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Autism Agenda



Linn Benton Lincoln ESD-Cascade Regional Autism Program

10 Fun Summer DIY Sensory Games for Kids

As the temperature rises and kids head home for the summer, parents begin looking for activities to fill the days. Here are 10 projects that incorporate new textures, colors, smells and sounds that will give your children a great new sensory experience and help improve motor skills!

For even more sensory play ideas, check out our [Pinterest boards!](#)

Note: Autism Speaks does not endorse any of these activities, we are simply sharing recommendations from our community. Before taking part in any activity, please make sure all materials are safe for your child. If you have any other suggestions, feel free to share below! Happy playing!

10) COLORED BEANS

The secret to these brightly-colored beans? A mix of regular food coloring and neon food coloring!



9) RAINBOW ICE EXCAVATION

This mom got THREE DAYS of play time out of this ice tower!

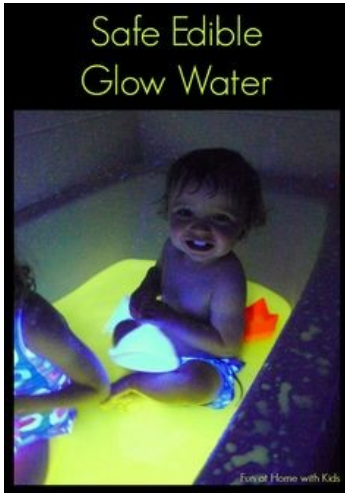
8) POLKA DOT SLIME

You only need 3 items to make this fabulous, fun slime!



Continued on page 2.

SUMMER DIY GAMES CONTINUED...



7) "GLOWING" WATER

This "glowing" water is actually made out of ground-up vitamin pills and glows under a black light!



6) SPIDER WEB WALK

This fun game involves balancing on a "web" while gathering letter tiles to spell words.

5) ZIPPER BOARD

A simple to make board that will provide hours of entertainment for young ones!



4) BALLOON PAINT STAMPING

[This site](#) actually includes 30 interesting methods to stamp paint: from using fruit and veggies, to water balloons, to toilet paper rolls!



Continued page 3.

SUMMER DIY GAMES CONTINUED...

3) MAGIC FOAMING SNOWMAN

This is the perfect activity for a hot, summer day!



Magic Foaming Snowman



Fun at Home with Kids



POOL NOODLE BOATS WATER SENSORY BIN



frogandsnailsandpuppydogmama.com

2) POOL NOODLE BOATS

These are perfect for bath time!



Fun at Home with Kids



Fun at Home with Kids



Fun at Home with Kids

1) RAINBOW SOAP FOAM

Just add toy cars, and it's a rainbow car wash!

All instructions and links can be found on the following site:

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/blog/2015/06/11/10-fun-summer-diy-sensory-games-kids>

WATER SAFETY: THE ULTIMATE LIFE SKILL

By Jim Ball, EdD, BCBA-D

Autism Asperger's Digest | July/August 2010 issue

The summer season is starting, complete with vacations, barbeques, parties and trips. It's also the time to keep cognizant of the one thing most kids on the autism spectrum love... water! Water play, water activities, water fun – it can all be a great experience for our kids, but it can also be a constant reminder to those of us who are responsible for them (as parents, educators, or service providers) of how vulnerable these kids are and how dangerous this “fun” can be. It is up to us to make sure that, regardless where our kids fall on the spectrum, they are taught appropriate skills to enjoy and more importantly, survive around water.

According to the National Autism Association, drowning is the #1 cause of injury-related deaths in children with an autism spectrum disorder. In 2005, 14 children with ASD died from drowning, when these children wandered off and were attracted to the water. Children with ASD do not fear “death” the way we do. At early ages, they do not understand the finality of death nor are they afraid of those things that could cause death, like water.

We know:

- Kids drown without a sound.
- It takes approximately one inch of water to drown in – a frightening statistic.
- 90% of drowning deaths occur while the child is being supervised.



Therefore, it is critical that right from the very beginning when our kids are young, we teach them water safety and how to swim. Learning this lesson too late can be tragic and heartbreaking, as the following story illustrates.

I had the great fortune of attending a fundraising event for the Autism Society in Jacksonville, Florida several years ago. During the event I met the most wonderful woman, a grandmother of a child on the spectrum. We spent several hours discussing many topics, including her grandson, about whom she had written a children's book. And here is where the story sinks. Her book was about teaching kids to seek out help in emergency situations, and it was based on her own personal experience. One day her son was outside watching his children play; one was on the spectrum. He was distracted for no longer than one minute and when he turned back to them the kids were gone. A frantic search ensued, ending in catastrophe; his son had drowned in the nearby shallow stream. The other two children had panicked and just ran away. The courage this grandmother had to turn their family's loss into an education for others was commendable. For me it highlighted yet again the importance of water safety and the need to make it a priority for our spectrum kids.

Teaching Water Safety and Swimming

Sensory Issues

A significant proportion of kids with an ASD have sensory issues, which complicates how we teach them to swim. The old-fashioned way our parents did it (throw you in and see what happens) just doesn't float. (Yup, that's what my father did, and I'm lucky I made it!) Kids with an ASD may need to ease into the pool and get used to the water before they are able to enjoy the experience enough for concrete lessons to start. Others may love the pressure they get from the water and just jump right in, not cognizant of drowning as a danger. It's important we make the experience enjoyable from the start. From there you can teach them what they need to do once in the water.

Teach Swimming

The same teaching strategies that make kids with an ASD successful in the classroom will also make the child a successful swimmer.

- Minimal Distractions

Make every attempt to minimize distraction while the child is in the water. If there are a lot of people in the pool turn the child around, so she can't see what is going on at the other end of the pool. Also, pool areas echo, so be prepared if the child has any vocal “stims” and try to redirect the child back to the swimming. Or schedule lessons on off times, when less people are present, or if needed, do private lessons.

Continued on page 4

WATER SAFETY CONTINUED...

– Use of Visuals

Use pictures to show the child the steps involved in swimming. Combining the visual with your explanation will give him multiple ways of understanding the sequence of steps and your expectations. Laminate the pictures and bring them in the pool. You may also want to show the child a video of swimming prior to getting in the pool. Video modeling is a great way to teach new skills. If you can't find a pre-packaged teaching video, create one of your own using a neurotypical sibling or friend as the "actor."

– Consistency

Whatever approach you decide to use (there are tons of examples on the web) make sure you use it consistently every time. Spectrum children learn through repetition, and lots of it!

– Task Analyze

Break down the steps to swimming and teach each one until the child can do the skill with little or no guidance. Do not overwhelm the child with too much information all at one time. Just putting his face in the water may be a huge accomplishment in and of itself!

Teach Water Safety

Swimming and water safety are not synonymous. They are different skills and should be addressed differently. All children, whether or not they ever want to put their little toe in the water, should be taught water safety skills. And the #1 rule is this: unless an adult is present the child should never go into any body of water, be it a kiddie or adult pool, a fountain, a stream, a pond or lake, or the ocean. They need to be taught this very specifically and concretely.

The more able child: Many children on the autism spectrum are highly rule driven (sometimes to a fault). In this instance it is a great thing! Make specific rules around water.

– You do not go near water without an adult with you. You may even make it more specific, adding distance to the water, how near the adult should be (i.e., an arm's length away, in visual sight, holding your hand, etc.) and/or citing specific people, like Mommy/Daddy/Grandpa).

After the rule is established, *practice it*. Don't assume the rule on paper makes complete sense to the child in a real life situation. Take the child around water and see what happens. You *want* to know if there are loopholes in your thinking and make necessary adjustments in your teaching. Each time the child follows the rule, heap on the praise and reinforcement.

The less able child: We still use rules for the less able child, but we may break them down more concretely and use more visuals to teach them. For instance, the rule might be something like this: "You do not go into the water without a familiar adult holding your hand." Have the child take your hand, walk to the pool and jump in with you. Every other time the child is around a stream, pool of any sort, lake or ocean, have her take your hand, walk to the water and go in together. Again, reinforce the child when he follows the rule and does what is expected.

Water is an awesome sensory experience for children with an ASD. It can foster language, social skills, and fine/gross motor development. It can also be a place where tragedy can strike at any moment. Remember, enjoy the water, but also respect it. Teach your child what to do around water and how to be safe. Then go out and have a wonderful summer!

Find more information about swim instruction at one of these websites.

American Red Cross. www.redcross.org

NCPAD Swimming Resource. www.ncpad.org/videos/fact_sheet.php?sheet=315&view=all

Swim Lessons.com. www.swimlessons.com

YMCA. www.ymca.net/programs



Researchers at the University of Oregon need your help to learn more about the ways kids and teens think and interact with others.

Eligible participants will:

- [illegible]



Permission from a parent (biological or adoptive) or legal guardian is required for participation.

If you or your child has a professional diagnosis of autism, OHSU (Oregon Health & Science University) and [Partner] invites you to learn more about SPARK, a new online research study sponsored by the Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative. The mission of SPARK is clear: speed up research and advance understanding of autism by creating the nation's largest autism study. Joining SPARK is simple – register online and provide a DNA sample via a saliva collection kit in the comfort of your own home. Register in person at OHSU by contacting us at SPARK@ohsu.edu, 503-974-OHSU (6478) or visiting www.SPARKforAutism.org/OHSU. Together, we can help spark a better future for all individuals and families affected by autism.

82 Summer Activities for Families with Special Needs

Between June and September my kids have 82 days of summer vacation, and I've promised them something fun every single day. That means I need 82 fun summer activities for one child with a developmental disability and one child who refuses to participate in most activities. It'll be a piece of cake, right?

Borrowing the weekday "Summer Schedule For Kids" at somerwhatsimple.com, scouring the internet for more ideas and adding some of my own activities, here are 82 days of summer fun and learning:

SAFETY SUNDAY

1. Teach your child his or her full name.
2. Teach your child your full name.
3. Have your child memorize your home address – show where the house number is located outside and show where the street name.
4. Have your child memorize your phone number. Practice reciting key information.
5. Learn how to cross the street safely.
6. Practice an escape route in case of fire.
7. Practice saying "no:" make it a game in which you take turns asking each other to do increasingly absurd things.
8. Play hide-and-go-seek to teach your child how to remain calm while looking for you.
9. Teach your child the buddy system.
10. Teach your child what an emergency is and how to call 911.
11. Practice asking for help with things that are hot, sharp, dangerous or too high to reach.
12. Start swimming lessons.



MAKE SOMETHING MONDAY

13. Arrange 5 or 6 photos to make a poster or scrapbook page.
14. Sweetened condensed milk makes a beautiful, edible fingerpaint.
15. Plant a seedling outdoors.
16. Dig for worms – it's a great exercise for fine motor skills and tactile defensiveness. Re-home the worms next to that seedling you planted.
17. [Bubble snakes](#).
18. Make a leaf scrapbook.
19. Color the sidewalk with chalk. Wash it all away with water.
20. Paint using different types of paintbrushes: a fly swatter, a flower, a cotton swab, a sponge, a leaf, etc.
21. Build an obstacle course with hula hoops, lawn furniture and empty boxes.
22. Tie-dye some t-shirts.
23. Make a magic wand using all available materials.
24. Build a "fairy house" outdoors with sticks, pebbles, pine cones, bark, leaves and other natural materials found outdoors.

TIME TO READ TUESDAY

25. Sign up for your local library's summer reading program.
26. Read a book under a tree.
27. Read all but the last page of a storybook and ask your children to suggest an ending.
28. Have your child dictate and illustrate a story, and read it together. It's OK if the story is 1 or 2 sentences long.
29. Make a home video of your child reading a story aloud, or of you reading aloud to your child.
30. After you finish reading a book such as *The Lorax*, go see the movie.
31. Read some books on a specific topic, such as insects, then do a related activity such as a bug hunt or catching fireflies.
32. Have your child create a summer schedule for the family and read off the schedule every morning.
33. Check out a book of simple science experiments and try some of them at home.
34. Check out a book about a historical figure and play dress-up at home.
35. Have your child write out a checklist for a scavenger hunt, and find everything on the list together.
36. Swap favorite books with your friends.

Continued on page 8.

SUMMER ACTIVITIES CONTINUED....

WHAT'S COOKING? WEDNESDAY

37. Fruit smoothies in the blender.
38. No-bake oatmeal cookies on the stove.
39. Pizza.
40. Spinach-artichoke dip in the blender.
41. Banana muffins.
42. Roll-up sandwiches.
43. Fruit kebabs.
44. Chicken soup in the crock-pot (plug it in on the porch so that it doesn't heat up the house).
45. Roasted marshmallows.
46. Scrambled eggs and pancakes for dinner.
47. Lemonade from scratch.
48. Guacamole.

THOUGHTFUL THURSDAY

49. Wash the car together. No driveway and no car? Then wash the toy cars.
50. Call someone just to say hello.
51. Pick some flowers (dandelions and clovers are OK) and give the bouquet to someone who isn't expecting them.
52. Write a top ten list of a person's best attributes and give the list as a gift to that person.
53. Write a thank-you letter to someone and mail it.
54. Donate clothing, books and toys to charity.
55. Teach your child to do one chore.
56. Give someone a homemade art project.
57. Volunteer at a food bank.
58. Collect bottles and cans, and donate the money to charity.
59. Pray for someone who needs a prayer.
60. Hug someone who needs a hug.

SOMEWHERE FUN FRIDAY

61. Petting farm or petting zoo.
62. A playground in a different neighborhood.
63. An art museum – check first to see when general admission is free!
64. The beach.
65. Pick fresh fruit at a local farm or visit the farmer's market.
66. Ride a train.
67. Find a carnival or a street fair.
68. Ice cream shop.
69. Waterpark or sprayground.
70. Visit a friend.
71. Nature trail or botanical garden.
72. A skyscraper or another high place with a grand view of the world.



SOCIAL SKILLS SATURDAY

73. Tell a story from your own childhood. Have your child tell a related story from his or her life experience – yes, even if your child is nonverbal.
74. Lie in the grass and take turns looking for shapes or pictures in the clouds.
75. Go around and ask every family member at home the same silly question, and share the answers.
76. Look at some old family photos and name all the people in them.
77. Practice making emotional facial expressions on cue with your child: neutral, happy, sad, fearful, angry, disgusted, surprised. Take turns and make it fun.
78. Practice listening skills by responding only with nonverbal communication for 1 to 5 minutes – then switch roles.
79. Be someone's mirror: imitate a person's actions as if you are that person's reflection in a mirror for 1 minute. Then switch roles.
80. Play Follow the Leader. Match the leader's pace for as long as possible, then let a new leader take over.
81. Play the statue game: one person freezes like a statue and the other person has to make the statue laugh. Take turns.
82. Develop family traditions: sing a song together, recite a poem, say a prayer that has special meaning to your family.

COPE WITH SUMMER'S RELAXED SCHEDULE

Five ways to help your child with autism cope with summer's relaxed schedule

By: Mari-Jane Williams

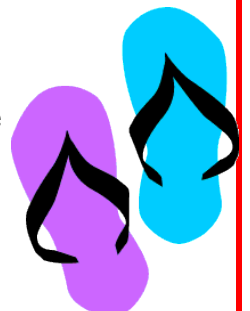
Summer. Those precious sun-soaked, school-free weeks are, to most kids, a nectar. And let's face it: We parents don't mind the lighter load that comes with no homework or after-school activities. But that same relaxed schedule can be a challenge for children with autism and their parents.

Those kids often rely on—and thrive in—the structured environment that the school year provides. At least five days a week, they know exactly what is going to happen, and when, for the most part. That helps them make sense of a world that can be overwhelming with its constant barrage of sounds, smells and transitions.

"If you think about what autism is, there are two main areas of difficulty," said Lauren Kenworthy, the director of the Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders at Children's National Medical Center in the District. "One is around social interactions, and the other is around a strong need for repetition and stability and sameness. They tend to get a lot of that from school, where they have the same schedule each day."

I recently spoke with Kenworthy by phone and she offered ways for parents to help their child with autism learn to cope better when things are more fluid or don't go as expected. Here are her suggestions:

- Use a calendar to label "typical" summer days, weekends, vacations and holidays. Then create a "typical day" schedule that follows the school schedule as much as possible in terms of lunch time and breaks. It can be very specific if you like, or it can be more vague. Think about the things that will happen every day, Kenworthy said, from brushing teeth to reading for a half an hour, and include those in the schedule to give your child a cue of how to move through the day. Make it very visual so your child can refer to it to get an idea of what is coming up.
- Talk to your child about having a Plan A, but also a Plan B in case things don't work out. For example, if you're planning to go to the pool, tell him that if a storm comes up or the pool is closed, you might do something else, and that is your Plan B. Help your child learn to make contingency plans by talking to him when you have to adjust your own plans. By teaching him that it's not the end of the world when plans change, you can help him learn how to regulate himself before he has a meltdown. "Tell them how you manage unexpected things, how you cope with it when you feel disregulated," Kenworthy said. "Talk out loud, and say 'This isn't what I expected, I'm feeling very upset, I think I need a Plan B.' Kids can really engage with that process, with parents asking for help with their problems. Then the next time you say we need a Plan B, that really means something to the child."
- Avoid developing bad habits. It can be tough to stick to a schedule during the summer, when you just want to relax and let go a little bit, but the more you can keep to a routine for meals and sleep, and continue to limit screen time, the more well-regulated your child is likely to be, Kenworthy said. You know what causes your child to feel overloaded. For some kids, it's a messy house. For others, it's certain kinds of noise. And for still others it can be an unexpected deviation from plans. Maintaining a routine and upholding normal house rules, even in the summer, can help prevent her from reaching her breaking point.
- **Recognize the warnings.** It's important to know the signs that your child is getting overloaded and remove him from challenging situations before a meltdown if possible, Kenworthy said. "Catch them at the rumble, not the rage stage," she said. "Ask yourself what are the warning signs and know what you can help them with. And it sounds strange, but we say don't just do something, stand there. Sometimes the best thing you can do is step back and watch your kid, instead of talking a lot, because that's not going to help."
- Keep things positive, always. With any child, it's more effective to reward good behavior than to punish bad behavior. Kenworthy said parents should try to praise their child four times for every one time they correct something. That can be challenging when your child is really pushing your buttons, but Kenworthy suggests using a pen to mark praises on one of your hands and corrections on the other so you can keep track of how often you're doing each. You can make that praise concrete by using stickers and a reward chart. Give him a star every time he is flexible or completes a task in a timely manner or manages a transition well. Once he gets a certain number of stickers, he earns a treat such as special one-on-one time to play a game with a parent, or choosing the family's dessert.

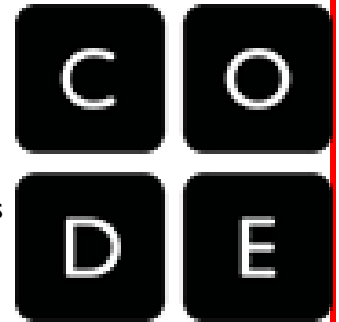


Many individuals who have autism are interested in computers and video games. Amanda Stenberg, one of our LBL-ESD autism consultants, found two websites that educate individuals on how to develop and create computer programs and video games.

<https://code.org/>

Code.org is one of the websites.

Launched in 2013, Code.org® is a non-profit dedicated to expanding access to computer science, and increasing participation by women and underrepresented students of color. Our vision is that every student in every school should have the opportunity to learn computer science. We believe computer science should be part of core curriculum, alongside other courses such as biology, chemistry or algebra.



Every student in every school should have the opportunity to learn computer science



The other website is **Scratch MIT.** <https://scratch.mit.edu/>

Scratch is a programming language and an online community where children can program and share interactive media such as stories, games, and animation with people from all over the world. As children create with Scratch, they learn to think creatively, work collaboratively, and reason systematically. Scratch is designed and maintained by the Lifelong Kindergarten group at the MIT Media Lab.

What is the age range for Scratch?

While Scratch is primarily designed for 8 to 16 year olds, it is also used by people of all ages, including younger children with their parents.

What resources are available for learning Scratch?

If you're just getting started, there's a [step-by-step guide](#) available inside Scratch, or you can download the [Getting Started guide \(PDF\)](#). The [Scratch Cards](#) provide a fun way to learn more. For an overview of Scratch resources, see [Scratch Help](#).

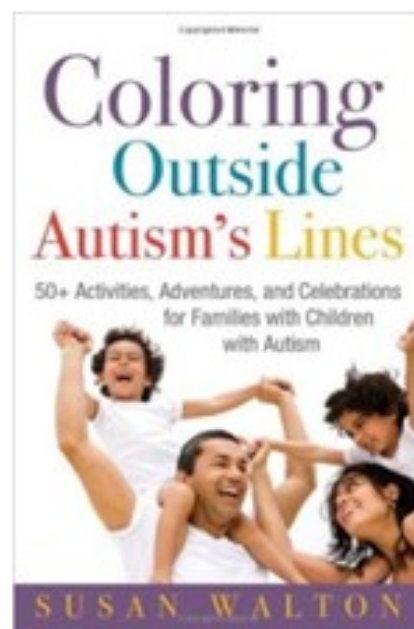
What is the Scratch online community?

When participating in the Scratch online community, members can explore and experiment in an open learning community with other Scratch members from all backgrounds, ages, and interests. Members can share their work, get feedback, and learn from each other.

Coloring Outside Autism's Lines: 50+ Activities, Adventures and Celebrations for Families with Children with Autism

by Susan Walton

Having a child with an autism spectrum disorder may mean that you have to change your life. It can seem as though there are so many things you just can't do. But there are adventures, large and small, that kids with autism love – and they are waiting for your whole family! If you think outside of the ordinary, look for reachable sensory experiences, come prepared, and keep an open mind, then everyone in your family can go along for a great ride. This book is your road map to rediscovering joy, fun and togetherness as a family. It is packed full of exciting ideas, with everything you need to know to make the ideas a reality.



Ideas include:

- Unconventional backyard fun: zip lines, trampolines, tree stumps, and even exercise bikes
- Easy ways to adapt public places such as bowling alleys, ice skating rinks, and swimming pools into stress-free outings
- Surprising activities that can lead to lifelong interests
- Dreaming big: there's a world of amusement parks, water slides, camping, and other family getaways that are truly within reach
- Special activities for grandparents and extended family members

How to team up with other parents to maximize the fun

This resource is packed with tips and advice from dozens of creative families who have found fun with autism and want you to do the same!





Expert Speaks!



*Family Services interviewed autism expert Lisa Jo Rudy about her new book **Get Out, Explore, and Have Fun! How Families of Children with Autism or Asperger Syndrome Can Get the Most out of Community Activities**, published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.*



WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO WRITE THIS BOOK?

My husband and I have always worked in the non-profit world – the world of museums and zoos, science, art, theater and education. We've met people who make their livings building haunted houses, showing the night sky to children, diving under the sea and investigating the mating habits of snails. We've seen kids on and off the autism spectrum (some with significant challenges) join dinosaur digs in Montana, play first clarinet in a regional orchestra, tutor typical peers in a foreign language, show horses, sell their paintings and much more. We've read the extensive research that says people learn in many ways, and express what they know with or without the use of spoken language. We know that getting out, exploring and having fun is not only critically important to full and happy life – it's also a way to build self-discovery, personal growth and bonding into the lives of children and families living with autism. It's time to get out there and make it happen!

YOU ARE GETTING OUT AND EXPLORING AS AN EXTENSION OF LEARNING, AS WELL AS HAVING FUN. HOW DO AUTISTIC CHILDREN LEARN DIFFERENTLY WHEN THEY ARE OUT AND ABOUT? WHAT LESSONS CAN EDUCATORS OF INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS LEARN FROM THE BOOK?

When kids are in school, they are taught with words, tested with words, and judged on their ability to use words successfully. The problem, of course, is that kids with autism by definition have a difficult time with both making sense of and expressing themselves with words.

Fortunately, there are many, many other ways to teach, learn, and show others your abilities. You can use your eyes, ears and hands. You can sing, play music, paint or swim. You can build a model castle, create a computer program, or ride a horse. Unfortunately, schools very rarely take advantage of the million and one non-verbal techniques for teaching or learning – and of course standardized tests make it even tougher.

My hope is that this book – and many other projects I’m involved with – will help teachers, administrators, consultants and researchers to investigate and make use of techniques used in informal settings (and the research that has already been done around the success of informal education for all kinds of learners) when they plan their lessons. Could their students learn through hands-on experimentation? Through physical exploration? Through artistic creation? Could their students express their learning through theater? Music? Or engineering design? We already know that the answers to these questions is “yes” – the challenge is to ensure that kids on the autism spectrum get the opportunity to benefit from what we already know.

HOW DO FAMILY UNITS BENEFIT FROM GETTING OUT AND EXPLORING?

Autism can be an incredibly isolating disorder. Not only do parents wind up spending a huge amount of their time, energy, money and love on therapies and care – they also feel like outsiders in their own communities and families. It can be even worse for siblings who, through no fault of their own, are often excluded from ordinary activities. By getting out and getting involved in the community as it’s possible, families are able to reconnect with clubs, churches and synagogues, sports leagues... and often with their own families. Another huge plus for getting out into the world with a child on the autism spectrum is that families discover their child’s real strengths and abilities in ways that would never be possible in the school or therapeutic settings.

FOR A PARENT, A TANTRUM ON THE TRAIN OR A P UNCH ON THE PLAYGROUND CAN SOUR THE IDEA OF FUTURE EXCURSIONS. WHAT ARE YOUR TIPS FOR RECOVERING FROM A “BAD DAY OUT”?

The best way to manage a bad experience is to already know, in advance, what you’re going to do when it happens. Autism parents know that it’s almost impossible to control for all possible issues, and to guarantee success. On the other hand, it’s very possible indeed to have a Plan B already in place.

Instead of taking a group of kids to the playground with one adult in charge, for example, have two adults along. That way, if an incident occurs, it’s easy to step in, end the experience, and leave the situation – without disrupting the group’s day out. At a zoo, the best choice may be to buy a low-cost membership, so that a shortened day at the zoo feels less like a failure and more like a ... short day at the zoo!

Bottom line, it will always be a challenge to involve your child with autism in typical community activities. Planning and flexibility – along with a thick skin and a sense of humor – can make all the difference.



WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A PARENT WHO WANTS TO GET OUT AND EXPLORE WITH THEIR CHILD WITH AUTISM, BUT MAY HAVE LIMITED TIME OR RESOURCES?

Start small and simple. If your child loves animals, visit the pet shop. If your child enjoys music, go listen to the town band for a little while. Take a short walk in the woods, plan a half-hour at the local pool, or pick some apples at the farm. Don't spend much money, don't commit a lot of time, and don't inflate your expectations. If you have a great five minutes, you're ahead of the game!

If you're really nervous about getting out in public with your autistic child, and you want to hand the reins over to someone else, you might want to consider some of many "special needs" community options that are available. True, Special Olympians are unlikely to compete at a world-class level – but the experience of building skills, friendships and self-esteem can be a stepping stone to many opportunities in the local community and beyond.

Of course, you also have the option of exploring and having fun at home – and that's an absolutely reasonable option for many families. Whether you're dancing together to your favorite CD, playing a video game, or just playing "tickle me," you're enjoying each other's company. And that's a huge step in the right direction!

ABOUT LISA

Lisa Jo Rudy is a professional writer, researcher and consultant, and the mother of a 13-year-old boy with an autism spectrum disorder. Since 2006, she has written the 'About.com Guide to Autism' (autism.about.com), a part of The New York Times Company. Lisa is the author of ***Get out, Explore, and Have Fun! How Families of Children with Autism or Asperger Syndrome Can Get the Most out of Community Activities***, published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers. She has more than twenty years of experience in developing hands-on exhibits, interactive games, books and activities for kids with every learning style, and has founded an inclusive summer program for children with autism in collaboration with the YMCA, written articles on inclusion for museum professionals, presented workshops on the subject, and is working toward development of related programs for the future.





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VISUALS

S'mores on a Stick

- get marshmallows, chocolate sauce, graham crackers, and a baggie & a skewer
- put 3 graham crackers in baggie and crumble
- put 3 marshmallows on skewer
- pour chocolate sauce in bowl
- dip skewer in bowl, dump baggie, on skewer
- eat & enjoy

Flag Bread Recipe

- get bread, jelly, strawberries & blueberries, toaster and a knife
- put bread in toaster, until toasted, in bowl
- spread jelly on bread
- wash strawberries, and cut off the leafy top
- put strawberries for stripes, put blueberries for stars
- eat & enjoy

Ocean Cookie Recipe

- get sugar cookie, food coloring, frosting, and gummy fish
- put frosting in bowl
- add 3 drops blue food coloring, stir
- spread frosting on cookie
- put 5 gummy candy, fish, on cookie
- eat & enjoy

Sand Dessert Recipe

- get vanilla pudding, wafer cookies, gummy fish, and a baggie
- put 2 wafer cookies in a baggie
- crumble wafer cookies
- pour cookies into pudding, and stir
- add gummy fish
- eat & enjoy

Visual Recipes: Summer Treats & Snacks

by [Sasha](#) | Jun 15, 2015



Summer is the perfect time for fun. Let you hair down and loosen those reins. It's time to let kids be kids. This packet of [visual recipes](#) is perfect for some fun and functional summer treats and snacks! These are quick and easy treats that can be used as a classroom special activity, afternoon snack, or group project! This is perfect for summer school, ESY, or some at-home fun!

Cooking is a fun and motivating activity that is great for language development, sequencing, fine motor skills, reading, and following directions! Great for children with special needs or early elementary grades!

<http://theautismhelper.com/visual-recipes-summer-treats-snacks/>