

CARD-USF HOLIDAY GUIDE

Holiday Resources for Families and Individuals with ASD



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SEASONS GREETINGS

The holiday season is usually filled with joy and excitement, but it can also come with its own set of stressful challenges. Disrupted routines, sensory overload, and greater expectations of socialization are just some of the reasons this time of year is so difficult. CARD-USF has compiled this resource guide to help you and your family navigate those challenges and spend more time enjoying festivities with your loved ones. We hope these tips and resources will help you stay safe and practice self-care while you celebrate.

If you have specific questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to your consultant - CARD-USF is here to help you make your season bright!

*Happy Holidays from all of us at
CARD-USF!*



HOLIDAY EVENTS AT AUTISM FRIENDLY BUSINESSES

11/20/23 - 1/1/24 Winter Village in Curtis Hixon Park

- Sensory skate opportunity every Monday from 4:00-5:00pm

12/2/23 City of Tampa Santa Fest

- Autism Friendly Tampa is providing a sensory relief zone

12/10/23 Great Explorations Children's Museum, Winter Wonderland Celebration

12/31/23 8-10am Glazer Children's Museum, Sensory-Friendly

Downtown Countdown

HOLIDAY-THEMED TRAININGS

1/30/23 12pm Winter Break Preparation for Children with ASD (Zoom Training), presented by FAU CARD

Self-Care during the holidays: Presented by CARD-USF

Handling Holiday Stress: Presented by CARD-USF

CURSOS EN ESPAÑOL

- Cuidados personales durante las fiestas
- Manejo del estrés durante las festividades y TEA
- Autismo y Las Congregaciones de Fe - YouTube
- Viajando con su ser querido con autismo durante las fiestas - YouTube

HOLIDAY SAFETY

While many of us are concentrating on gift buying, decorating, and celebrating with family and friends, we all need to keep safety in mind during this busy season. We can become easily distracted and our loved ones with autism may become overwhelmed by new sounds, crowds, or unfamiliar places. A little planning can help keep everyone safer and ready to enjoy the holiday season.

Let your friends and relatives know when you are visiting that you or your loved one may need a quiet space to reduce anxiety. Ask if your friends and family have door alarms, pool alarms and gates. Are guns, medicines, and chemicals locked?

Prepare yourself or the individual with autism with social narratives and pictures of where you are going. Pack sensory items, electronics, and other comfort items.

Be extra aware of your surroundings, especially if there are busy streets, wooded areas and bodies of water. Here are some additional safety strategies from CARD and our safety partners:

Autism & Safety-Top Safety Tips

Your safety strategy begins with these 12 Safety Tips [Version en Español](#)

CARD's Water Guardian Postcard [English Version](#) - [Spanish Version](#)

Staying Safe This social experience story provides rules and strategies to prevent children from wandering and eloping. The story refers to the adult taking care of your child. Talk to your child about who his or her safe adults are. You can modify the story by inserting the name of the specific adult caring for your child.

[Safe Kids Worldwide Top Tips about Holiday Safety](#)

[Safe Kids Worldwide Gun Safety Tips & Teaching Gun Safety Skills to Young Children](#)

[Florida Poison Information Center Holiday Safety Tips](#)

[9 Tips for Holiday Food Safety](#)

[Safe Cooking for the Holiday](#)

[National Drowning Prevention Alliance Home Safety for the Holidays](#)

GENERAL RESOURCES

[Holiday travel tips from FAU CARD](#)

[16 Tips for an Autistic-Friendly Holiday Season](#)

[Understood.org Holiday Planner Guide](#)

[Holiday Prep Guide: Smoother Holiday Transition guide](#) [Holiday Transition Issues](#)

[Reducing Holiday Stress for Families of Children with Autism](#)

[Understood.org Holiday Behavior Worksheet](#)

[TACSEI Holiday Strategies for Success](#)

[National Autism Resources Free Resources for a Safe and Happy Holiday Season](#)

[El Autismo Y Las Fiestas ¿Compatible o No?](#)

[Military.com How to Handle Holiday Separations](#)

[UpriseHealth.com Supporting Children's Mental Health During the Holiday Season](#)

ALLERGY/SENSITIVITY-FRIENDLY HOLIDAY FOODS

Specific Carbohydrate Diet: [Pecanbread & SCD Recipe](#)

Gluten/Casein/Soy Free – [Nourishing Meals](#)

[Allergy Free Halloween Candy Ultimate Guide](#)

[Five Holiday Recipes to Try with Your Picky Eater – Autism Parenting Magazine](#)

[A Survival Guide for Families with Unique Mealtime Needs](#)

- [The Welcoming Holiday Table](#)



THANKSGIVING

NOVEMBER 23, 2023



Thanksgiving Day, annual national holidays in both the United States and Canada celebrating the harvest and other blessings of the past year. Americans generally believe that their Thanksgiving is modeled on a 1621 harvest feast shared by the English colonists (Pilgrims) of Plymouth and the Wampanoag people.

[Thanksgiving Social Experience Story Template by FSU CARD](#)

[Thanksgiving Tips from FAU CARD](#)

[Autism Society 5 Tips for a Sensory Friendly Thanksgiving](#)

[AutismSpeaks Expert Q&A: Tips for an Autism Friendly Thanksgiving](#)

[Understood.org Tips to Help Your Child with Food Sensitivities Enjoy the Holidays](#)

[Los niños autistas y el día de Acción de gracias](#)

CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 25, 2023



[Example Christmas Gift Wishlist](#)

[Autism Society Holiday Resources and Gift Guides](#)

[\[YouTube\] Gifts ideas for your loved one with Autism for the Holiday season - Coffee Break with CARD](#)

- [Español: ¿Qué puedo regalar en los días festivos? Necesito ideas y sugerencias... - La Hora del Cafecito](#)

[Unforgettable Christmas '09 By Ann Richards](#)

[Autism and the Holidays by Maureen Bennie](#)

HANUKKAH

DECEMBER 7-15, 2023

Hebrew for “dedication” – is a Jewish holiday based on the story of the menorah in the Second Temple of Jerusalem that burned for eight days in spite of only having a single day’s supply of oil.

[We need to make Hanukkah more accessible for children with autism](#)

[How to Play the Traditional Hanukkah Game Dreidel](#)

[High Holiday Resources](#)



NEW YEAR'S EVE

DECEMBER 31, 2023

New Year's Eve is one of the largest global celebrations because it marks the last day of the year. Actual date varies by country and ethnic celebrations. Can be based on Gregorian or lunar calendar.

[Tips to Watch Fireworks from FAU CARD](#)

[Autism Parenting Magazine Best Practices with Autism in the New Year](#)



OTHER CULTURAL HOLIDAYS



Las Posadas: December 16-24

Las Posadas, celebrated throughout Mexico and Central America, is Spanish for “The Inns.” It honors the journey of Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem in search of lodging.



Winter Solstice/Yule/Christmastide: December 21

Modern celebrations include meditation, the exchange of nature-themed gifts, crafting an evergreen wreath, candlelight celebrations, and spending time in nature to honor and celebrate its many gifts.



Kwanzaa: December 26-January 1

Kwanzaa is an annual celebration of African-American culture from December 26 to January 1, culminating in a communal feast called Karamu, usually on the sixth day.