

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Top tips: Christmas routines for children with SEND

The run-up to Christmas can be a busy and hectic time for everyone and a time when children are very excited!

Implementing these strategies can help create a supportive environment that allows young children to enjoy the festive season while minimising stress related to routine changes.



1. **Maintain a consistent routine:** Where possible, keep daily routines similar to those during 'normal' times. Familiarity helps children feel secure and reduces anxiety about changes
2. **Build in quiet time:** With increased excitement and stimulation in the lead up to Christmas, it's essential to incorporate quiet time into your daily schedule. Designate a calm space where children can retreat for a few minutes to relax, read, or engage in quiet play. See our 'Creating a cosy space for big emotions' activity
3. **Prepare for changes in advance:** Communicate any changes to the children's routines ahead of time. Discuss special events or activities related to Christmas, such as parties or visits from Santa, so children know what to expect
4. **Encourage expression of feelings:** Create opportunities for children to express their feelings about the upcoming holiday and any changes they may be experiencing
5. **Involve children in activities:** Engage children in Christmas preparations, such as decorating the nursery. Involvement can provide a sense of ownership and excitement while helping them adapt to the festive atmosphere
6. **Model calm behaviour:** Children often mirror the emotions of adults around them. By modelling calmness and positive coping strategies, you can help children manage their own feelings of excitement or stress during this busy time
7. **Offer reassurance and support:** Provide plenty of reassurance and acknowledge any fears or concerns children may have about changes in routine or events and offer support by being present and attentive to their needs.

NDNA products to support you with these tips

- [Supporting Children's Emotional Well-being](#) – factsheet.



Tip

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And more resources at www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna