



# Preparing Learners for the Holidays

## OVERVIEW

While the holidays are designed to be joyful and fun, we all know they can and often do bring on their own set of stressors. Families and individuals who already face a unique set of challenges associated with ASD can be particularly affected this time of year.

Knowing the limits of your loved one with ASD is a good start to avoiding unnecessary unhappiness. How much noise or other sensory input is tolerable? If you have family members coming to visit, prepare them ahead of time to the possible problems that are specific to your family member with ASD. If your family is planning to travel, prepare your ASD family member to the possible challenges that go with traveling and unfamiliar environments.

Most of all, find creative ways to have fun, make memories, and get the whole family involved.

## PLAN PLAN PLAN

- Create social stories to set expectations and appropriate behaviors.
  - include some strategies of how to cope with it, e.g., it's okay to remove yourself to a quiet place and regroup, take some deep breaths, perhaps watch a favorite video, or play a video game, etc.
- Use visual schedule or task analysis for decorating/setting the table/series of events so your learner can help/be prepared!
- Use visual recipes to help learners get involved. Check out Project ACCESS's [virtual cookbook](#) created just for thanksgiving!
- Use scripting for those awkward social situations.
- Build in quiet breaks and let learner know when a good time is to take them.
- Be flexible
- Try to keep a similar structure and routine
- If there are holiday activities your loved one is not interested in – don't force the participation. But using age appropriate visuals will help them know what is expected and possibly encourage participation.
- Have something to do when there is "nothing to do"



Thanksgiving is a holiday in November.

At my family's Thanksgiving meal, we might eat \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ To visit with family, we might need to travel. Some families travel by car and some travel by airplane.



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## YOUR LEARNER MAY BE WONDERING...

- What is the Schedule (Plan)?
- What am I expected to do?
- How much am I expected to do?
- What will other people be doing?
- How will I know I'm finished?
- What will I do next?
- What should I do if I don't know what to do?
- Am I aware when I become overwhelmed, anxious or upset?
- What should I do if I become or feel myself becoming overwhelmed, anxious or upset?

Having strategies/visuals to help answer these questions will decrease some behaviors associated with awkward social situations.

## OTHER RESOURCES

- 101 Activities for Kids in Tight Spaces: At the Doctor's Office, on Car, Train, and Plane Trips, Home Sick in Bed... by Carol Stock Kranowitz
- Visual Recipes on TPT
- The New Social Story Book by Carol Gray
- Fact sheets by Project ACCESS staff
- Helpful tips by reachaba
- Helpful tips by adayinourshoes
- Project ACCESS Resource Library Visuals/Cookbook



## Honey Glazed Ham

### Ingredients



1 10-  
smoke  
water



1 1/2 c  
brown



1/2 cup

Recipe adapted from <https://www.sugar-honey-glaze-336933>

### Directions

1



Preheat oven to 350°F.

2



Unwrap ham and Rinse under cold water

3



Place it on the rack in the roasting pan. Cover with foil and bake 1 hour 40 minutes.



4



combine the brown sugar and honey in a saucepan and cook over medium heat until the mixture is smooth and the sugar has dissolved.

5



Pour the brown sugar glaze over the ham and continue roasting 1 hour 40 minutes more, basting at least twice with the drippings in the roaster.



6



Check for doneness by inserting a meat thermometer into a meaty spot -it should register 160 degrees F. Then slice!



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