

□ Build Your Own “Family FAQ” Sheet

A Custom Cheat Sheet to Help Relatives Support Your Neurodivergent Child

□ Why This Exists

You shouldn't have to re-explain your child's needs every single time there's a family dinner, holiday, or visit. And your child shouldn't have to suffer just because Uncle Joe doesn't "get it."

This guide helps you build a one-page, personalized FAQ sheet that gives relatives:

- Clear, loving language about what your child needs
- A heads-up on what to expect (and what *not* to do)
- A way to feel useful and involved without overstepping

It's perfect for:

- Holidays and big family gatherings
- Sleepovers and weekends at Grandma's
- Drop-offs, longer stays, or shared caregiving setups

It makes your child safer, your family more supportive, and *you* less exhausted.

□ Quick Note Before You Begin:

Some people may not respond well to this guide. You may face pushback, eye-rolls, or subtle resistance. That doesn't mean you're doing it wrong. It means you're *disrupting comfort with clarity*.

If someone refuses to engage or says, "This is too much," you have options:

- **Stand firm:** "This isn't optional for my child's safety and comfort."
- **Redirect:** "If you're not sure what to do, just ask instead of guessing."
- **Set boundaries:** "If this doesn't feel like something you can respect, we'll have to make other arrangements."

Not everyone will show up for your child the way you hope. That's not your failure — it's their choice.

But the ones who *do* show up? They'll become part of something sacred: a world where your child is accepted, understood, and protected. That's who this sheet is really for.

□ How to Use This

Below is a template. Fill it in, tweak it, or rewrite it in your voice.

Then:

- Send it by email or text before events
- Print it out and stick it on the fridge at Grandma's
- Hand it to anyone who helps care for your child

“Getting to Know [Your Child’s Name]”: A Family Guide

□ About [Child’s Name]

Hi! I wanted to give you a little insight into what helps [Child’s Name] feel safe, happy, and understood.

[He/She/They] is [age] years old and is [autistic / neurodivergent / working on some support goals / insert your language].

This sheet isn't about rules — it's about helping [them] feel safe and seen. We'd love your support.

□ Things That *Help* [Child’s Name]

- Having a quiet space to go when overwhelmed
- People giving them space to warm up before talking
- Being offered choices instead of being told what to do
- Knowing what's happening next (visuals, countdowns, etc.)
- A consistent routine (especially for sleep and meals)

More personalized:

[He loves when people get down to his level when speaking.]
[She feels safe when she can carry her fidget or chew toy.]

□ Things That *Might Be Hard* or Overwhelming

- Loud voices or sudden noises

- Big groups or crowded rooms
- Being touched or hugged without warning
- Unfamiliar foods or smells
- Being told to “say hi” or “give a hug” on command

More personalized:

[He might flap, pace, or cover his ears when overstimulated.]
 [She might not respond when spoken to — that's okay.]

□ If [Child's Name] Is Upset or Melting Down

- Please stay calm — your energy matters
- Give [him/her/them] space, don't crowd or touch unless they ask
- Offer a quiet activity or a known comfort item
- Say things like: “It's okay to feel big feelings. I'm here.”

DO NOT: yell, threaten, shame, or punish

□ What Not to Say or Do

- Don't say “You're fine” or “Stop being dramatic”
- Don't try to force eye contact, hugs, or verbal responses
- Don't discipline like you would a neurotypical kid
- Don't say things like “I don't see autism” or “He just needs structure”

If you're unsure, just ask: “What would help right now?”

□ How You Can Support Us

- Respect our boundaries around time, noise, and routine
- Ask questions instead of making assumptions
- Let us leave early if needed — no guilt trips
- Celebrate progress even if it doesn't look like typical milestones

“Thanks for loving our kid exactly as they are.”

This isn't meant to control. It's meant to *connect*.
Thanks for being part of our village.

Cheers!
Alex