

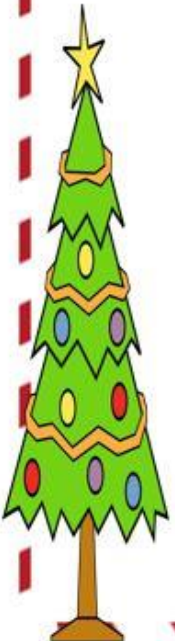
# RESOURCE PACK FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE



**CHRISTMAS EDITION**

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## CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS SOCIAL STORY

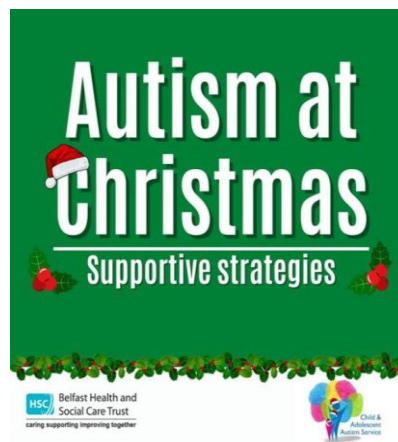
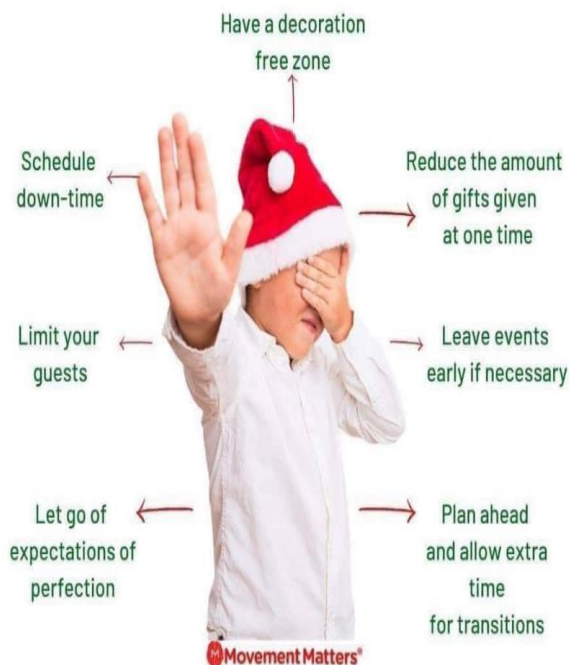
The Christmas period may be a stressful time for some autistic children. This [social story](#) from Autism NI may be a good way of introducing a new or unfamiliar concept.



Although Christmas is an enjoyable time for many, a lot of autistic people will find changes in routine disruptive and anxiety provoking – [Download Resource](#) from Autism NI

## SENSORY OVERLOAD

AND THE HOLIDAYS



Christmas is often filled with joy and celebration, but it can also be a challenging time for many autistic children and young people as it brings changes to routine, new foods, family gatherings, bright lights and loud music.

Children and young people with ASD can struggle with many of the changes and sensory aspects of Christmas so Belfast Health & Social Care Trust's Child and Adolescent Autism Service wants to share some strategies with you to help make your Christmas a little easier and more enjoyable. Read the full strategies at: <https://view.pagetiger.com/autismatchristmas/1>

DEAR SANTA!

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

For Christmas this year, my family and I are planning to make it the best one ever!  
I have chosen ...

SOME SAFE FOODS TO EAT

SOMETHING COMFY TO WEAR

A QUIET PLACE FOR A BREAK

SOMETHING ELSE THAT  
WILL HELP MAKE IT GREAT



For Christmas this year, I would love ...

SOMETHING I WANT  
(TO DO WITH MY PASSIONS)

SOMETHING I NEED  
(FOR MY SENSORY WELLBEING)

SOMETHING TO WEAR  
(THAT IS SUPER COMFY)

SOMETHING TO READ  
(OR IS COOL TO WATCH)

THANK YOU, SANTA!





This time of year can be really exciting for many people, but can also be a time filled with new sensory and social experiences that are not part of your usual routine.

Here are some tips and a downloadable leaflet from Autism NI that may help you plan for your Christmas celebrations! [Top Tips for an autism inclusive Christmas — Autism NI](#)



Big gatherings can be great fun and it's lovely seeing the whole family, but it may involve being around some people who are not deaf aware - especially in noisy environments. Check out National Deaf Children Society's tips and tricks on how to make Christmas Day deaf-friendly for your deaf child 🖱

<https://bit.ly/3iXNMtO>

[Make your Christmas deaf-friendly with these top tips from National Deaf Children's Society parent bloggers](#)

[Learn Christmas themed British-Sign Language signs](#)

## AUTISM NI CHRISTMAS CALENDAR

Can be used to visually show autistic children & young people what activities, trips, and events to expect over the Christmas period. [DOWNLOAD HERE](#)

December 2022 

AutismNI 

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10 	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 	20	21	22 	23	24 	25 
26	27 	28	29 	30	31	

## Christmas tips for SEND families!

- ✓ **Put presents in one big box** and let your child open them at their own pace over the following days
- ✓ **Avoid surprises** by picking gifts from their list and wrapping them in clear cellophane (or not at all)
- ✓ **Add batteries** to toys before wrapping
- ✓ **No food rules.** Who says pizza and pot noodles can't be Christmas dinner?
- ✓ **You do you!** Don't feel guilty telling friends or relatives if something doesn't work for you
- ✓ **Don't put unrealistic pressures on yourself.** The holidays can be overwhelming for everyone, so stick to your regular routine if you want to

contact for families with disabled children

# december SELF-CARE

@POSITIVELYPRESENT



## Christmas to-do list

- ☐ ~~Be~~ ~~BUY PRESENTS~~ *someone in a hug*
- ☐ ~~WRAP GIFTS~~
- ☐ ~~SEND GIFTS~~ *peace*
- ☐ ~~Donate~~ ~~SHOP FOR FOOD~~
- ☐ ~~Be~~ ~~SEE THE LIGHTS~~
- ☐ HAVE FUN!

ni4kids



## Christmas mental health

If you find Christmas a difficult time of year, this page has some tips to help you cope. Different things can help us at different times, depending on our situation and how we're feeling. Some of these tips may not feel helpful or relevant for you right now. Try some different things and see what works best for you.



# Kindness Advent Calendar 2022



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
			1. Leave a kind note for your teacher	2. Tell a Christmas Joke to make someone laugh	3. Tidy up your toys	4. Dance around the house to Christmas music
5. Hold the door open for someone	6. Compliment 3 people	7. Do something that makes you laugh	8. Give someone a big smile!	9. Give a hug to someone special	10. Make a food donation	11. Share a Christmas treat with someone
12. Make a Christmas decoration with a friend	13. Share your toys with someone to make them smile	14. Draw a Christmas picture for someone	15. Pick up litter while out for a walk	16. Bake Christmas cookies with a loved one	17. Share a story with someone	18. Do a chore for a family member
19. Feed the birds 	20. Look after someone who needs help today	21. Wish someone a Merry Christmas!	22. Check in on someone and how they are feeling	23. Sing a Christmas song with a friend	24. Write a list of what you are thankful for	25. MERRY CHRISTMAS



# IT'S OKAY IF...

@iamhayleykaye

You're not in  
The holiday  
spirit

You're  
grieving

Your home is  
more chaos  
Than festive

You're excited  
For some alone  
Time

This season is  
more anxiety  
Than cheer

Things aren't  
going To plan

You set  
boundaries  
with family

You break  
Traditions That  
are Triggering

You give more  
presence Than  
presents

LIGHT A  
CANDLE



SLOW  
DOWN



GET  
A HOUSEPLANT

STAY  
CONNECTED



DRINK  
HOT  
COCOA



MOISTURIZE



Winter  
Self - Care

© COLORMEHAPPY

BUNDLE UP



READ  
A  
NEW BOOK



ASK FOR  
HELP



TREAT  
YOURSELF



SEND A  
CARD



BAKE  
COOKIES



FAMILYWELLNESSPROJECT

## MANAGING STRESS AT CHRISTMAS

Christmas can be a wonderful time of year filled with lots of celebrations and fun for families, but it can also be very stressful for many parents. Parents can feel the pressure of managing their children's expectations alongside managing the financial stresses that the time of year brings.

### DO YOUR OWN THING

Try not get drawn into what others are spending or doing and do what is right for your family.



### BUDGET

Set a budget in advance - don't underestimate your outgoings.



### PRACTISE SELF CARE

Take time out for yourself and do things which help you to relax. Eat well, sleep at regular times & be good to yourself.

### ENJOY THE SEASON

Don't get overwhelmed trying to have the 'perfect' Christmas & instead enjoy the time with your family.



### BE GRATEFUL

Taking time out to be grateful helps build our immune systems, keeps us in touch with the positive aspects of life, and connects us with others



### EVERYTHING IN MODERATION

Be mindful of your own tipping points when it comes to holiday indulgences. Stick to your usual limits you'll feel much better when the New year hits!



Find out more about the Family Wellness Project at: [parentingni.org/family-wellness-project](https://parentingni.org/family-wellness-project)



# Five Finger Breathing



1. Spread your fingers wide
2. Place a finger at the base of your thumb
3. Breathe IN as you slowly run your finger up your thumb
4. Breathe OUT running your finger down the other side
5. Repeat for all five fingers
6. Shake your fingers out and repeat if needed

[www.PookyKnightsmith.com](http://www.PookyKnightsmith.com) | @pookyh

# 12 reminders if you find Christmas stressful

1. Your best will always be enough
2. Boundaries are a gift and you can set them
3. You're not alone if you find it hard
4. You're allowed to say 'no'
5. There's no such thing as a perfect Christmas
6. There's so much to enjoy in the little moments
7. Self-care deserves it's place on your To Do List
8. It's brave and ok to ask for help
9. You can't control everything and that's ok
10. You're doing a much better job than you think you are
11. You can only do what you can do
12. You deserve a very Merry Christmas

ALT

Save for whenever you need it

THINGS to REMEMBER THIS SEASON



# ITS OKAY IF...



THE HOLIDAYS  
ARE HARD  
FOR YOU



YOU ARE  
STRUGGLING  
MENTALLY



YOUR CHRISTMAS  
LOOKS DIFFERENT  
TO OTHERS



YOUR EATING  
HABITS CHANGE



YOU NEED  
ALONE TIME



YOU NEED TO  
SET BOUNDARIES

# WELCOME TO THE YOUTH WELLNESS WEB

The Youth Wellness Web has been co-designed by young people for young people with easy access to different resources and services that can really help you.

If you are looking information and help with:



Visit the Youth Wellness Web at the link below or scan the QR code for instant access.



[www.cypsp.hscni.net/youth-wellness-web](http://www.cypsp.hscni.net/youth-wellness-web)



## Services for young people: Information for Young People



There's a new number for texting a school nurse from your mobile phone. Text-A-Nurse is an anonymous confidential messaging service, which is available Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm during the week in both term-time and school holidays. The message is delivered to a safe and secure web application for the nursing staff to view. You are guaranteed a response within 24 hours Monday to Friday. If a faster response is needed, you will be advised of where you can get urgent help.

You can message for advice on all kinds of health issues, like sexual health, bullying, healthy eating and any general health concerns. Or you may want support for your emotional health and wellbeing, particularly as life returns to normal after lockdown.

Look out for more information around school/college.

The text numbers for this are:

Northern Trust Text-A-Nurse  
07480 635982

Belfast Trust Text-A-Nurse  
07507 328290

South Eastern Trust Text-A-Nurse  
07507 327263

Western Trust Text-A-Nurse  
07480 635984

Southern Trust Text-A-Nurse  
07507 328057

Or visit [www.chathealth.nhs.uk](http://www.chathealth.nhs.uk) to start a chat





### Coping at Christmas

Ways to remember your special person during Christmas.

- On Christmas morning, light a candle to remember the person who died, acknowledge that you will miss them today.
- Take time to listen to some music - maybe their favourite music.
- Write a memory on a star tag.
- Talk with other family members about your memories of your special person and how you feel about them not being here.
- Write a note to them letting out all the things you would like to share with them.
- Make or buy a new frame for your favourite photograph.
- Blow some bubbles sending some love and a thought with each bubble.
- Eat their favourite Christmas food, as a way of remembering them.
- Visit the grave or a place they enjoyed going.

© CBS Dec 2020

Ways to  
remember  
someone at  
Christmas

*Cruse* Bereavement  
Support



TRY MAKING YOUR FRIEND OR  
RELATIVE **PART OF YOUR DAY**  
THROUGH YOUR CHRISTMAS  
DECORATIONS.

Some people like to light a special candle  
near a picture of their loved one. Or you  
could hang something of theirs on the  
Christmas tree, or hang up a decoration  
including their name or picture.

*Cruse*  
Bereavement  
Support

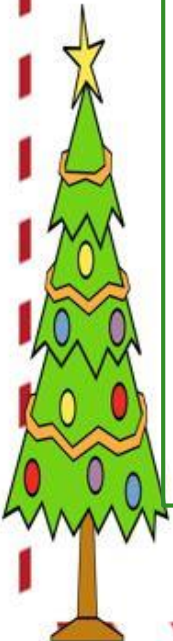
**WINSTON'S  
WISH** **WW**

[10 ways for coping with grief at  
Christmas](#)



If Christmas is hard,  
If you've lost someone dear.  
Just look in your heart,  
And you'll know they're still here.  
The star in the sky,  
The light falling snow.  
The robin outside,  
It seems like they know.  
If this is a time,  
When you're struggling through.  
Just do what you can,  
For what matters, is you.  
There's no need to be merry,  
There's no need to be bright.  
Just do what you can,  
It will all be alright.

(Credit for the poem goes to Lorna @tootsdesign)





Dear Santa,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old.  
I live in \_\_\_\_\_. I have been trying to be very good  
this year. Here are a few of the good things I have done. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I would also like to tell you about what I want for Christmas. Here is my  
Christmas Wish List. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I will be asleep when you visit on Christmas Eve, but I  
promise to leave some \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ for you to eat and drink.

Thank you,  
Love

LITIR CHUIG  
DHADÍ NA  
NOLLAIG

A Dhaidí na Nollag

Bhí mé iontach maith i mbliana agus ba  
mhaith liom...

Go raibh maith agat ♥

Ó

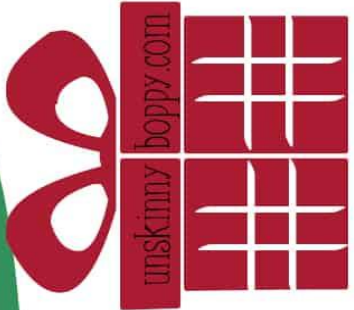
Nollaig  
Shona Duit



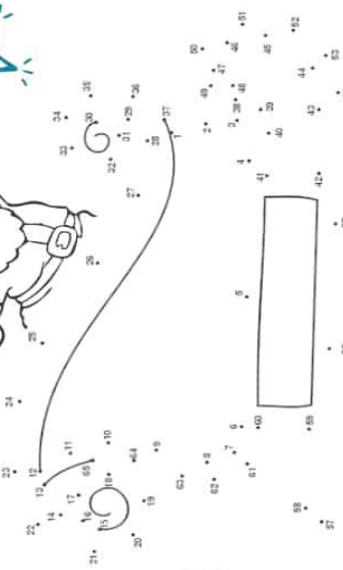
ACTIVITIES

# Christmas Fun

T H S U A L C A T N A S E P W  
H B S T N E M A N R O I G R I  
T G E S R E I N D E E R A E N T  
I L T G N I V I G S N E P L S E E  
F S Y T B L E S N I T E M N R S  
Y A A S O W S B N D I T N T S  
T G D L N R E G M Y O A F S G  
N A I L S E P L T E I R M S N  
E Y L I M A F E I K C B S T I  
W B O I P T N G C R R E O H K C  
T S H R E B H Y S S U O L D G C  
N G W H I T E C H R I C S L T  
T M A S D E C O R A T I O N S



LET IT SNOW!



CONNECT THE DOTS

# ACTIVITIES



Visit us at [Great-Kids-Birthday-Parties.Com](http://Great-Kids-Birthday-Parties.Com) for tons of free party printables.



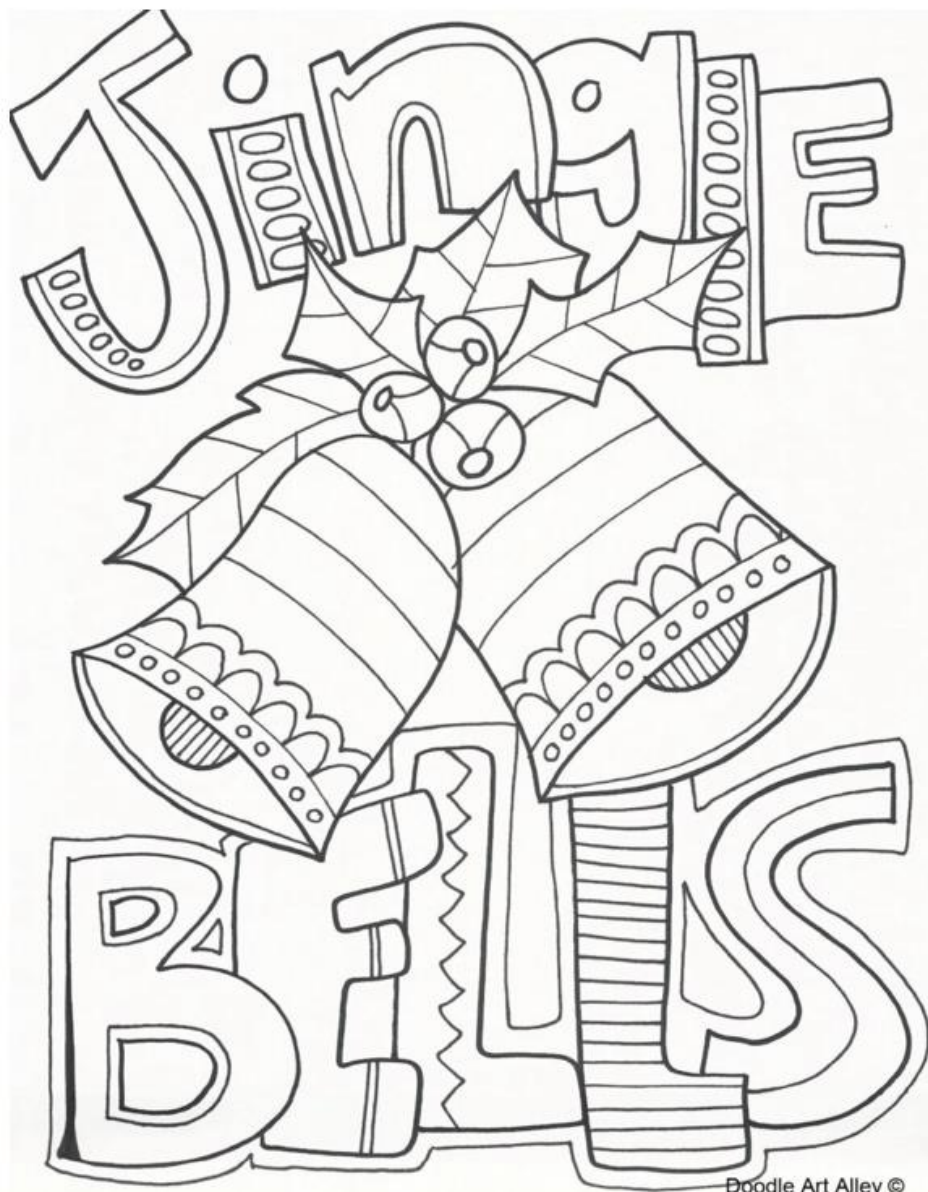
## Merry Christmas

Artzy Creations

# ACTIVITIES



COOL2BKIDS.COM



Doodle Art Alley ©

## Day 1



Get creative and send a handmade Christmas card to someone who might be feeling lonely this holiday season.

It's the thought that counts and you will be helping to spread some Christmas cheer!



#12PlaydaysOfChristmas

## Day 2



Set a festive scene using scrap paper or magazines to make Christmas decorations.

### Festive paper bunting

Gather old magazines, newspapers or scrap paper. Cut your paper into similar sized strips, loop one through the other and stick/staple the ends together.

### Paper snowflakes

Cut a piece of scrap paper into a square, fold in half diagonally to make a triangle, fold again to make a smaller triangle.

Fold the left side in a third of the way, turn over and fold the other side in to make a wedge shape then trim off the bottom. Cut out some shapes then open to reveal your unique snowflake.



#12PlaydaysOfChristmas

## Day 3



Help the bugs in your garden stay warm and cosy as they sleep through winter in a comfy bug hotel.

Use bricks (with holes), plant pots, wood or palettes as the base for your hotel. Fill in the spaces with dry twigs, leaves or moss to create snug hiding places for different bugs.

Bug hotels can be all shapes and sizes, depending on the materials you have. The different nooks and crannies will attract a range of creatures to visit this winter, and stay a while.



#12PlaydaysOfChristmas

## Day 4



### Cinnamon playdough

- 2 cups flour
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 1 cup salt
- red food colouring
- cinnamon
- Christmas cutters

Add the flour, cooking oil, salt and cinnamon to a large bowl and mix together.

Add to a large saucepan and add some food colouring.

Mix on a medium heat until the dough starts to form and becomes dry.

Let the dough cool and knead to make it soft.



#12PlaydaysOfChristmas

## Day 5



### Frozen suncatchers

Gather some natural materials, e.g. leaves, berries, pine cones, small twigs, flowers or petals.

Find a suitable container to create your suncatcher such as a biscuit tin lid, foil container or plastic container.

Place your natural materials in the container and cover with a little water. Place two laces, ribbons or twine near the top to use to hang your suncatcher when it's frozen.

Let your suncatcher freeze overnight then carefully remove in the morning, hang in the sun and watch it sparkle!



#12PlaydaysOfChristmas

## Day 6



Make snowballs with white socks or large white pom poms for an indoor snowball fight!

Split into two teams, with each team having the same number of snowballs.

Divide your room with masking tape and set a timer.

On your marks, get set, SNOWBALL FIGHT!

When the timer ends, the winning team has the least amount of snowballs on their side.



#12PlaydaysOfChristmas

## Day 7



**Don't wait for the real thing ... make your own snow this Christmas!**

Mix 500g of cornflour with 250ml of baby oil to create fluffy white snow.

Use kitchen utensils, toy figures or just your hands to play, mould and create in the magical snow.



#12PlaydaysOfChristmas

## Day 8



### Ice lanterns

Fill a container with water and drop in some natural materials such as flowers and leaves.

Place a smaller container in the middle and tape to the top so it doesn't touch the bottom.

Leave outside overnight to freeze. Add a battery operated tea light to create your outdoor ice lantern.



#12PlaydaysOfChristmas

## Day 9



### Winter scavenger hunt

Wrap up warm and see how many you can find!

- twinkling lights
- Christmas tree
- door wreath
- snow
- a robin
- icicles
- a dog wearing a jumper
- holly
- animal tracks
- carol singers
- footprints
- red noses
- woolly hats
- hungry birds
- Santa!



#12PlaydaysOfChristmas

## Day 10



**Put your empty cardboard delivery boxes to good use!**

\*Set up a wrapping station in Santa's workshop to get ready for the big day.

\*Create a little house for your Elf on the Shelf - gather scrap fabric and other free and found materials to decorate.



#12PlaydaysOfChristmas

## Day 11



It's panto season - raid the dressing up box and put on a show to entertain your family.

Sing carols and Christmas songs to spread holiday cheer!



#12PlaydaysOfChristmas

## Day 12



**Organise an indoor games night for all the family. Here are some festive ideas ...**

- Pin the red nose on Rudolph
- Christmas themed 20 questions
- Chocolate coin treasure hunt
- Charades
- Guess what's in the stocking
- Christmas musical chairs



#12PlaydaysOfChristmas



**Activity Advent Calendar 2022**

1 ready, steady, go games!

2 video calls with relatives

3 workout with baby

4 christmas baking together

5 go on a christmas sound hunt

6 chat about favourites

7 christmas shopping game

8 what's in the bag?

9 post box to the north pole

10 put teddy to bed

11 teddy bear's christmas meal

12 take a look at family photos

13 bubble fun

14 festive i spy

15 peekaboo

16 play games with a box

17 go on a winter walk

18 carol karaoke

19 create a festive sensory box

20 dance party around the xmas tree

21

22 play with wrapping paper scraps

23 cuddle up with a story

24 sleepy time games

## Low cost/no cost play ideas



**Make a den**  
Use blankets and sheets to make a cosy den



**Shopkeeper**  
Set up shop using cupboard items



**Play dress up**  
What can you dress up as with items from around the house?



**Memory game**  
Take it in turns to remove something from a room, can the others remember what is missing?



**Teddy bear's picnic**  
Get all your cuddly friends together for a living room picnic



**Treasure hunt**  
Create a treasure hunt around your home or garden



**Homemade art**  
What can you create using loose parts from around the house (boxes, cartons, leaves etc)?



**Hide and seek**  
An oldie but a goodie, where are some good hiding places in your home?

## Sung to "Frere Jacques"



Father Christmas  
 Father Christmas  
 He got stuck, he got stuck  
 Climbing down the chimney  
 Climbing down the chimney  
 What bad luck  
 What bad luck!



## Sung to "Old MacDonald Had a Farm"

Father Christmas had a tree  
 Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho!  
 And on that tree he had some lights  
 Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho!  
 With a flash flash here  
 And a flash flash there  
 Here a flash there a flash  
 Everywhere a flash flash  
 Father Christmas had a tree  
 Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho!



## Sung to "Incy Wincy Spider"

The lonely little snowman,  
 Sat sadly on the grass.  
 Out came the children and  
 Made the snowman laugh.  
 'WHOOSH' went the snowballs  
 "Be careful" called out Mum  
 Now the lonely little snowman  
 No longer felt so glum!

Credit Gemma Seal



## Sung to "Twinkle Twinkle"

Snowflake snowflake in the sky  
 Love to watch you floating by  
 Down you fall upon the ground  
 Down you fall without a sound  
 Snowflake snowflake in the sky  
 Love to watch you floating by.





Go To ....for Christmas FUN!!

**Parent Line NI**  
0808 8020 400

**Star Tip**  
Aim to make space for precious 1-1 time with each member of your family.

**Star Tip**  
Create an ever-ready Car-Bag with toys, snacks and essentials for easier journeys.

**Home Made Together**  
Decorate old jam jars with greenery, paints or pasted tissue. Add electric tea lights and enjoy home-made lanterns.  
Hang with wire or ribbon.  
\*\*\*\*\*  
Bake orange and lemon slices in the oven at 140 degrees for an hour. String with pop corn for natural garlands.  
\*\*\*\*\*  
DIY Crackers..... Wrap empty loo rolls with bright paper. Fill the space with treats and secure each end with ribbon.

**Fun Outside**  
Wrap up warm with woolly lamp hats or torches and have an exciting walk in the dark  
\*\*\*\*\*  
Treasure Hunt Walk....head outside and see who can find the most Christmas Trees, Santas, Snowmen  
\*\*\*\*\*  
Collect greenery, pine cones and berries to create hand made wreaths and decorations.

**Star Tip**  
Create a treasure hunt for items necessary to carry out a task.

**Memory Makers**  
print out a selection of family photographs  
Gather round and have a lucky dip of 'remember this'

**Community Christmas**  
Consider encouraging children to donate to charity shops, food banks and Christmas Appeals

why not set up your own home photo booth with fancy dress and silly props?

**Parent Line NI**  
0808 8020 400

**Parenting NI**  
Christmas Countdown

**Method:**  
Cut snowman face shapes from coloured felt/paper  
Snowmen - decorate six white cups with coloured shapes to make snowmen faces  
Snowballs – roll socks in tight balls



## Snowman Slam

A fun game idea for the whole family

### Materials:

White cups; coloured felt/paper; white socks; glue; scissors

### Method:

Cut snowman face shapes from coloured felt/paper  
Snowmen - decorate six white cups with coloured shapes to make snowmen faces  
Snowballs – roll socks in tight balls

## Christmas fun – Handprint wreath!

**Parenting NI**  
Christmas Countdown

### Method

#### You'll need...

- Used cereal box
- Green paper
- Red paper
- Scissors
- Glue stick
- Ribbon



- 1 Draw around your child's hand on a piece of cardboard from the cereal box.
- 2 Cut this out and use it as a template on the green pieces of paper to cut out and create multiple hands. Use different shades of green if you can.
- 3 Use a plate to draw a circle on another piece of your cereal box – this will become the base of your wreath.
- 4 Layer your cut out hands on the wreath and glue down one on top of the other to create a leaf style pattern.
- 5 Cut out some berries from red paper and glue on to your wreath.
- 6 Hang up to display with a ribbon!



## Popcorn Christmas Garland

All you need is unflavoured popcorn (make it and leave it out overnight to go stale) Plastic Yarn needles (child safe) and thread. Tie the thread to the needle and push the popcorn through to thread.

If you want you can embellish with dried orange slices or cinnamon sticks you can tie on the thread. You can offer the popcorn to the birds after Christmas or decorate outside trees with them as festive bird feeders.



### Tree Decoration

Trace a spiral on a piece of green card. Cut along the line. Decorate with stickers, pom poms and glitter, then hang from the top.



### Cinnamon Stick Reindeer Ornament

Simply glue together cinnamon sticks and add eyes and a red nose.



## Sock Snowman

Pour some rice into a sock, squeeze and shake into shape and secure with a hair/elastic band. Repeat 3 times making the head bigger than middle part of body. Glue on face, buttons and feet.



## Fun Christmas Crafts- Milk bottle Snowman Lanterns!

Just take an empty and cleaned out milk bottle and add in some battery fairy lights. Decorate the faces with cut out card board and you can use any spare hats etc you have. These will look so festive on your doorway!



Foot Print Christmas Card using paint, card, sequins/beads/pompoms etc



## Christmas Craft Ideas

Homemade Wrapping paper using paper, paint and cookie cutters



Thumbprint Baubles that can personalise a tree or be gifts for Family. You just need an inexpensive bauble set, sharpies and some acrylic or poster paint

## Low-cost playful ideas

1. Visit parks, green spaces, beaches or forests.
2. Play outside - get the wellies and raincoats on and jump in puddles.
3. Paint the pavement, walls, fences, gates or drainpipes with water - all you need is a bucket and brushes.
4. Have a family dance party or sing-a-long.
5. Create a fort in your living room out of blankets or cardboard boxes.
6. Go on a hike.
7. Have a sunset picnic at a park or beach.
8. Upcycle old toys using stickers, foam or paint.
9. Try some sewing or knitting.
10. Play a game of chess, dominoes, jacks or card games.
11. Make a sensory bottle using old bottles, coloured water, glitter, beads, stones or anything you fancy!
12. Make slime. Pour 2 tbsp of shampoo into a bowl, add 2 tbsp of shaving foam and mix. Add 1 tsp of salt and mix everything together thoroughly. Put mixture into the freezer for approximately 15 minutes.
13. Buy a cheap box of chunky chalk - children will have hours of fun.
14. Make a mystery bag - fill a bag with random supplies and see what children will play or make.
15. Make a mat to play hopscotch on. You can roll it out for play - an old sheet is perfect.
16. Melt ice! Fill cups or containers with coloured water, freeze them, and watch the ice melt as you add salt to it.
17. Make a collage with paper, glue and things to stick like pictures cut out of catalogues or magazines, scraps of paper, ribbon, fabric, dried pasta, natural materials etc.
18. Play x-o-x or eye-spy.
19. Have a game of hide-and-seek.
20. Street play - go outside and encourage other children to go 'out to play'. Play some football, frisbee, dodgeball, piggy in the middle or stick in the mud.



You'll be amazed at what fun can be enjoyed!

## Free family days out



## Christmas fun - Marshmallow Snowmen!

ParentingNI  
Christmas Countdown

### Ingredients

- 1 pack of marshmallows
- Skewers
- Red laces
- Black icing
- Sweets to decorate!



### Method

- 1 Start by taking a skewer, you can use a candy cane if you prefer, and push on three marshmallows to make the shape of a snowman.
- 2 Tie a red lace as a scarf between the first and second marshmallow to make a scarf.
- 3 Add two dots of black icing for eyes and make a smile. You can also add buttons with the icing. Decorate! Get creative...use different types of sweets to create hats, arms etc!

### Tips...

Not only is this a great activity to do with kids, they can also create them as gifts. Simply place your finished snowmen into cellophane bags, tie with ribbon and add a gift tag.



### Christmas Recipes for Kids

Cooking with the kids at Christmas is a really fun family activity. Bake up a storm with reindeer cupcakes, snowman cookies, festive brownies and Christmas shortbread.

Enjoy yourselves or share with friends as gifts at: - [https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/collections/kids\\_at\\_christmas](https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/collections/kids_at_christmas)

## Healthier Snack Ideas

### Santa Bananas



### Rudolph Sandwiches



### Snowman Pancakes



### Banana Pop Penguins





Tree

Decorations

Star

Angel

Lights

Wreath



The tree is up

I wrote a letter to Santa

Crann

Maisiucháin

Réalta

Aingeal

Soilse

Fleasc Nollag

Tá an crann in airde

Scriobh mé litir chuig Daidí na Nollag

Christmas  
An Nollaig  
Ann Null-ig

Cran

Mash-oo-hine

Rell-ta

Ang-il

Sull-sha

Flask Null-ig

Taa an cran in are-jah

Scr-eve may lit-chure hig da-gee na null-ig



Christmas  
An Nollaig  
Ann Null-ig



Christmas

Christmas Eve

Merry Christmas

New Years Eve

Happy new year

Santa

Sleigh

It's Christmas

Santa is coming

Nollaig

Oíche Nollag

Nollaig shona

Bliain úr

Bliain úr faoi mhaise

Daidí na Nollag

Sleamhnán

Tá an Nollaig buailte linn

Tá Daidí na Nollag ag teacht

Null-ig

Ee-ha Null-ig

Null-ig hun-a

Blane oo-er

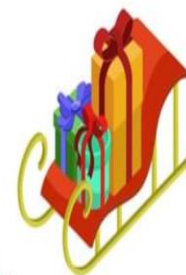
Blane oo-er f-wee wash-a

Da-gee na Null-ig

Slauw-nan

Taa an Null-ig bull-cha lin

Taa Da-gee na null-ig ag cha-akt



[More winter & Christmas themed resources & activities including a Christmas Story from Altram](#)

## When kids meltdown over the holidays

### It does not mean

- They are a bad child.
- You are a bad parent.
- They are trying to ruin your fun
- They are trying to embarrass you.
- You need to fix their feelings.
- You need to jump to their demands.
- They need to learn a lesson.
- They are defiant and refuse to listen.
- They hate you.

### It may mean

- They need a break.
- They are overwhelmed.
- They need connection with you.
- They are struggling with a sensory.
- They need you to be their calm.
- They are seeking a quiet, calm space.
- They are tired, hungry, or bored.
- You are their safe space.
- They are still figuring out how to navigate their big feelings.

@ourmamavillage



### My Child's First Devices: A Christmas Guide to Children's First Devices

Are you planning on giving your child their first device for Christmas this year? 📱 To make this process easier, Safer Schools NI's online safety team have created five simple steps designed to help ensure your child is tech-safe when using the device. Read here:

<https://bit.ly/3j1ab9T>



### Inexpensive ways to create festive experiences

- Go for a walk or drive at night to see Christmas decorations on other peoples houses, bring a flask of hot chocolate
- Bake some cookies together
- Buy a single sleigh bell from eBay or BM bargains, tie it to a ribbon and leave it in the garden on Christmas morning- this could be a bell that dropped from Santa's sleigh
- Make homemade ornaments like a popcorn garland. All you need is string, popcorn and a blunt needle. The popcorn can feed the birds after Christmas
- Have a hot chocolate station with a variety of prepared topping to choose from, crushed up candy canes, whipped cream, sprinkles etc. Pair it with a Christmas movie night

*Kids who are melting down  
over the holidays*

*do not mean*

"I'm trying to ruin your fun"

"I'm trying to embarrass you"

"You are a bad parent"

"I am a bad child"

"I need you to meet my demands"

"I need to learn a lesson"

"I'm defiant and refuse to listen"

"I hate you"

*may mean*

"I'm overstimulated and need a break"

"There's a lot of new people and  
I'm feeling overwhelmed"

"I need your attention"

"My brain is feeling flooded right now  
with emotion, I can't think logically"

"I need you to take me to a safe space  
to let these feelings out"

"Please help me find a peaceful spot  
to hang out"

"I feel safe having these feelings with you"

"This has been a big day for me"

"I'm hungry, tired, or bored"

"I need you to be my calm right now"

"This is all new for me"


"I love you and feel safe with you"

*Our Mama Village*



[Ideas for Christmas  
on a budget from  
Action for Children](#)



 In this special Christmas issue of EA's High Five newsletter, they share some good ideas to help readers enjoy being jolly this month!

Read here:

<http://ow.ly/crMs50M4AYV>



ni4kids's crackin' Christmas issue is out now!

Have a read at: [NI 4 Kids Magazine \(pagesuite-professional.co.uk\)](http://pagesuite-professional.co.uk)

BBC BITESIZE

### Eco-friendly Christmas Decorations

#### Repurpose old baubles and tinsel

Turn them into a garland for the doorway or a wreath!

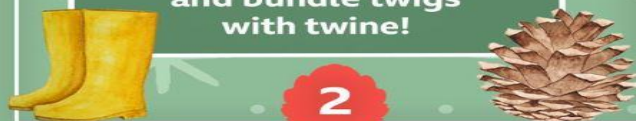


BBC BITESIZE

### Eco-friendly Christmas Decorations

#### Decorate your trees with nature

Paint some pinecones and bundle twigs with twine!



BBC BITESIZE

### Eco-friendly Christmas Decorations

#### Get your house smelling festive with fruit

Slice some oranges and bake for 45 minutes for some fragrant décor!



## Go to's for MANAGING CHRISTMAS EXPECTATIONS

Create a gift wish list ahead of time which could cover birthdays and Christmas. Help children to 'star' a most wanted gift!

Talk to your children about special treats, days, visits etc and how to share these or spread them out over the holidays

Chat about who all you will see together or apart at Christmas - which days they will see which family members and/or friends

Talk about what Christmas dinner might look like and possible expectations from family or friends. Be realistic with your expectations of your child or children

Consider your own self-care. Build in some 'time out/rest/space' to the busy Christmas calendar

### Holiday tips for separated parents

- 1 Reassure your children, using age-appropriate language, that both parents will agree how best to organise shared time over the holidays. Do not have discussion about the other parent with children present.

familymediationni.org.uk



### Holiday tips for separated parents

- 2 Avoid making demands or raising your voice. Agree a time to meet for these discussions or to have a telephone conversation. Avoid using text or e-mail, as can be open to misinterpretation.

familymediationni.org.uk



### Holiday tips for separated parents

- 3 Try putting yourself in the other parent's position, in your child's position, or other grandparents' position...  
**How would you feel?**

familymediationni.org.uk



### Holiday tips for separated parents

- 4 Do not react to demands from other parent on impulse, try to dial down potential for conflict. Maintain the focus on the child's current and future needs, avoid looking to the past.

familymediationni.org.uk



### Holiday tips for separated parents

- 5 Stay in the here and now, be kind to yourself and your children. Parental relationship breakdown is tough, do consider the future, remember, you will both always be parents and responsible for the well-being of the children, they love and need both of you.

familymediationni.org.uk



### Holiday tips for separated parents

- 6 As you begin your journey of parenting apart, try and keep all conversations focusing on the needs of your children as they grow. Learn to be flexible as the child's interests/needs change as they grow and therefore the days/times of moving between homes may change.

familymediationni.org.uk



### Holiday tips for separated parents

- 7 To help reduce disagreements, consider agreeing to complete a family calendar, many templates available on-line. Considering work rotas, school breaks, the needs of individual children, the link to wider family and grandparents.

familymediationni.org.uk



### Holiday tips for separated parents

- 8 Be realistic around the details to ensure smooth movement between two homes. Agree times/dates/locations in advance and have a plan B in case of travel disruption or illness. Agree in advance the mode of communication in emergency.

familymediationni.org.uk



### Holiday tips for separated parents

- 9 Discuss the usefulness of remote contact for older children, agree times and stick to them for 'facetime' or 'Zoom', when away from you. Also consider having two 'Christmas celebrations.'

familymediationni.org.uk



## Separation at Christmas

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Christmas  
Countdown

**Make the most of the time you do have together**

Christmas isn't a competition between you and your ex where you try to outdo each other. Spending quality time is more important than gifts. It doesn't have to be expensive trips out either, doing crafts or playing games is also great fun.



**Try not to worry about the "Perfect Family Christmas"**

We are bombarded with imagery which depicts 'the ideal Christmas'. It helps to remind yourself that there isn't a perfect way to celebrate Christmas and try not to put any unrealistic expectations on yourself.

**Put your children first**

Regardless of your feelings towards your ex, try to think of what is best for your children. Don't put them in a position of choosing between mum and dad. Don't criticise the other parent in front of the children, no matter how angry you feel.



**Don't bottle up your feelings**

Although it is important to remain positive for your children it is important for your own emotional wellbeing to have someone to talk to. If you are feeling upset and alone try talking to a family member or friend about how you feel.

**If you don't have access to your children over Christmas...**

Make arrangements with your family or friends. If anyone close to you is in the same situation, why not organise to see them; volunteer or invite them round for lunch so that you will not be by yourself.



## Parent's guide to gift giving

ParentingNI  
Christmas  
Countdown

**Don't focus on presents**

Easier said than done! We live in a society that is driven by consumption, but focus on the other aspects of the holidays. Talk to your children about what else they are excited about: family time, food, decorations etc.



**Manage Expectations**



Children have little ability to understand the true cost of the items they want. It is up to you to set a level of expectation of money spent on gifts. Be careful about the language you use about gifts. Try to talk more about giving gifts, particularly to those in need.

**Talking about Advertisements**

If you notice your child watching ads for toys talk to them about what ads are & what they are trying to do. By working together, you can ensure that children know what to expect from the toys they unwrap on Christmas day.



**Reacting to negative behaviour**

It can be extremely frustrating to hear a child say "I didn't want this" or "Is that it?" Instead of reacting with anger or expressing that frustration, parents should take this as a teaching opportunity about disappointment and coping skills.



**If a child is reacting very negatively to a gift:**

- Don't feed into a tantrum.
- Be careful not to escalate the problem.
- Help them to understand – once they have calmed down – why what they did was not ideal. Be patient, and do not try to shame them for their reaction.



**THIS CHRISTMAS REMEMBER...**

**Your children need your presence more than your presents**

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**CHRISTMAS TIP**

Talk to your children about the value of things and explain that it's not all about getting presents. Christmas time is a good time to spend together and make memories.

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**CHRISTMAS TIP**

Good communication is so important within a family, if you are feeling the pressure don't be afraid to ask for help. The less stressed you are as a parent, the less stressed your children will feel.

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Countdown

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## THIS DECEMBER REMEMBER...



get plenty  
of rest



your family  
doesn't need to  
be blood-related



wrap up  
warm



don't go into  
debt buying  
gifts



be present in  
the moments  
@toyoufromsteph



you can say  
no to plans



@sketchesinstillness

It's not how tall the Christmas tree  
but how much love there's around it.

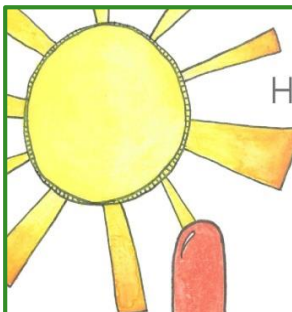
## Self-care tips for parents this Christmas

Whilst Christmas is a merry time for many, lots of parents will be struggling over the next few weeks. What are your strategies for self-care this Christmas? There are lots of different strategies, it's important to try a few to figure out which work best for you.

### 10 ways to look after yourself this Christmas

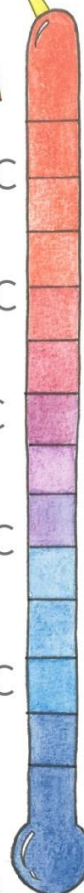
- Ignore the dust
- Don't expect perfection
- Carve out time for yourself
- Spend time in nature
- Listen to music
- Go for a walk
- Allow yourself to feel lots of emotions
- Write in a gratitude journal
- Engage your senses
- Practice deep breathing

**Parent  
LineNI**






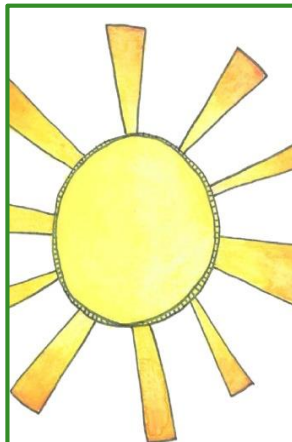
## How to Dress for the Weather Guide

Outdoor play is a great way to support healthy growth and development. Opening the doors to outdoor play in all kinds of weather provides children and adults with opportunities to spark their curiosity, leading to wonder, exploration and learning. When children have the right clothing for the season it contributes to them having positive, rich outdoor play experiences that just can't happen indoors. Get outside, be curious, let children lead and have fun!



Temperature	Clothing Items
20°C	Shorts, T-shirt, Hat, Sneakers
10°C	Pants, Long-sleeved shirt, Socks, Cap, Sneakers
0°C	Pants, Long-sleeved shirt, Jacket, Socks, Sneakers, Hat, Mittens
-10°C	Pants, Long-sleeved shirt, Socks, Overalls, Hooded jacket, Hat, Mittens, Boots
-20°C	Long-sleeved shirt, Pants, Socks, Overalls, Hooded jacket, Scarf, Mittens, Boots

*Supporting Outdoor Play Year Round*




[www.getoutsideandplay.ca](http://www.getoutsideandplay.ca)

[www.befitforlife.ca](http://www.befitforlife.ca)


## How to Dress for the Weather Tips

### Tips for Hot


- Use sunscreen before going outside
- Wear a hat and sunglasses
- Bring a water bottle to stay hydrated

### Tips for Rain and Wet Conditions





- Cotton absorbs moisture and stays wet and heavy. Avoid cotton clothing and socks on colder days
- Wear rubber boots to keep feet dry
- Elastic cuffs on sleeves of a rain jacket and ankles of splash pants keeps water out
- Pull pant legs OVER rain boots to keep feet dry
- Bring an extra set of clothes including waterproof mittens for cold, wet days

### Tips for Cold



Dress in layers:

- **Base layer:** closest to your skin, fits snugly and helps wick moisture away. Look for wool or polyester fabrics.
- **Mid layer:** the insulating layer that keeps you warm. Stick to wool or fleece.
- **Outer layer:** protects you from the elements like wind, rain and snow. This layer should be waterproof with enough room for layers underneath.


[www.getoutsideandplay.ca](http://www.getoutsideandplay.ca)

[www.befitforlife.ca](http://www.befitforlife.ca)