

# Connections

A Newsletter For Teachers Working With Autism  
Educational Equity For All



December 2017

## Autism & holidays... You can do this... 5 Tips that work like magic

Here are five ways you can use video to help students enjoy a positive holiday season.

### 1. Use video to give information

The busy holiday season is frequently full of changes in regular schedules and routines.

### 2. Teach holiday related routines

Think about any routines that are new or used infrequently (or this even works with more familiar routines).

### 3. Create video stories

Helping students handle social situations via strategies such as writing Social Stories™ has become common. These same stories can be created in a video format. It doesn't have to be complicated.

### 4. Remember people

Families have different ways to celebrate during holidays. For many, it's a time to get together with friends and extended family. That creates more change for our targeted students.

### 5. Perform

Children of all ages enjoy watching videos of themselves and those around them doing fun things. Consider these.

- Singing favorite holiday songs
- Dancing
- Talking
- Showing something drawn or made
- Demonstrating how to do something

<http://usevisualstrategies.com/autism-video-holidays/>



Don't miss the next Sensory Friendly Film!



COCO  
12/9/17



WONDER  
12/12



STAR WARS:  
THE LAST JEDI  
12/23 & 12/2

## Movie Showings for Guests & Families Living with Autism or Other Special Needs

AMC is proud to partner with the Autism Society to bring you unique movie showings where you can feel free to be you! We turn the lights up, and turn the sound down, so you can get up, dance, walk, shout or sing!

We are now expanding our Sensory Friendly Film program to four showings per month.

- The second and fourth Tuesday and Saturday.
- Family-friendly movies will continue to show Saturdays, starting at 10am local time
- We've added Tuesday showings at 7pm local time that may appeal to others on the autism spectrum.

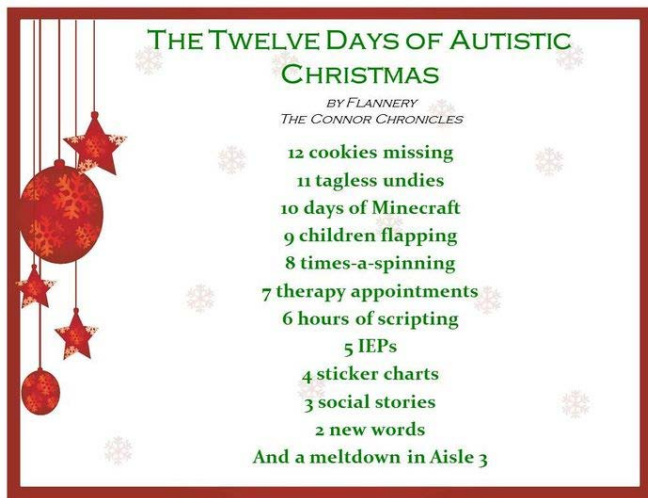
Tickets are \$4-6 depending on location and can be purchased on the day of the event. To find a participating theater:

<https://www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films>

EDUCATIONAL  
EQUITY FOR ALL  
..... Giving kids what they need to succeed.

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## FEATURED IDEA OF THE MONTH



### Building flexibility and predictability into classroom routines this holiday season

It is important to build flexibility into your usual classroom schedule by explaining to students that sometimes the schedule will change and teaching them how you will indicate when a change occurs.

Having a consistent icon for change is an easy way to let students know that a change in routine will happen that day. A change icon can be placed directly on to your existing schedule and may be in reference to a particular activity or time at which an activity takes place. Change icons are especially helpful for unexpected changes and are applicable in a variety of situations year round, so don't wait to introduce the symbol to your students!

*Attachment 1 below provides examples of symbols for change that you can print and use in your classroom.*

Continue to reference your regular classroom schedule to show students the shape of the day

Even though you may be spending the whole morning building gingerbread houses, it is important to review your usual daily schedule before getting started. Though the activities listed will be different, students can still get a sense of how long activities will last and be reassured that some aspects of their day will remain consistent, such as recess and lunch.

<http://www.autismoutreach.ca/tipomonth/building-flexibility-and-predictability-classroom-routines-holiday-season>

## WEBSITES AND RESOURCES

<http://comfortinganxiouschildren.com/holiday-classroom-anxiety/>  
<https://goo.gl/ExocvG>  
<https://www.myautism.org/8-perfect-autism-friendly-holiday-gifts/>  
<https://www.nationalautismresources.com/toys-for-autistic-children-and-teens/>  
<https://recoveringkids.com/2017/11/21/giftideas/>



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



### Understanding Autism

Understand more about autism, including diagnosis, the autistic spectrum and life with autism, with this online course.

**Duration 4 weeks, 3 hours per week**

**FREE online course, Upgrade available**

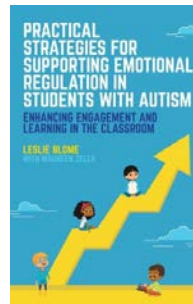
*What topics will you cover?*

- What is autism... and does it exist?
- Social communication skills
- Sensory sensitivities and repetitive behaviours
- Co-occurring conditions
- Strengths and difficulties of people on the autism spectrum
- Lived experiences of people on the autism spectrum

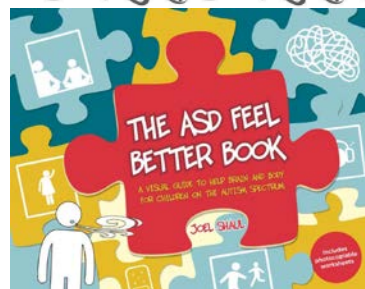
<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/autism>



## RECOMMENDED READING & VIDEO



Practical Strategies for Supporting Emotional Regulation in Students with Autism: Enhancing Engagement and Learning in the Classroom



A Visual Guide to Help Brain and Body for Children on the Autism Spectrum

### ASD FEEL BETTER BOOK

Learn to build individual strengths and work through problems with this picture-based guide for children with ASD aged 7-14. The use of simple images and photocopiable worksheets creates a fun and engaging resource for identifying different emotions and how to manage and deal with personal challenges.