



Targeting Social Skills During the Winter Holidays

Holiday celebrations and family gatherings can be a lot of fun, but they can also be overwhelming when you are not following the typical routine and your child does not know what is coming next.

Here are some tips for an enjoyable holiday season.

1. Let Your Child Know What to Expect

Prepare your child for these changes by outlining what they can expect in advance.

("Tomorrow, we will eat breakfast. Then we are going to Grandma's house. Your aunts and uncles and cousins will be there. We will eat lunch, then we will open presents").

Include as many details as possible.

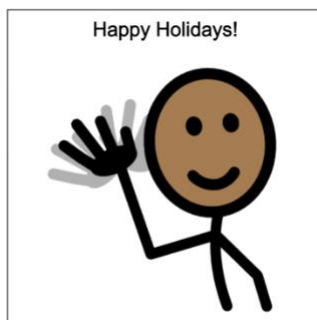
Continue to narrate and prepare your child throughout the day.

("Now we are eating lunch. Next, we will open presents").



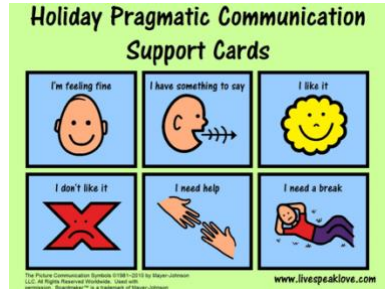
2. Practice Holiday Greetings and Phrases

Before your celebrations, take time to practice saying "Hello," "Happy Holidays!" or any other appropriate phrases. The more you practice, the easier it will be for your child to recall and use this language within your celebrations.



3. Script Some Conversation Starters

Help your child develop some general comments and questions to break the ice with other kids and adults.



4. Role-Play

Rehearse the possible situations. If there will be a gift exchange, practice opening the gifts and saying thank you. Practice lighting candles or singing songs if these are part of your holiday celebrations. You can also role-play some things that may be unexpected, such as getting a gift they do not like or being offered a food they do not want.



5. Let Your Child Know What They Did Well

Recognition can mean a lot. If your child did a good job with something, mention it. Be specific (e.g. "I love how you tasted the potatoes even though they looked different than at home," "You were so kind to share your toy with your cousin.") This will help your child be more confident going into future celebrations.

