

# SOCIAL COMMUNICATION TEAM NEWSLETTER

WINTER EDITION 2023

Welcome to our Seasonal Newsletter, for children known to the Social Communication Team

## Sensory differences in winter

Winter impacts the way we live in lots of small ways, but for children with sensory differences, these small changes can have a big impact.

In winter, the weather is colder, afternoons are darker and festive lights fill the city. There are changes to food and drink as seasonal options become available. Places such as shops and winter events may be louder and busier at this time.



Clothes also change during this time as we wear more layers of warmer fabrics. Some children may find layers uncomfortable or they may feel cold despite being wrapped up. They may find certain fabrics scratchy or distracting. Some children find they actually really love wearing outdoor clothing, and want to keep them on indoors!



**Is your child experiencing sensory differences? Look at their environment and see if small changes can be made to support them.**

Can you offer choices with clothing? Are there quieter areas where your child can take a break?

For more advice around understanding and supporting children's sensory needs, visit our webpage: [Sensory Needs \(whittington.nhs.uk\)](https://www.whittington.nhs.uk/sensory-needs)

## Waiting for your child's assessment?

We understand how frustrating it is to wait. However, there are many strategies which can help all children, whether or not they have received a diagnosis.

**Using strategies early will not impact the outcome of your child's assessment.**



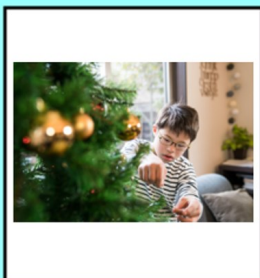


## Changes during winter:

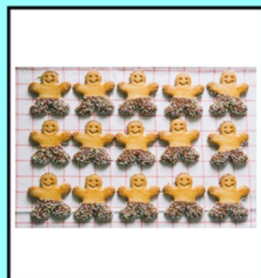
There are many changes during this period which can be unpredictable, unsettling and place greater social expectations on children. These can include changes to the school schedule such as Christmas dinners and performances. Some families may have gatherings during this period or attend winter activities. There may be changes to the environment such as festive decorations and lights. They may find events which involve fireworks unpredictable and loud.

**Tip: prepare your child for any changes in advance where possible**

Prepare your child for any new situations or changes to their routine by showing them what will happen next, using visuals such as pictures or objects to help them understand.



now



next

More visual ideas can be found here:  
[Supporting understanding \(whittington.nhs.uk\)](http://whittington.nhs.uk)

Ask your child's nursery/school if there are any changes to the timetable which you can help your child prepare for.

For more advice on preparing your child for change, visit: [A guide for all audiences \(autism.org.uk\)](http://autism.org.uk)



## Websites:

Advice on these websites can support those who are still waiting for their assessments as well as children who have received a diagnosis.

You can prepare your child for **any event or religious festival** by helping them understand what to expect and adapting the sensory environment where possible.

**Halloween:** [Halloween tips \(autism.org.uk\)](http://autism.org.uk)

**Fireworks:** [Tips \(autism.org.uk\)](http://autism.org.uk)

**Diwali:** [Simple Strategies for a Sensory-Friendly Diwali Celebration - Sensory Friendly Solutions](http://autism.org.uk)

**Hanukkah:** [Top ways to make Hanukkah autism-friendly - ap-p2vox](http://autism.org.uk)

**Christmas:** [Preparing for Christmas: autism resources](http://autism.org.uk)





## Activities for children:

### All activities in Islington

Find out about free or low cost activities for children on the Islington Council website. You can follow 'Islington Life' on Twitter, Facebook and/or Instagram to keep updated or visit [Things to do | Islington Council](#)

### Bright Start activities for children 0-5

Bright Start run various stay and play groups and activities for young children across Islington. Look out for a group called '**Extra Boost**': A specialist group activity for under 5s with additional needs, who benefit from a quieter space where their individual needs can be met. Click this link to view their current weekly timetable [Bright Start Islington, weekly timetable 2022/23 \(openobjects.com\)](#)



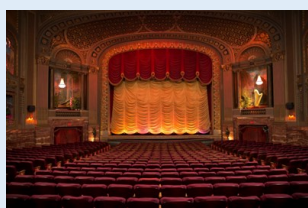
### Relaxed performances

Many cinemas and theatres offer viewings which have been adapted to improve experiences for people with sensory and communication needs, or anyone who would benefit from a more relaxed environment. Adaptions may include changes to sound and lighting during shows. More information can be found here:

**Cinema:** National Autism Friendly Cinema Screenings | Dimensions ([dimensions-uk.org](#)))

**Theatre:** Home - Go Live Theatre Projects

**Pantomimes:** Relaxed Performances | Pantomimes | ATG Tickets



## Important date:

### Applying for schools 2024

Applications for school places must be made online by **15<sup>th</sup> January 2024**. Visit this website to complete an application: [Guide Section | Islington Council](#).

For help filling in this application, call 020 7527 5515.



## Services in Islington:

### Islington Family Information Service (FIS)

For information and advice about free early learning and childcare, activities and support services for families with children 0-25, contact: 020 7527 5959; [fis@islington.gov.uk](mailto:fis@islington.gov.uk)

**Bright Start** is a service for children under 5 and their families. They run activities across Islington which include stay and play sessions and parent groups. Further information can be found on their website: <https://www.islington.gov.uk/children-and-families/bright-start-islington-start-for-life-and-family-hubs>

**Growing Together:** is a service for families in Islington. They run various free workshops which can be booked via eventbrite (e.g., calmer nights sleep workshops) here: [Growing Together Events | Eventbrite](#)

**SENDIAS** provide SEND advice for parents and carers. They run parent groups including "RELAX it's Friday" on the last Friday of every month: [islingtonsend@family-action.org.uk](mailto:islingtonsend@family-action.org.uk)

