

# Family Workshop #1: Preparing our young people for special events

In February a group of Discovery parents and carers met to discuss all things Christmas, birthdays, holidays and family gatherings. They shared stories, laughter and lots of advice.

## The Key Challenges

Managing emotions when children become **too excited**.

A **lack of understanding** from members of the public.

Unsupportive family and friends; feeling of shame and blame. "Why can't they just..." or "**Have you tried...?**"

Children becoming **overwhelmed** and withdrawn.

Feeling like your child is expected to be doing things because they 'should' or 'its normal'.

**Fear of getting it wrong** or becoming tired of having to make a big decision over what seem like small things to other people.



## Hints, tips and resources



**Really listen** to your child; let them help build the plan e.g. when will we leave? What will we take with us?

Remain **child focused**; you will know when your child is ready to leave an event, never be worried what people will think

**Prepare well**; pictures on websites, videos on Youtube (do this regularly in the lead up to an event)

When visiting a restaurant **make enquires** about the menu before you arrive, ask if they have a quiet area or break out space. Often places want to help, you just have to ask. Some families recommended letting people know in advance that you are bringing a child with needs and outlining any simple accommodations. Quote: "Be polite, worse they can do is say no!"

Have a 'get to know me sheet' for family and friends who struggle to connect with and understand your child (example below)

A backpack of toys, books, fiddles and snacks is a must. An 'on the go safe space'.



# Things to Google ...

**SNIPS (Special needs inclusion play care service)**

Families said this has been a key part in expanding their child's access to community events and clubs.

**A Hospital Passport**

This is a service available via the Outpatients Department. A document that summarises a SEND child's needs so that any medical professional working with your child has the information they need.

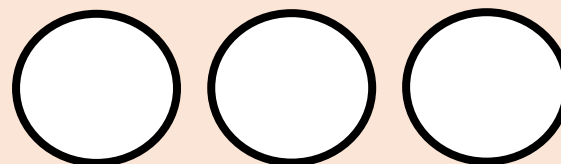
**The sunflower lanyard**

An increasingly well known symbol worn by people with invisible disabilities to make the public aware of a need for additional support.

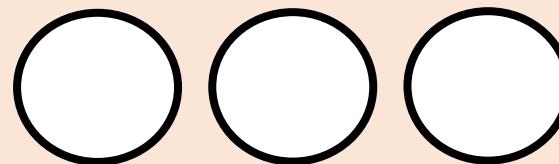
*"Some things won't work straight away, and some things will work and then stop working, keep going because you always know what is right for you child."*

## Getting to know me...

**Ask me about...**



**When I am happy I tend to...**



**If I start to...**

**You could...**

*Filling this in with your child before visiting family and sending it alongside some recent achievements is a great way of sharing positive expectations for their interaction with your child. (If you would like a copy to be sent home, just drop us a message)*

A special thank you to the parents and carers that took part in the workshop.

Next time our focus will be on how to prepare our young people for the questions, feelings and changes of puberty!