



# we are all different!



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## Autism and Celebrations.

Just like Birthdays, The Christmas period can be both an exciting and stressful time of the year for many autistic people. It can be a time with lots of change, social interaction and expectations.

If possible, try to keep some aspects of your daily routine the same in the lead up to the festive holiday, as well as on Christmas day. For example, it might be helpful to maintain the same bed time, or keeping their breakfast to the usual time.

Countdown calendars are helpful if your child understands 'days', not only counting down to Christmas day but it may also be helpful to remind your child of some key events. For example when the school holiday starts, when friends and relatives might be visiting and when school resumes.

Allow your child some time to themselves if they are feeling overwhelmed. It's likely that they need some time to reset and ground themselves, remember that they need time to rest, just like you need time to rest.

### **How can I help my child?**

Here's a few tips on ways you could make the festive period easier for yourself and your child.

- Include them in decision making and inform them of changes to their routine, use visuals if appropriate.
- Decorate the tree, or house together so that your child can see the change happening and feels involved.
- While it can be nice for everyone to eat together and to try traditional foods, it's not essential you do this! Even if that means a plate of chicken nuggets for Christmas dinner!
- Some children may find Christmas presents overwhelming, it might be that they may prefer to open their presents in a staggered way, or by themselves without an audience.