



Free COVID & Holiday Toolkits from **The Autism Society of America!**

<https://www.autism-society.org/holiday-support-december-2020-toolkit/>

<https://www.autism-society.org/covid-19/>

Happy Holidays from Parent Network of WNY!



Making the Best of the Holidays During a Pandemic

Every family is facing unique challenges this holiday season amidst the COVID 19 pandemic. Parents and caregivers of children who are differently abled may also be concerned about behavioral challenges that are likely to arise with the upheaval of seasonal traditions and routines.

There are many reasons that holiday merriment may be lacking; but it does not have to be that way. Changes may have to be made, but there is still holiday cheer to be found. Consider this holiday season as an opportunity to create new traditions and routines for your family. Even though change can be very difficult for those who are differently abled, it is easier to cope with change when you are prepared and sharing the new experience with your loved ones.

Be Prepared for Changes During the Holidays

- Create a visual schedule and sequence events and activities.
- Use a social story to help explain what is different this year.
- Consider replacement activities to take the place of cancelled events.
- Review and repeat the rules and expectations for in-person gatherings.
- Provide frequent positive praise.
- Be sure to have preferred items—used for sensory input, coping, or calming—available and accessible.
- Keep yourself calm and in control.
- Put extra emphasis on aspects of the holidays that are unchanged.
- Share your feelings and encourage your child to do the same.

COVID Safe Activities for the Holidays

- Have your child pick a new recipe and practice making it together.
- Make your own decorations.
- Create cards or gifts to donate to shelters, hospitals, or nursing homes.
- Go for a drive or walk to view homes embellished with holiday décor.
- Find a family friendly (and COVID safe) volunteer activity.
<http://www.volunteerwny.org/calendar/>
- Create your own fundraiser or donation drive.
- Get outside. Check out this list of 100+ outdoor crafts and activities.
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tQ3KrCTos6_iJGNln5L61DaiP2jEw1V/view?usp=sharing

Upcoming Events

Date/Time	Topic	Link
Wednesday, 1/13 @ 6:00 pm	Having The Talk: Sexual Behavior, Reproduction and Youth with Disabilities	https://parentnetworkwny.org/event/having-the-talk-sexual-behavior-reproduction-and-youth-with-disabilities/
Tuesday, 1/5 @ 6:00pm	Parent Member Training: 2-Part Course Part 1—Independent Learning Part 2—Live Virtual Event	https://parentnetworkwny.org/event/parent-member-training/
Thursday, 1/7 @ 6:30pm	Chautauqua Family & Caregiver Support Group of Children with Special Needs	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82679660440?pwd=VIJsWE9OVjI0ODIwK1E0c2dCNDBMdz09



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