

C O S Y U P



A half termly newsletter for by the Autism Advisory Teacher Service for Peterborough's Autism community



Festive Fun Without the Overwhelm

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For many, the festive season is a time to relax, enjoy family gatherings, indulge in festive treats, and admire twinkling lights. But for some autistic individuals, these changes can make Christmas feel overwhelming rather than joyful. Below are some practical tips to help make the holidays less stressful and more autism-friendly.

Managing Changes

Christmas often brings big changes to routines, which can increase anxiety for those who thrive on predictability. Here are a few ideas to help:

- **Plan Ahead:** Create a Christmas calendar so your child knows what to expect. Advent calendars can also help with countdowns, especially if key events are marked on the calendar.
- **Christmas Day Timetable:** A simple schedule for the day can provide reassurance and structure.
- **Keep Some Routine:** Try to maintain familiar routines where possible, such as bedtime.
- **Comfort Items:** If you're travelling, pack a bag of familiar objects to help your child feel secure.
- **Decorations:** Introduce decorations gradually. Let your child know when they'll go up and when they'll come down to reduce uncertainty.



Supporting Sensory Needs

The festive season can be a sensory overload—bright lights, loud music, strong scents, and busy crowds can all be challenging. Consider these strategies:

- **Avoid Crowds:** If visiting Santa, call ahead to book a quieter time and avoid queues.
- **Lighting:** Limit how long lights are switched on or choose settings without flashing.
- **Safe Space:** Create a calm area without decorations or keep festive décor to one room.
- **Food Choices:** If your child has dietary preferences, offer alternatives or allow their usual meals.
- **Noise:** Avoid crackers or remove the snapper if loud bangs cause distress.

Other Helpful Tips

- **Do What Works for You:** Traditions are optional—focus on what brings joy and comfort to your family.
- **Reduce Waiting:** Put batteries in toys before wrapping to avoid delays.
- **Minimise Surprises:** If surprises cause anxiety, add a picture of the gift to the tag so your child knows what's inside.

We hope these tips help make your festive season more enjoyable. From all of us at the Autism Advisory Teacher Service, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

AN AUTISM CHRISTMAS

Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the house...

The noises were different, with more people about.
I don't like not knowing, what to expect
I need my routine and space to reflect.

I want to keep eating, my usual food
Not talking to visitors, doesn't mean I'm rude.
I love all my presents and having no school,
But it can feel overwhelming, with new rituals and rules.

I may not react, like other children do
But I really am grateful, for my presents from you.
So be gentle with me, be patient and kind
And remember your world, looks different to mine.



Local

PARENT & CARER ADHD/ASD SUPPORT GROUP

Looking for support this Christmas? Join the monthly Thursday morning group at Family Voice Peterborough, 10am-12pm. Hosted by Pinpoint Cambridgeshire & Family Voice, it's free to join and offers peer chat, practical advice, and expert mini-talks. Suitable for parents/carers of children with, or awaiting, an ADHD or Autism diagnosis.

Out & About

Christmas Ice Skating

[Click here](#)

Springfields Winter Wonderland Walk:

[Click here](#)

Christmas at Peterborough Museum

[Click here](#)

SEN Friendly Sessions at Safari Softplay:

[Click here](#)

Nene Park Winter Festival:

- Enchanted Forest
- Performances
- Fairground Stalls

[Click here](#)

Cathedral Christmas Tree Festival:

[Click Here](#)

Rainy Days

Try these...

- Melted Snowman Biscuits...[Click here.](#)
- Christmas Chocolate Play Pudding... [Click here.](#)
- Edible Snowmen...[Click here.](#)

Christmas Apps..

Crazy Santa Run...

[Click here.](#)

Christmas

Countdown Story...

[Click here.](#)

Crafty Christmas Tree...



NOTICE BOARD

EVENTS:

Family Voice: Challenging Behaviour Virtual Workshop:

[Click Here](#)

NESSIE Webinar Playbacks (Supporting youngsters who struggle to attend school, Anxiety, Bullying, Self-harming Behaviours)

[Click Here](#)

Pinpoint: Movement, Sensory Support, Reasonable Adjustments in School: [Click Here](#)

Parent/Career Consultations...

The Autism Advisory Teacher Service run a parent/carer consultation service. If you would like to talk to one of our advisory teachers about matters relating to Autism/ADHD you can use the email address below to book an appointment:

SEN.inclusion@peterborough.gov.uk