

# ADHD and Autism

## 6 Solutions to a Stress-Free Holiday

I know what you're thinking: "'Stress-free' and 'the holidays' don't go together." We at Synergy Neuro-Enrichment want all kids to enjoy this special time of year. No matter which holidays your family celebrates, the following tips and strategies can help everyone enjoy the season... especially those with special needs like ADHD and autism. Read and share our article, and enjoy this wonderful time of year! We have more information on our website when you want more.

[www.VisaliaSynergy.com/NDD](http://www.VisaliaSynergy.com/NDD)

### 1. Schedule of Events:

Give your child a schedule of events for special activities, particularly on days with lots of transitions. Whether it's a written schedule or one with pictures for younger kids, your child will feel calmer and safer knowing what is coming up. *It doesn't need to be fancy*, just understandable to them. Discuss the schedule regularly and what will happen when you get there. For example, let your child know if there will be lots of people or noise or relatives squeezing cheeks 😊.

Often, just knowing what's next can help children with special needs feel less anxiety.

Oh, speaking of schedule, continue to **make your child's sleep schedule a priority**, especially with so many activities that are out of their norm.

**2. Have a code word your child can use** if he or she feels too stimulated and needs a break. Assure your child if he or she uses the code word when they REALLY need it, you will respond right away. Again, this helps the child feel a small sense of control. This helps reduce anxiety.

**3. Family Meeting:** Before you leave for holiday parties or other fun events, have a quick family meeting so your whole family knows how long you plan to stay and how you expect them to behave. This will benefit neuro-typical children as well, since any child can get overwhelmed with the excitement of the holidays.

### 4. Extra Tools/Toys-to-Go:

Children with significant sensory sensitivities often require more sensory stabilization. These small tips can be the difference between pleasure and pain at the event.

- Ear plugs or muffs if you will be in a noisy environment
- Sensory fidgets if the child is expected to sit still.
- For sensitive kids who need to wear dress clothes, bring along some soft clothes for them to change into as soon as possible.
- Be prepared by knowing your child's specific limitations and how you will handle them if the need arises. Don't wait for the meltdown to begin.

### 5. Food for the Road:

If your children have food sensitivities or allergies that prevent them from eating holiday treats, plan ahead to offer alternatives like all-natural candy or a gluten-free treat from home. Children with neuro-behavioral disorders like ADHD or autism often already feel different, but having their special treat makes this less of an issue.

**6. Limit holiday decorations in your home,** if your child is easily over-stimulated. Too many twinkling lights combined with smells from the kitchen and other holiday distractions, can be too much for children with autism, ADHD, or sensory disorders. You might do a test run of having a light or decoration lit and not, and ask them which way they feel better. Also, let special needs children help you decorate for the holidays so they are involved in the changes that take place in their usual environment. That's back to the feeling of control again.

The holiday season doesn't have to be a stressful time of year for your special needs child! We hope these tips help your whole family enjoy this fun time of year.

### **Let's Be Honest**

I know we're supposed to be strong & ALWAYS positive, but don't you get tired of doing all these things to accommodate - Planning, IEPs, special food, and teaching the teachers and relatives how to deal with your child's uniqueness. Aaagh! But you can't ever give up... not on our child! Their chance

of a normal future, a decent college, or good relationships is up to us. No one else is going to do this job for us.

I remember the meltdowns my child used to have over the smallest things. And it would take an hour to get him back to "normal". Sure, discipline, routines, personal attention, and learning styles were important and helpful, but there seemed to be more, something foundational. **That's what led me to immerse myself in the work of functional nutrition (aka Functional Medicine) and functional neurology (aka Brain Balance).** *The results have been amazing, not just for my own child, but for many I have worked with.*

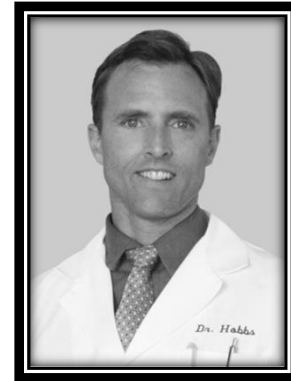
Jay Hobbs, DC, DACNB

### **Hope for the Future**

**Now we are opening more space and time in our office in Visalia to provide real, permanent solutions.**

**559-635-8266**

**[www.visaliasynergy.com/ndd](http://www.visaliasynergy.com/ndd)**



Dr. Hobbs has been practicing in Visalia for 16 years, focusing on natural, [w]holistic solutions for children and adults with chronic conditions.