

While the summer holidays are a lovely break from school for many children, some children and families can find it a stressful experience. Children with an ASD diagnosis or those that may display ASD traits, may in particular find it a challenging time of year. The regular routine of being in school five days a week is no longer in place and that can feel confusing. Here are a few suggestions for supporting your child over the summer holidays, to support that change:

**Routine** - If possible, try and keep to similar routines in the morning and evening as you would on a school day. For example, breakfast, getting dressed, etc. A simple structure to start and end the day helps keep consistency for your child and will help make them feel more secure. If you can find a way to build basic routines in each day, it can lessen anxiety. This could include having breakfast, going for a walk, playing with Lego, having lunch etc.

**Visuals** – A weekly timetable on display can help your child prepare for what is happening each week. [Please see the example provided](#). If your child feels overwhelmed by looking at a whole week, consider looking at it day by day. If you are planning a day out, maybe look at the website or watch a YouTube clip of the place ahead of going. Talk through the plan for the day and give your child time to ask questions about what to expect. This will give your child the opportunity to begin to become familiar with the place.

**Special Projects/Interests** – The summer holidays could give you the time to develop and find out more about special interests. If your child is a budding chef, could they plan to make a cake or create a special menu? Or if your child loves trains, could they make a fact book all about what they know or have learnt.

**Build in relaxation time** – There may be days when you need a “chill out day.” All children will benefit from having days at home and spending time in the garden. Don’t feel the need to do too much everyday. It is a good idea to have a balance.

**Flexibility** - Although planning and structure are important in helping your child feel more secure over the summer holidays, there will always be those unpredictable days. Sometimes your child may need an extra day at home and that’s okay. You know your child’s needs better than anyone. For this, it can sometimes help to have an “oops” card to go on the weekly timetable to show when things don’t go as planned.

**Preparing for going back to school** – As you begin to approach the time for going back to school, begin by having gentle conversations about going back or revisit the social story from school about the new class.

All children are different and what works for one child may not work as well for others. You know your child best, so do what you feel works best for them. Enjoy the summer holidays and we look forward to welcoming you back in September.