



# Christmas survival guide tips

If your child is a particularly anxious person, having them well prepared for the activities and events that are going to be happening over Christmas is crucial. Consider which resources you currently use to support your young person with managing their daily routine. How can you apply these trusted methods to make Christmas as comfortable as possible?

Below is a selection of tips parents have used to make the holidays more manageable for all the family.

## Preparation tips

**Use a Christmas calendar or visual timetable to clearly display which activities and events are happening and when.**

Talk through the timetable with your child to check they are aware of upcoming events, ensuring they understand there are going to be some changes to their normal daily routine. Consider showing your child photographs of the places you are going to, so they are prepared for what to expect when they are there. Giving them as much information as possible in the lead up to the event could reduce their concerns considerably.

**Keep their routine the same for as long as possible.**

If your child likes their days to be structured, make sure you maintain this as much as you can over Christmas. For example, you may feel pressurised into letting them stay up later as it's the school holidays, however this could really throw your young person and leave them tired and confused.

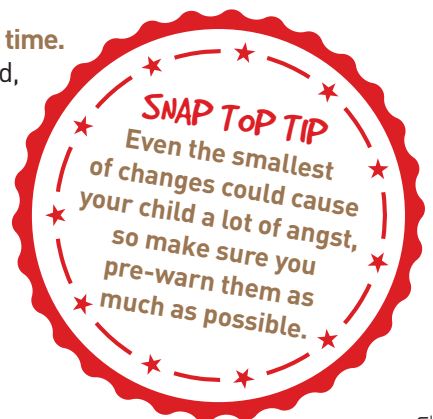
**Consider speaking with your child's school, to see if they can use the same strategies as you.**

When you decide to start preparing your young person for Christmas, make sure everyone else is on board too. The normal school routine is always abandoned in the

close run up to Christmas and most children love the different and exciting festive activities, but for children with additional needs this can be a difficult and stressful change. See if the school would consider creating a visual timetable or calendar to have up in the classroom, so that your child can be prepared for the changes that are happening in school as well as at home.

**Allow for Christmas free time.**

Over the Christmas period, there are lots of added expectations. If you feel your child is becoming overwhelmed, consider factoring in time for them to be away from the festivities. Celebrate all successes, no matter how small, and try not to dwell on the situations where your child may have struggled.



**Please find links below to useful visual resources:**

<http://www.sparklebox.co.uk/special-needs/visual-timetable/special-events.html#.W-Qp69X7SUk>

