



Holiday Survival Tips for Caregivers



Parades, concerts, and Santa photos are not requirements- just options!

If your kids, or you, aren't enjoying the activities then consider if it is worth the time and energy to do them. Things like Santa photos might feel like holiday "have-to's" but may actually be putting undue stress and strain on your family. There are lots of cool ways to interact with Santa and his elves online, wonderful options for at home picture creation, drive-through light events, and even parades on TV you can watch from the comfort of your living room!



Make your own traditions that work for *your* family.

Your kid doesn't like turkey? No problem, chicken nuggets it is!

Your kid doesn't like opening gifts? Great! Save money and time by not wrapping!
Traditions are meant to leave you feeling warm and fuzzy- not exhausted and stressed.

Remember, the same isn't always the best- different is ok!



Less can be *more*- less gifts, less decorations, less visitors, less stress ...

Outward pressure and expectations can get to the best of us, but *more* is not always *better*.

When things are getting too hectic, stop and take a moment to think about how you can lessen your load. We can all get caught up in feeling like we have to do what "everyone" else but social media is only a small window into others' lives...don't let comparison steal your holiday joy!



Holiday Survival Tips for Caregivers

 **When things don't work out like you thought learn from it and exercise self-compassion.**

Being a parent and caregiver is hard! There are no guidebooks for all the little (or big) bumps in the road. Making mistakes is inevitable, but the goal is to learn from them and then readjust. Acknowledging our mistakes and showing our kids how we move forward to try again or try differently is a great example for them and lets them know that they aren't the only ones who get it wrong sometimes.

 **Remember that your child is not *giving* you a hard time, they are *having* a hard time.**

Holiday stress is not just for adults and kids with disabilities can often experience higher stress than their family members or peers (behavioural expectations, sensory input, changes to routine, spaces or activities that aren't accessible, etc.). When everything starts to feel like too much, simplify by focusing on the three S's; Safety, Sanitation and Spirit.

Everything else is just icing on the gingerbread house!

 **There will be highs and lows...remember to look at both.**

Holidays can be fast-paced and stressful for everyone, and we tend to remember the negative the most. Take time to stop and look around to appreciate what IS going well, or things that have gone better this year than in the past.