

HOT TOPICS

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM ALL OF US AT PARENT NETWORK

Presented by Parent Network of WNY - November 2017

December is often a time for holiday celebrations, family gatherings, and the promise of new beginnings with a new year around the corner. For many families, the holidays bring a unique stress and opportunities for disappointments. Children with disabilities may have difficulty adjusting to the changes in their routine, the expectations to visit family and friends and other holiday happenings. We all have holiday stories. Some are happy, some are stress filled. Parent Network is happy to share one from one of our parents that highlights some lessons learned and strategies for a calmer and joyful holiday season.

"I'm not going to lie, for many years, my holidays have been VERY chaotic. I come from a blended family. There were always 2 houses to go to, 1000 people to see and so many hours in the car. I never really looked forward to the holidays because all I ever wanted to do was stay home!

As an adult, I continued to keep these traditions of traveling from house to house, always trying to see everyone in one day and not really enjoying myself. After having kids,



**"PARENT NETWORK OF WNY
IS ONE OF THE BEST
MEMBERS OF MY SON'S TEAM"**

the stress just grew. Having a typical child is hard enough but throw in our ASD baby, well that's when things get REALLY interesting! What we were doing for so many years was just not working for our family - a change of environment, new foods and smells, sitting in a loud, hot house. These were all a recipe for a really rough day.

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I decided that this year, I would leave thanksgiving event planning up to my kids! I gave them some choices, we talked about the menu (pizza was even in the mix!) and they decided what we would be doing this year. What did they decide? They want to stay home in their pajamas, eat turkey and mashed potatoes and play board games all day! To me, this shows they just want us. Not the stress of traveling or getting dressed up or being at someone's house we usually aren't at. They want us.

I am lucky enough to have family and friends who recognize just how crazy the holidays are for us. We don't get pressured to join and we are learning to break our holiday celebrations into more frequent smaller gatherings! We like to spread the holiday love out, so no one gets overwhelmed.

I am thankful for my family, I am thankful that I can accommodate the needs of my family and I am thankful for all the support I get from everyone around me. I hope you and your family enjoy your holidays as much as we will, playing board games on our pajamas!"

- Lilly Bridenbaker

Parent Leadership Graduate 2017



Helpful Resource from Understood.org

8 Tips for Helping Kids With Social Skills Issues Cope With the Holiday Season

1. Practice hellos and goodbyes.
2. Tell your child what to expect.
Script some conversation starters.
3. Help your child join a group.
4. Role-play opening presents,
5. Practice making conversation with adults.
6. Go over hosting duties.
7. Point out what your child did well.

[Full Article](https://tinyurl.com/ycdb4hpl) - <https://tinyurl.com/ycdb4hpl>

Holiday Stress Busters **Free Webinar!**

Parent Network is pleased to announce a special event to help you find strategies for a more successful holiday season.

Joe Clem, well known for his Nurtured Heart Behavior Support workshops, will share his expertise supporting families during this informative webinar.

December 13, 2018, 7 - 8 pm

[Register Here](https://tinyurl.com/ycglzb4l) <https://tinyurl.com/ycglzb4l>

Once you register you will receive an email confirmation with the login information.