

24 TOP TIPS TO SURVIVE THE FESTIVE SEASON**24 days until Christmas****Prepare for Change**

Talk about Christmas and what this means for your family - creating family rituals and routines repeated year after year is a lovely way of creating special memories in a more predictable way

24 TOP TIPS TO SURVIVE THE FESTIVE SEASON**23 days until Christmas**

Prepare your child for specific events e.g. by showing them photos of where you are going and how you will get there, and planning what you will eat or wear

24 TOP TIPS TO SURVIVE THE FESTIVE SEASON**22 days until Christmas**

Make a booklet or social story about Christmas with pictures of Christmas trees, decorations and Christmas food. **But be careful - if your child takes things very literally, they may become anxious if your Christmas does not appear exactly as in the pictures!**

24 TOP TIPS TO SURVIVE THE FESTIVE SEASON**21 days until Christmas****Discuss in Advance**

Prepare your child for any changes to meals, cutlery or table set-up e.g. by involving them in laying the table or agreeing the seating plan

24 TOP TIPS TO SURVIVE THE FESTIVE SEASON**20 days until Christmas****Don't Overwhelm**

Set a limit on the number of presents, e.g. one from mum and dad and one from grandparents

24 TOP TIPS TO SURVIVE THE FESTIVE SEASON**19 days until Christmas**

When visiting family or friends, let them know about anything that could help to make your visit as stress-free as possible e.g. turning off Christmas lights, letting you know in advance what the food will be, sharing plans for activities and having a quiet space to escape to

24 TOP TIPS TO SURVIVE THE FESTIVE SEASON**18 days until Christmas**

Enable them to be in control of things which might overload them e.g. scented candles, flashing Christmas lights. If possible, give them direct control (like the button for the lights) or provide sensory defences e.g. ear defenders or sunglasses

24 TOP TIPS TO SURVIVE THE FESTIVE SEASON**17 days until Christmas**

Spread out social activities across the festive season with rest days in between, to give your child time to recover

24 TOP TIPS TO SURVIVE THE FESTIVE SEASON**16 days until Christmas****Get them used to decorations**

Involve them in changes to the house, e.g. take them shopping for decorations, let them handle decorations, let them see decorations being hung up, or let them help putting them up

24 TOP TIPS TO SURVIVE THE FESTIVE SEASON**15 days until Christmas**

Get ideas from other families, and share your tips with them on our private Facebook group

ADD-vance Parent/Carers & Professionals

24 TOP TIPS TO SURVIVE THE FESTIVE SEASON**14 days until Christmas**

Use a calendar or visual timetable to cover the entire holiday season, including:

- specific events e.g. when decorations go up, when you write cards
- school days versus home days
- when family or friends are coming

24 TOP TIPS TO SURVIVE THE FESTIVE SEASON**13 days until Christmas**

Discuss whether they would like their presents wrapped and consider alternatives e.g. leaving presents unwrapped, wrapping in cling film or including a picture of what's inside on the gift label

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12 days until Christmas

Incorporate a Christmas activity that they enjoy into their daily schedule, e.g. opening the advent calendar, or switching on the tree lights

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11 days until Christmas

Ask for help

Ask for support from friends and family, e.g. a grandparent could watch your child doing a favourite activity while you help your other children to decorate

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10 days until Christmas

Consider how to explain Father Christmas

Try to avoid the concept of 'good' and 'naughty' lists as this can cause huge stress if taken literally. Think about where Father Christmas will leave the gifts - many children worry about a 'stranger' coming into the house or into their bedroom

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9 days until Christmas

Stick to the schedule

Keep the daily routine the same as far as possible, including on Christmas Day. Ensure they have a copy of the schedule with them at all times so they can remind themselves what is happening and share it with others

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8 days until Christmas

Create decoration-free zones in the home e.g. their bedroom

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7 days until Christmas

Allow them to escape to an agreed 'safe place' at key moments that may be stressful, e.g. when other people are opening their presents. Reassure them it's ok to use this and prompt if necessary

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6 days until Christmas

Presents

If your child struggles with surprises, create a wish list and liaise with family and friends (or request money that they can spend in their own time).

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5 days until Christmas

Consider using 'virtual' meet-ups e.g. via Zoom to avoid the need to leave home while still catching up with family and friends. But don't pressure your child to take part - online meetings can be very stressful for some individuals

24 TOP TIPS TO SURVIVE THE FESTIVE SEASON

4 days until Christmas

Introduce presents one by one, instead of all at once. Many children prefer to open just one per day!

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3 days until Christmas

Staying away from home

Support them to pack themselves with plenty of time to prepare what to take beforehand. This will help them feel in control and less anxious. Take self-soothing objects/activities

24 TOP TIPS TO SURVIVE THE FESTIVE SEASON

2 days until Christmas

Build some free time into their daily schedule when they can engage in their special interests. This should help keep anxiety levels down

24 TOP TIPS TO SURVIVE THE FESTIVE SEASON

1 day until Christmas

Take care of yourself!

It's easy to forget your needs amongst the stress of Christmas. Call on friends & family for help so you can enjoy the things you love about Christmas, such as your favourite films, food and events

From everyone at ADD-vance, we wish you a stress-free & joyful holiday season