

# PREPARING FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The holidays typically are a busy time of the year for many families. Whether it be because of family gatherings or filling the home with decorations, changes in routines are often happening around us this time of the year. For many children with disabilities, these changes can be overwhelming when they happen all at once. Although this holiday might look a little different from last year, this tip sheet covers a few ideas to prepare for the busy season.

## **Start thinking about what's most important to your family.**

Often with busy schedules and changes, we get caught between the Urgent and the Important. The Urgent often calls us towards a sense of rush and completion, whereas the Important can help us to take a step back from the rush, look at the bigger picture, and remind us of our family values. As we start to thinking about what's important to our families, we can also start to prioritize our days in a meaningful way.

## **Plan for breaks and down time.**

It's typically easier for us to schedule appointments than it is for us to plan for times of rest. However, resting well also energizes our minds and bodies to do other tasks well. You can try thinking about what calming activities in your home looks like (e.g., reading books, colouring, sitting in a tent or a blanket fort with the lights off), and try scheduling these activities in your day.

## **Invite your kids into the preparation process.**

Planning ahead with your kids gives the whole family an opportunity to see what's coming next. This can make a busy season seem less unpredictable and overwhelming for everyone. You can try putting together visual schedules for the day, week, or even the month! If there are upcoming events (in or outside the home), invite your children to mark it down on your family calendar. Social stories and choice boards are also great tools for the preparing for the holidays!