle of holiday magic!

### Gifting Made Fun

Stretch out the excitement by opening gifts one at a time or turning it into a scavenger hunt. Bonus points for sensory-friendly toys!

### Celebrate in Their Style

Whether it's dancing to carols or a quiet movie night, lean into activities your child loves. Traditions that make them smile are the best ones to keep.

### It's OK to Say No

If an invitation feels too much, skip it guilt-free. Your child's comfort comes first—no explanations needed!

### Celebrate Small Wins

Every tiny triumph—whether it's trying a new food or lasting 10 minutes at a party—is a reason to cheer. Sprinkle praise like snowflakes!

### The Season of Gratitude

The holidays aren't about perfection; they're about love, laughter, and connection. Give yourself the gift of grace and remember—you're doing amazing!

### Routines Keep the Jingle in Your Jangle

The magic of the season can shake things up, but keeping your child's day predictable will help. Use a holiday countdown calendar or visual schedule, and don't skimp on bedtime—it's the gift of energy for everyone!

### Deck the Halls with Sensory Smiles

Go for soft twinkle lights, simple wreaths, or homemade decorations your child can create. It's memory-making and sensory-friendly all rolled into one!

### Enlist Your "Helper on Duty"

Family or friends can play your child's helper while you host. Share your child's favorite activities, so they're entertained and happy.

### Check in with Your BCBA

Talk about strategies from your child's Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). They can sprinkle in tips to keep behaviors in check during all the holiday excitement.

### Snack Smart with a Festive Twist

Bring familiar foods to gatherings and make them fun with cookie cutters or colorful plates. Less stress, more yum!

### Predictable Choices for the Win

Help your child feel in control with simple options like, "Do you want to sit at the table or on the couch?" Predictability = holiday peace!

### Pack a Holiday Toolkit

Heading out? Don't leave without a kit of sensory items, headphones, snacks, and fidgets. It's your festive survival bag!

### Sprinkle on Sensory Magic

Balance sensory seekers and avoiders with engaging play or calming spaces. Think kinetic sand for fun or a quiet corner to recharge.

### Visuals Are Your Secret Weapon

Use holiday-themed visuals to prep your child for the day's events. A picture of candles, decorations, or gatherings can make new routines easier to navigate.

### Seating for Success

At gatherings, pick a cozy spot near supportive family members to help your child feel comfortable and included.