

Holiday Planner



Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

November

22

Look through holiday cookbooks together to find alternative holiday dishes your child will eat. You can add them to your menu or offer to bring one to the holiday meal at someone else's home.

23

Call your holiday host for the guest list. Your child can make place cards for the meal *and* find out in advance who he can expect to see.

24

Take time as a family to give thanks. Ask what everyone is most grateful for this year. Then gather their thoughts in a list, a collage or a video.

25



26

Happy Thanksgiving!

Celebrate being with family and friends, and let little things go.

27

Check out the online shopping deals. Let your child help you pick out gifts for family members so you can both avoid the holiday crowds.

28

Create a family holiday calendar marking activities you'll do and people you'll visit. You can even attach photos.

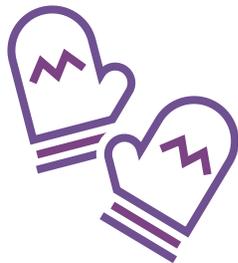
If you attach photos with Velcro dots, they can be moved if the schedule changes.

December

29

Brainstorm foods your child will eat that also fit your holiday traditions. Will he eat jelly doughnuts instead of potato pancakes? How about punch instead of eggnog?

30



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As you're making plans for your child with sensory processing issues, be sure to touch base with your other kids about what *they* would enjoy for the holidays. Let them know about any changes to family traditions.

2

If your child is bothered by light, you can do a web search together for pictures of holiday light displays. Discuss what might work for him before you decorate.

3

Investigate sensory-friendly festivities in your area, such as movie showings or concerts.

4

Start looking for comfortable clothes for school holiday programs.

Try to think outside the box. A tuxedo T-shirt—or black leggings with a long, soft sweater—can look dressy but still feel comfortable.

5

Set up a “holiday-free” zone at home—a place your child can go to decompress that's free of holiday decorations, food smells and people.

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Happy Hanukkah!

If your child is sensitive to the smell of the candles, put your menorah on a cookie sheet and carefully move it to another room after you light it.

7



8

Include a note in your holiday cards or emails to the friends and family you'll visit this season. Explain that you may have to arrive late or leave early and your child's preferences around affection.

9

Check babysitter availability. Even if your child is coming with you to an event, you may want a babysitter on call in case he needs to leave early. Plan to meet with and talk to the babysitter.

10

Read books about the traditions behind the holiday and talk about the traditions your family has created. Who knows? Your kids may have great ideas for more!

11

12

Make cookies together. Using a rolling pin encourages good motor skills. If your child doesn't like the feel of cookie dough, use store-bought cookies and let him decorate them.

13

Take a day off from holiday planning. Get takeout for dinner and cultivate calm.

14

Practice friendly holiday greetings that give your child the physical space he needs to be comfortable, such as a head nod and a hearty "Happy holidays!"

15

16

Role-play different social situations your child might come across.

17

Decide how your family will be handling presents this year.

Keep in mind that giving and receiving gifts may be a source of frustration. "Secret Santa" and "Yankee Swap" games may add to anxiety.

18



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Create a fun "survival kit" of holiday-themed sensory calming items for your child. Two ideas are a snowman squishy ball and an inexpensive MP3 player with calming holiday music.

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Let your child choose his favorite holiday movie. Then watch it together. If he likes lots of sensory input, snuggling up is the perfect way to provide it!

21

Call your house of worship and ask which service times are likely to be less crowded.

22

Think of simple ways to respond to comments or questions about your child's issues from family or friends.

23

24

Come up with a creative "escape" signal you and your child can use if he needs a break from the festivities.

25

Merry Christmas!

The prep work is all done, so you can focus on enjoying the day.



26

Be flexible with your plans for today. Your child may need some time to recover from yesterday's excitement.

27

This is a low-stress day to entertain people you didn't see at the holidays. Keep it small and simple.

Let your child know in advance that it's OK for him to take a break from socializing if he needs to.

28

Check in to see if your child wants to make plans to hang out with a friend for a low-key vacation day.

29

Take some time for yourself to relax and recharge. Ask a friend or family member to watch your kids for the afternoon.



30

Visit some of the holiday sights or see that holiday blockbuster movie now that the crowds have died down.

31

If you have New Year's Eve plans, keep the day calm. Pull out a board game, pop in a movie and snack on leftovers.

Let your child know what he can expect the evening to be like. Have a plan for if he gets overexcited or has a meltdown.

January

1

Happy New Year!



2

With the holiday season over, it's time to get back in shape for school. Return to a regular sleep schedule and talk with your child about his wishes for the next half of the school year.