

The Holidays are Here!
By the Oklahoma Autism Network

The holidays bring special times but also can bring special challenges for families of people on the autism spectrum. The Autism Society of American provides some great [helpful tips](#) for families for the holiday season.

Another challenge during the holiday season can be the extended time out of school for children on the autism spectrum. Some children have difficulty with the change in the schedule and the possible change of caregivers if they require child care while their parents work during the holiday break. Below are several tips to consider when

- Prepare your child for changes ahead of time. Use pictures, a written calendar, social stories, and other supports to help prepare your child for the change in their schedule. The Indiana Resource Center has a [helpful guide](#) to using visual supports.
- If you are staying home with your child over the break provide some structure to your day or plan some specific activities for you and your child. You don't have to schedule your day from minute to minute but it often helps children with autism to have a general idea of what will happen during the day (eg: eat breakfast, play with toys/video games/computer, watch video/tv/movie, go to store, etc)
- People with autism often have a higher need for physical activity and being indoors for long periods of time can be difficult. Whenever the weather permits bundle your child up so he/she can go outdoors to get some exercise. Even short trips outside can make a difference. If the weather does not allow for time outdoors try to create opportunities for indoor physical activity such as playing a video game that involves movement, stack pillows and knock them down, have a pillow fight, or rough-house (with caution for safety of course!).