

Hints and tips for helping children with Autism, ADHD and learning disabilities cope with Christmas at school.

Disruption to normal routine:

- Use a 'change' symbol on the child's schedule and use this every time something different will be happening.



- Give the child time to adjust to changes by giving the schedule to your child the night before.
- Practice using a 'time out' card so the child knows they have the option to opt-out of something if it is too overwhelming.
- Have a calm box full of sensory toys at hand if the child starts to show signs of anxiety.
- Always have a back up plan prepared, whether this be an alternative activity or somewhere else for the child to go.

School play/ carol concert:

- Seat the child at the end of the row and away from the loud music.
- Have a fiddle toy/ sensory box ready for use.
- Give the child an important job to do to give them a focus e.g. look after props or welcome guests.
- Limit the amount of time the child has to stay e.g. three carols.
- Visit the church/hall beforehand, take photos and show these to the child so they know what to expect.

School party and disco:

- Have a schedule in place so the child can see what order the games are going to be played.
- Provide the child with a social story that explains rules and about winning and losing
- Plan ahead what the child will wear and allow them to wear school uniform on a non-uniform day if wearing 'home clothes' at school is too difficult for them to process.
- Have a quiet place for the child to go to.

Food:

- Have a separate 'try' plate for the child they don't feel pressured to try food they are uncomfortable with. The try plate allows the child to explore new food if they wish to.
- Ask parents to provide the child with food they normally eat.
- Make a table mat tailored to the child's interests. This provides your child with a clear idea of where they will be sitting and defines the activity that will be taking place at the table.