skills on the hill pediatric therapy

Sensory-Friendly Holiday Survival Guide

Helping sensitive kids enjoy big gatherings

Holidays bring bright lights, loud rooms, new foods, itchy clothes, and broken routines - a lot for a sensitive nervous system. A little planning helps your child (and you) actually enjoy the day.

NOTICE	TRY	BUILD	CONNECT	GROW

Before the event

Preview what will happen with photos or a simple social story

Helpful idea

Keep sleep and meals on schedule; pack comfort items; plan an exit

Dress for comfort

Soft, tagless clothes and removable layers

Let them help pick; skip the scratchy "special outfit" if it causes distress

Build in breaks

Designate a quiet room; offer headphones; step outside

Use heavy work (carry, push, jump) to reset

Food without the fight

Bring a safe food; don't push new foods at a big event; keep pressure low

Set expectations - yours and theirs

Tell relatives the plan; allow "hello" without hugs

Celebrate small wins and lower the bar for a "successful" day

Parent tip: Start small. Pick one idea that fits your family, practice it consistently, and build from there.