



ACCEPTING THE SPECTRUM

A monthly newsletter sharing information and support for families, caregivers, and friends of children on the Autism Spectrum.

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SUMMER TIME

As school ends Summer vacation begins, and for some children on the spectrum, the change in season and routine can be challenging.

Summer vacation, water tables, fireworks, and beach days...with so many fun opportunities comes a gentle reminder that some autistic children may struggle with the change to their routines such as new free time or visiting crowded places. To help your family enjoy the Sunny season consider your child's strengths and challenges. Most children on the spectrum thrive with routine, and preparing them and your family for activities can help lower anxiety around when events will happen and what to expect.

Opportunities for Summer Changes and Skill Building

Many children on the spectrum struggle with rigidity and/or flexible thinking. They may need help understanding and adapting to changes in what they're doing such as transitioning to a less preferred activity or tolerating a change in their environment.

- Try to keep things **clear and predictable** including rules and routines.
- Use **visual schedules** to increase your child's independence and decrease anxiety around when events/tasks will happen.
- **Give warnings** with consistent and simple language eg: "It's almost time to go inside and wash hands for lunch!" **Set a timer** to show time passing.
- Allow a **favorite toy or show** at meal times at the table or during transitions to less preferred actions such as getting in the car.
- **Help your child focus** on what's next rather than what they're leaving eg: "It's time for dinner and iPad! What movie are you going to watch on iPad?!"

SENSORY NEEDS TO CONSIDER FOR OUTINGS:

Noise - Bring headphones for noise sensitive kiddos
Visual - Take breaks away from brightly lit areas for light sensitive kiddos
Smell - Take breaks away from crowded areas/restaurants and fragranced stores
Touch/Taste - Consider sensitivity to touch or materials that may be uncomfortable for your child

Tips for Summer Outings

Have a Plan A and a Plan B

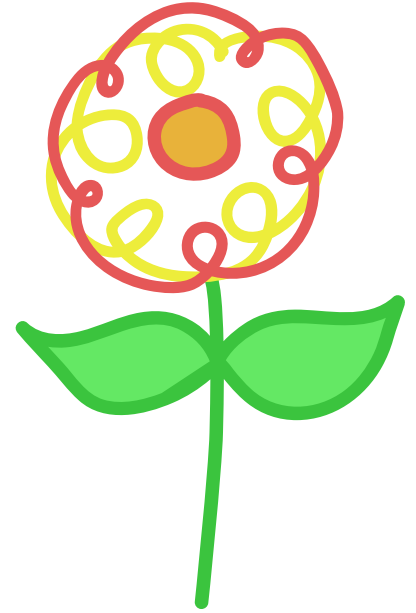
- Be Flexible on where and when you bring your child places
- Plan alternate activities for your other children for if issues arise

Plan for Needs and Challenges

- Pack favorite snacks and small toys in a to-go bag to bring with you on outings to the park, store, etc.
- Consider a travel "calm kit" equipped with favorite items and a timer to help kiddos cope if they feel overwhelmed

Social Stories for New Places and Concepts

- Discuss vacations or new concepts for your child with your supervisor to identify how a social story or other visuals could help prepare them
- Use visual tools such as Social Stories or videos to help prepare your child for where they are going and what they can expect



National Autistic Society presents the world of "Too much Information"

This virtual reality video was created by Autistic adults and children to give you insight on how they can experience the outside world. Sometimes, Autistic people can feel overwhelmed by everything around them. Sights, sounds, smells, and stares from strangers can make a simple shopping trip a challenge for people on the spectrum and their families.

Notes from the Author:

Families currently receiving services are encouraged to discuss the contents of this newsletter with their supervisor for further support on planning and interventions. If you or someone you know is in need of ABA services, Evaluations for Autism, Parent Training and Support, or Consultations then please contact our team for further information on appointments and services:

Collaborative ABA Services LLC
515 Centerpoint Drive Suite 205, Middletown, CT 06457
P. 860-421-4052

*For emergency crisis support parents, children, and teens can contact 2-1-1 and an appropriate mobile crisis team from your area will be dispatched to your location for support.