



Dear GAN Members,

The Board of Directors and I thank you for your continuing support of our efforts to promote awareness and understanding of autism and to enhance the resources essential to community responsiveness. As GAN begins its 11th year, our 2 websites, www.ganinfo.org and www.faninfo.org enable us to share projects, resources and information with thousands of families world-wide.

Our innovative Socials for Adults with Autism and Caregivers that we co-sponsor with local universities have enabled hundreds of families to network and develop new friendships. Student volunteers have become lifetime advocates for our community when they observed how autism impacts 3 generations in families. We encourage other communities to sponsor Socials and we share [tools online](#) about how to replicate events cost-free in other areas.

Please continue to support our outreach and new lifetime resources for families. We send our best wishes for safe and wonderful holidays and good health and happiness in the New Year.

Warmest regards,

Bonnie Gillman
Executive Director

P.S.

If you receive duplicates, things you will never use or you just want to make room for new gifts, donate your "extras" to GAN.... You can get a lot of things into a flat rate box from the post office and you will receive a tax-deductible form to complete with the value you estimate for your contributions. It's that easy! [Please see the attached flyer for details.](#)

Holiday Tips

Prevent Some Anxieties

- Holidays can be stressful and over-stimulating for anyone, but particularly so for children with autism. Prepare your family members, in advance, that some holiday traditions may need to be modified to accommodate to your grandchild's needs. Ask them, and especially the other children who will be there, to be inclusive. Here are some helpful strategies to lessen your grandchild's anxiety and increase your family's enjoyment of the holiday season.
- Create a visual story - using a series of photographs, pictures or drawings before each holiday can help your grandchild prepare ahead for planned activities. Place the items in order so he can anticipate what will happen after each activity.
- Practice sitting at the table with the plates, napkins, lighting and music before the holiday gathering. Prepare your grandchild for shaking hands and other social expectations.
- Share holiday foods in advance to determine what your grandchild does or does not like. Help him to become more comfortable with the food selection.
- If you know your grandchild prefers different foods, prepare his favorites and bring them to where you will be dining with the family.



Decorating Tips

- Take your grandchild to a small holiday-themed store so they can look at lights prior to setting up a Christmas tree.
- Decorate in gradual stages, rather than changing everything at once. If possible, allow your grandchild to interact with the decorations and help put them in place.
- Are they attracted to the lights? Do they have an aversion to the lights or musical decorations? If so, substitute ribbons, paper chains or other festive touches.
- Is your grandchild allergic to pine or does he like to pull pine needles off the tree and eat them? Consider an alternative, like an artificial Christmas tree or place a small real one on a high table, out of reach.
- Do you have glass ornaments and is your grandchild safe with these? If not, consider only plastic ornaments



Prepare a Respite Area

- Prepare a quiet area space for your grandchild to decompress if they become overwhelmed by the sensory stimulation.
- Your grandchild may not like loud noises, so take him outside to play or have the other children play games in another room.
- Prepare alternative activities for your grandchild, especially if you know they have an aversion to a holiday tradition, like watching football on TV.
- If your grandchild is very active take them to the park or another place where they can freely move to help them calm down.

Day of the Event

- If you are going to another home, take your grandchild's favorite foods, music, games and snacks with you.
- Consider scheduling an early dinner or eating in advance prior to the other guests arriving.
- Reward your grandchild throughout the event and reinforce positive behaviors. *Always* tell his parents how much you admire their parenting skills. They need your compliments even more!

Gift Giving

- If your grandchild doesn't have fine motor skills, practice opening gifts. For example, have your grandchild wrap little fun objects and open them.
- Put pictures of the gift giver instead of names on the gifts because your grandchild might not recognize everyone's names.
- Avoid using cellophane and other noisy wrappings.
- If you put gifts under the Christmas tree, prepare well ahead of time by teaching that gifts are not to be opened without the family there. Wait until just before the holiday to set out gifts, especially large tempting ones.
- Do not display disappointment if your grandchild initially rejects or seems not to like his/her gifts. Sometimes they need time to engage with the gift later.

[Gift Ideas for Teens and Adults](#)

[More Gift Giving Tips](#)

[Gifts That a Child with Autism Gave Me](#)

[Holiday Gift Resources for Special Kids](#)

["Priceless" Gift Suggestions for the Holidays and for all Occasions](#)

[Gift Suggestions for Any Budget](#)



Holiday App Fun

Talking Reindeer

Christmas Coloring Book

Speak into the phone and Talking Reindeer will talk back to you. Change his voice in settings and you can go super low or squeaky high!



The best Christmas coloring book app in the App-store with 81 adorable holiday coloring pages Inside.



Super Dreidel

As seen in the NY Times, Macworld, and the Jewish Journal. The only dreidel app with full gameplay and animation for 2-8 players, 2 new fast pace versions, and the dreidel song.

Hanukkah Coloring Book

A Hanukkah edition of popular children's app 123 Color, which has been featured in The New York Times, in iPhone Life Magazine. |



Ebay Donations

Donate to GAN's [Giving Works eBay Store](#)



Grandparents have lots of "stuff" like collectibles, unused gifts and household goods, clothing, vintage jewelry and things in good condition that our families "do not want."

Your "stuff" can benefit other grandparents and families affected by autism. The Grandparent Autism Network welcomes donated goods.

You can drop off tax deductible items at Jay's Catering, 10581 Garden Grove Blvd., Garden Grove, CA - or send them C/O GAN at 23785 El Toro Road, #103, Lake Forest, CA 92630 (USPS flat rate boxes may lower mailing costs!)

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www.ganinfo.org
www.faninfo.org

Networking together,
grandparents are a vital
resource for autism...
and each other!