

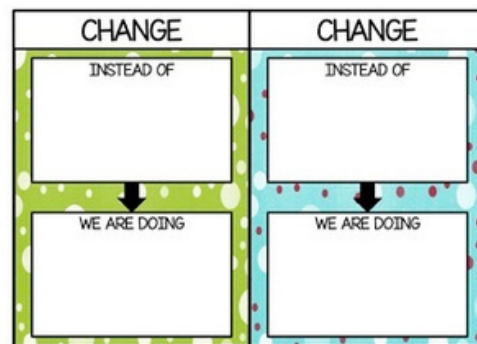
Accepting the Spectrum

A monthly newsletter sharing information and support for families, caregivers, and friends of children on the Autism Spectrum

Written by: Olivia Sullivan, RBT

The holiday season is upon us! While holidays may be an exciting time to be around loved ones and celebrate, they are often difficult for some children with autism. Many families will gather with extended family members and loved ones during the holiday season. For a child with autism, these gatherings of unfamiliar people, places, food, and noises can create a stressful environment that differs from their daily routine. Ahead of this festive time of year, there are many steps you can take to prepare your child and ease them into these changes so they, too, can enjoy the celebrations and gatherings this holiday season!

- Create a visual schedule for the day. This can help your child to understand what to expect since their daily routine will be different. It is important to go over the visual schedule and the changes with your child throughout the day as well.
- With some holidays, comes gift giving! Practice opening gifts, giving gifts, and taking turns with your child. It can be helpful to role play with your child when it comes to opening and giving gifts. This is a great opportunity to practice responses to receiving a gift such as saying “Thank you”.



- Bring familiar toys and activities to occupy time. By bringing some of your child's favorite toys and activities, your child will have items that they're familiar with and bring a sense of normalcy from their everyday routine.



- There are likely to be unexpected things that occur during holiday gatherings and events that may trigger feelings of overstimulation, stress, or discomfort in your child. Bringing items like noise canceling head phones or other calming items and strategies may be helpful during holiday gathers.



- Prepare your child for the upcoming holidays by reading books about your family's celebrations, or reading a social story.



Agency News:

- Families currently receiving services are encouraged to complete the caregiver survey

Please welcome our new staff that have joined Collaborative ABA Services:



Meet Alissa! She is a Licensed Social Worker. She graduated from Pennsylvania State University in 2015 and took some time off to gain some experience, where she was first introduced to ABA services and worked as a BT; gaining experiencing working with children in the home and school settings. She obtained a Master's Degree in Social Work in 2021 from Sacred Heart University after moving back to CT. Prior to working for Collaborative, she gained experience servicing adults battling addiction and working toward recovery. The best part of her job is helping individuals gain insight into themselves, helping them see their strengths, as well as aiding in their growth as an individual. In her spare time she loves to travel, spend time with her family and friends, as well as wish she was at Hogwarts practicing magic! (Harry Potter reference)



Meet Wynona! Wynona recently graduated from American International College located in Springfield MA, in May 2023 with a Bachelor's degree in Public Health and Sociology. She is currently pursuing her Master's in Public Health at AIC with an expected graduation in May 2025. Prior to graduating she was playing D2 field hockey at AIC and working part time as a CNA. Wynona is passionate about healthcare and caring for children. In her free time, she enjoys fitness, the outdoors, and spending time with friends and family.





Meet Grace! Grace just recently graduated from Concordia University In Montréal, Canada, with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and minor in Law and Society. She decided to move home to Connecticut before pursuing a career in ABA therapy, which has been her passion ever since. Grace has been working with children across a variety of settings since she was 15 years old, and is planning on staying on that path. Currently seeking her Behavior Technician Registration, she is enthusiastic about helping others and, in the future, is interested in pursuing her master's degree in either Occupational Therapy or Speech Language Pathology. In her free time, Grace enjoys spending time with family and friends, traveling, and listening to music.

Additionally, Hannah is a Social Work student from the University of Connecticut School of Social Work Program. She is working alongside Alissa and Alisha to gain experience in the field.



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