

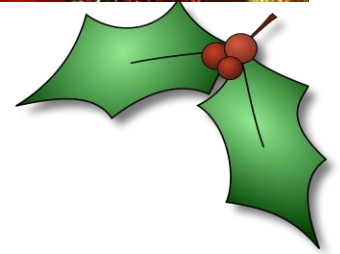
# I'M A PARENT, GET ME OUT OF HERE!

THE HALF TERMLY NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS/CARERS OF CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE WITH AUTISM



An accessible version of this newsletter is available at our [Local Offer Page](#).

## Christmas Autism Tips



Rob Emery – Autism Advisory Teacher

Many people look forward to the festive period. A break from routine, socialising with family, festive food and twinkling lights. But for some people with Autism, these things make negotiating the Christmas period particularly difficult. Here we try to include some tips to help your Christmas be little less stressful and little more Autism friendly.

### Changes

Christmas is a time of lots of changes. For those that prefer the predictability and familiarity of routines these changes can raise anxiety. Create a Christmas calendar so that the changes in routine are planned for. Advent calendars provide a good countdown that can help some people prepare for events at Christmas particularly if the events are marked on the calendar. Creating a timetable for Christmas day can help to create some predictability on the day itself. Try to keep some routine in aspects of your day, like bedtime. If you plan to go away, take a bag of familiar objects to provide comfort.

Christmas decorations and lights are a very visual reminder of the changes during the festive period. Introducing decorations slowly can help. Defining when decorations will be displayed and when they will be taken down again can help.



### Senses

Christmas can be an assault on our senses. Scented candles, flashing lights, bright colours, loud music and big crowds can all be uncomfortable for people with sensory differences. Try to avoid queues/crowds. If you plan to visit Santa, you can often call ahead and book a time to avoid queuing. You can limit the amount of time that Christmas lights are on for or set them to a mode where they don't blink/flicker. Create a safe space where there are no lights/decorations or limit decorations to a single room. If your child/young person has dietary requirements, then consider an alternative Christmas dinner or allow them to have their preferred food. Avoid crackers or take out the snapper if loud noises are a problem.



### Other tips

Don't feel as though you must stick to traditions, Christmas is a time for happiness and joy so do what works for you and your family. Consider putting batteries into toys before they are unwrapped to avoid the wait to play with them. If your child/young person doesn't like surprises, consider putting a picture of what is inside the wrapping on a tag. We hope you find these tips useful and from all of us at the Autism Advisory Teacher Service we wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy new year!

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# Some family activities for the Christmas break!

## DIY Snow Globes

You'll need:

- A jam jar with lid
- Glitter
- A Christmas toy
- Plasticine
- Superglue



- Start with a clean and label-free jar.
- Superglue your chosen toy to the lid of the jar, then leave it to dry for an hour.
- Place a teaspoon of glitter in the jam jar and fill to the top with cold water.
- Over the sink (this bit is messy) place the lid on the jar and screw it tight. Some water will spill out at this point but don't worry: this way you'll be left with plenty of water but no air bubbles.
- Check the lid is on really tight.
- Turn over and shake to your heart's content – and let it snow...!!!

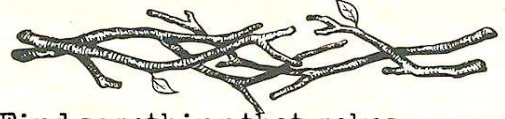


## Mince Pie Munchies

Put a mince pie on a plate in front of each player. See who can munch the most in 30 seconds using only their mouth... you can add cream if you want to make it even more messy!

Try the Gratitude scavenger hunt below or make a list of your own and tick them off as you collect them:

## Gratitude Scavenger Hunt



1. Find something that makes you happy.
2. Something to give someone else to make them smile.
3. Find one thing that you love to smell.
4. Find one thing you enjoy looking at.
5. Find something that's your favorite color.
6. Find something you are thankful for in nature.
7. Find something that you can use to make a gift for someone.
8. Find something that is useful for you.



[www.simplerchristmaslog.com](http://www.simplerchristmaslog.com)

## Parent Notice Board

In this section we want to share relevant news and information that you might find useful. If you have any news to share please contact us.

[SENandInclusion@Peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:SENandInclusion@Peterborough.gov.uk)

### Post-16 Choices.

If your child is in Year 11 and are thinking about 'what next?' Have a look at Peterborough City Council's Local Offer and click on the *Preparing for Adulthood* icon. If your child is in Year's 9 and 10 it might be worth having a look too – you can never prepare too early!

### Yvonne Newbold Webinars

Yvonne Newbold is a parent and a professional with a wealth of expertise in SEND and behaviour. She is currently running live webinars for parents and professionals on a range of SEND topics for £2.50. More here: [yvonnnewbold.com/webinars](http://yvonnnewbold.com/webinars)

### Check out our other newsletters:

**Cosy Crew** – A newsletter for Primary Aged Children with Autism.

**The Lift Up** – A newsletter for teenagers and young people with Autism.

Available from our [Local Offer Page](#) half termly.

## AATS Yule Log Competition Entries

Amy



Claire



Jill



Yvette