

# Pathfinders for Autism

## Holiday Tips for Parents



It's time for holiday fun! Well, it's supposed to be fun, but this time of year can feel stressful and overwhelming for families.

Here are some ideas to help keep the holidays cheerful:

1. Make the wrapping as fun as the gift. Why not use colored bubble-wrap instead of wrapping paper? Popping those bubbles can be a great sensory stimulus.

2. Open gifts all day long. Or over multiple days. Opening all of those gifts at once can be overwhelming. Or, you find that your child is only interested in playing with the gift he or she has just opened. Consider taking lots of breaks and extend your holiday.

3. It's ok to say no. You really don't have to attend every event and party you are invited to. Really.

4. Worried that your child might tell a friend or relative that they don't like their gift? Tact might not be our children's greatest strength. Try role playing with them. Pick the ugliest item in your house and practice how your child should react. It could be fun.

5. The holidays offer the perfect opportunity to teach your child how to go out and do things for other people. Let your child deliver meals with you, or shop for a toy to donate to Toys for Tots, or let him pick out his gently used toys or clothes that he is willing to donate to a charitable organization. (Be warned, they can change their minds!)

6. Holidays are noisy. Lots of people, the ripping of paper, the holiday music... You may want to consider investing in a good set of head phones for your child to block out some of the noise.

[Shopping for a Child with Autism](#)

[Cooking Holiday Foods that are Gluten-Free, Casein-Free](#)

[Stacking the Deck for Family Holidays](#)

More holiday tips from [The Autism Society of America](#) and [Autism Speaks](#)

7. Make holiday decorations out of edible playdough. Playdough makes for a great sensory activity and artistic expression. What better way to personalize your home than with your own handmade ornaments? Here's great website with several edible playdough recipes to choose from: [http://www.makingfriends.com/pro\\_edible.htm](http://www.makingfriends.com/pro_edible.htm)

8. Donate your autism-friendly toys or sensory toys to your local schools once you no longer have a need for them. Or, start a toy exchange with other local families.

9. Take time for YOU. While you're at the toy store stocking up on batteries, remind yourself to recharge your own batteries. You'll be a better caregiver and advocate for your family member with autism if you're feeling rested, healthy and energized. (You've heard this before, but it's worth saying again.)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

