WVPTI
Serving Families Statewide

PIECING IT TOGETHER

A Season of Togetherness

Making Memories, Embracing Differences & Celebrating Family

Welcome, families and caregivers!
This season brings opportunities to slow down, try new activities, and create meaningful moments together. Inside, you'll find simple, inclusive ideas for November and December, along with helpful tips and resources.

November & December 2026

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November
Family Activites

Welcome, families and caregivers!
This season brings opportunities to slow down, try new activities, and create meaningful moments together. Inside, you'll find simple, inclusive ideas for November and December, along with helpful tips and resources.

Explore the Season Together

Take a Fall Discovery Walk or Roll

Explore a familiar sidewalk or path by finding three colors, a bird, and a bare tree. Your child can point, use a communication device, take photos, or enjoy the view, and can also do the same search from a window if necessary.

Make Leaf Art

Place a leaf under paper and rub with a large crayon, or make a collage with paper leaves. Tape the paper down, offer easy-grip supplies, and skip real leaves if the texture is uncomfortable.

Plan a Quiet Community Outing

Ask your library, museum, or recreation center about quieter hours or sensory-friendly programs. Confirm accessible entrances, restrooms, seating, sound levels, and a place to take a break. Show your child a photo before you go.

Create and Connect at Home

Bake a Small Batch of Cookies

Offer one job at a time: choose a cutter, scoop ingredients, stir, or arrange cooled cookies. Use a spoon for sticky textures. An adult handles heat and sharp tools. Follow food-allergy and feeding needs, and do not taste raw dough.

Build a Gratitude Tree

Draw a tree on paper and add paper leaves for people, pets, places, or favorite things. Invite a spoken answer, drawing, photo, gesture, or communication-device response. Every contribution counts!

Sing a Favorite Song

Choose a familiar song and let your child sing, hum, sign, tap, or listen. Keep the volume comfortable. Offer a choice of two songs and stop when your child is ready.

A Flexible November Plan

Week 1: Try a discovery walk or window search.
Week 2: Make leaf art and visit a quiet community space.
Week 3: Bake cookies or help with a favorite family recipe.
Week 4: Add gratitude leaves and share a favorite song.

Family Reminder

Holidays look different in every home. Invite your child to choose what feels enjoyable. Keep familiar foods and a comfortable place to rest available during gatherings.

Different seasons. Same support.

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December Family Activites

Celebrate in ways that work for your family!

December can bring bright lights, busy rooms, and changes in routine. Create celebrations that fit your family. Choose traditions that are meaningful to you, explain plans ahead of time, and leave room for breaks. You don't need a full calendar to make warm memories.

Explore the Enjoy a Sensory OutingTogether

See Lights at Your Own Pace

Try a short neighborhood walk, roll, or drive to see steady lights. Ask about flashing displays or music before visiting a larger event. Choose a quieter time, bring familiar comfort items, and make it easy to leave.

Visit a Library or Seasonal Event

Ask about a quiet story time, small craft group, or sensory-friendly holiday visit. Confirm current dates and accommodations directly. Remember, a “sensory-friendly” label may not meet every child's needs.

Take a Winter Nature Break

Look for evergreen trees, clouds, birds, or animal tracks. Choose a clear, accessible route and clothing your child tolerates. Keep outings brief in cold weather and avoid icy paths. A porch or window bird-watch is another option.
Make Holiday Memories at Home

Make Holiday Memories at Home

Decorate Cookies

Offer two icing colors and a few age-appropriate decorations. Your child can spread icing, choose a design, or direct a helper. Check food allergies and choking risks. Decorating paper cookies works, too!

Hold a Family Sing-Along

Let everyone choose a favorite holiday or everyday song. Offer quiet listening, signing, seated movement, or gentle tapping. Skip bells and loud instruments if they're uncomfortable.

Play Holiday Bingo

Use the bingo card in this newsletter to look for seasonal objects at home, in a book, or on an outing. Add pictures or real objects for children who do not read. Use crayons or large stickers instead of small markers.

A Flexible December Plan

Week 1: Preview the month with a simple picture or written calendar.
Week 2: Enjoy a light outing and make a card.
Week 3: Decorate cookies and sing a favorite song.
Week 4: Play bingo and take a winter nature break.

Different seasons. Same support.

Before You Go

Explain where you're going and what happens afterward.
Bring your child's communication tools, comfort items, and necessary supplies.
Agree on a way to request a break.
Respect “no,” including when your child doesn't want a hug, photo, or new food.

Helpful Tips & Articles

Practical information to support your family this season.

1. The Power of Outdoor Play

Playing outside supports children's physical health, mental well-being, and development. Spending time in nature gives families opportunities to explore, learn, and connect.
Try a short nature walk, visit an accessible park, or watch birds from your window. Outdoor activities can be adapted to your child's interests, abilities, and comfort level.
Read the article: https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/power-of-play/Pages/playing-outside-why-its-important-for-kids.aspx

Minimizing Holiday Stress

The holidays can be overwhelming for children with autism and other sensory needs. Bright lights, loud noises, crowded spaces, and changes in routine may cause stress. Preparing ahead, creating predictable routines, and allowing quiet breaks can help make celebrations more comfortable. Remember, holiday traditions should fit your family's needs.
Read the article: https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/minimizing-holiday-stress-for-children-with-autism

Cooking It Up with 3-Year-Olds

Cooking with young children is a fun way to encourage learning and independence. Simple kitchen activities help children practice communication, counting, coordination, and following directions.
Let your child help with safe, age-appropriate tasks such as stirring ingredients, choosing cookie shapes, or counting scoops. Adapt activities to their abilities and interests. Visit. https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/spring2023/cooking-with-three-year-olds

Explore the Enjoy a Sensory OutingTogether

Get Outside and Explore

Try a nature walk or visit a local park.
Let your child explore at their own pace.
Adapt outdoor activities to your child's abilities and interests.

Make the Holidays Brighter

Create a simple, predictable schedule.
Prepare your child for new places and activities.
Consider sensory-friendly options and quiet breaks.
Keep traditions flexible to fit your family's needs.

Cook, Learn, and Connect

Choose simple recipes with a few ingredients.
Let your child help with safe tasks like mixing or washing.
Use cooking to practice counting, language, and motor skills.
Most importantly, have fun together!

Different seasons. Same support.

Family Holiday Bingo

Look for these holiday items at home, in a book, around your neighborhood, or while out and about!



Ways to Play

- Find the items at home, in a book, or during an outing.
- Use a crayon, sticker, or preferred marker to cover each square.
- Try to get five in a row—across, down, or diagonally!
- Play together and take your time.

Make It Inclusive!

Use larger markers or stickers.
- Let your child point, name, show, or use a communication device to identify items.
- Adjust the items to match your child's interests, abilities, and family traditions.
- Keep it simple and fun—there's no right or wrong way to participate!

Family Outing Planner

Use this simple planner to get ready for your family's next outing this season.

Before You Go

- Explain where you are going and what to expect.
- Check the event details (quiet hours, accessibility, sensory-friendly options).
- Bring communication tools and preferred comfort items.
- Pack necessary supplies (snacks, medications, change of clothes, etc.).
- Agree on a way to request a break.
- Respect “no,” including when your child does not want a hug, photo, or new food.

Outing Ideas

Library Visit
Look for quiet story times or sensory-friendly programs.
Museum or Rec Center
Ask about accessible entrances, seating, and a place to take a break.
Nature Walk
Choose a clear, accessible route and keep it brief in cold weather.
Light Display
Try a short walk, roll, or drive to see steady lights. Choose a quieter time and bring comfort items.

WVPTI Resources for Your Family

Training & Workshops
Learn about upcoming trainings for parents, caregivers, and youth.
Family Support
Get one-on-one support and information.
Fact Sheets & Guides
Explore helpful resources on a variety of topics.
Contact Us
Have a question? We're here to help!
Visit wvpti-inc.org for more information.

Seasonal Reminders

Take Breaks
Give time for rest during busy activities and gatherings.
Keep it Comfortable
Familiar foods and a cozy space can help your child feel more at ease.
Different Looks Different
Holidays look different in every home. Invite your child to choose what feels enjoyable.

Thank You!

Thank you to all the families, school partners, and supporters who make our work possible. Your dedication helps create stronger, more inclusive communities across West Virginia.

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