Aiming Higher, Achieving More, Together!

United In SEND

news, guidance & signposting for USF families

Special Christmas Edition

The Christmas break is often a time when families step away from their usual routines. For many children, it brings excitement, anticipation, and joy. However, the shift in routine can sometimes be challenging for children with SEND. In this issue of *United in SEND*, we will explore strategies and practical tips to help support you and your child throughout the festive season.

Talk with your child about **what to expect** over the Christmas period. Using visual supports such as a calendar can help with the count down to different events and activities e.g. having visitors or going to visit family.

Keeping your child's **routine the same**, if possible, can help them to feel safe. Talk to your child about small changes that may happen such as introducing an advent calendar, using visuals can support this too.

Remind them they can have a **safe space to go to** if it all gets too much. Speak to your families and friends about this too, so that they can support when necessary.

Sensory Tips for Christmas

- **Quiet Space:** Create a calm area where your child can retreat to if things get overwhelming.
- **Ear Protection:** Use ear defenders during loud activities if needed.
- **Food:** Plan meals in advance and keep familiar foods and mealtimes consistent. Discuss any changes to table settings or cutlery beforehand.
- **Decorations:** Involve your child in decorating if appropriate, but keep some areas decoration-free to reduce sensory overload.

*Top **10 tips** to have an enjoyable Christmas with your child*

https://www.sensationaltutors.co.uk/10-tips-for-enjoyable-christmas-children-with-sen/

Your mental health matters too. Caring for yourself is caring for your child. If you need someone to talk to over the holidays, you can contact Parental Minds parentalminds.org.uk+2parentalminds.org.uk+2 or Devon Mind https://www.devonmind.com/urgent-help

If things feel very difficult, you can also contact **CAMHS** via Devon's Single Point of Access: call **0330 0245 321** (Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm), or for out-of-hours mental health distress, **0300 555 5000** https://www.devonscp.org.uk/training-and-resources/guidance/health-and-wellbeing/emotional-and-mental-health/