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# Autism Agenda



Linn Benton Lincoln ESD-Cascade Regional Autism Program

## 7 Tips for Creating Summer Fun For Autistic Kids

Summer is a few short weeks away! The joy of completing the school year also brings the challenges associated with unscheduled days, unpredictable new environments, and the unexpected elements of the season.

Here are seven helpful tips for planning your family's summer that we hope will help create more fun and reduce stress:



### 1. MAINTAIN SOME STRUCTURE

Try to maintain your child's typical eating and sleeping schedule as much as possible. It's not easy to stick to a schedule during summer, especially as this is a time when you want to let go a bit and relax. If you can maintain the basic structure of your child's routine with eating, sleeping, and some routine in the day, you are less likely to have an overwhelmed or anxious child.

### 2. BE CLEAR ON YOUR GOALS

You may want to create opportunities for your child to build social skills. Summer is a great time to enroll your child in social skills programs where they can participate in small-group activities and learn how to navigate relationships while receiving one-to-one support.

### 3. PREPARE IN ADVANCE

Whenever possible, it can be helpful to familiarize your child ahead of time with the destination by using photographs, videos, etc. If your child has never flown or stayed in a hotel before, practicing these on a small scale can be helpful. Some airlines offer practice travel for families with autism. You may also want to visit a hotel room before an overnight stay.

Continued on page 2.

*The LBL ESD Autism Agenda Newsletter is a compilation of national and regional resources designed to support families and school teams. Every effort is made to provide accurate and complete information in the LBL ESD Autism Agenda Newsletter; however, LBL ESD cannot guarantee that there will be no errors. For example, some of the content within curated resources from across the nation may not apply to Oregon. LBL ESD does not assume any legal liability for any direct, indirect or any other loss or damage of any kind for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, product, or process disclosed herein, and do not represent that use of such information, product, or process would not infringe on privately owned rights.*

## 7 TIPS FOR CREATING SUMMER ... CONTINUED....

### 4. TRAVEL SAFETY

It's important to acquaint your family with your vacation details, such as where you'll be staying during your trip. If you are staying with family or renting an apartment or home, be sure to check that each door has a lock and that the perimeter of the house is secure. It's also a good idea to familiarize yourself with other parts of the property, such as areas that have access to water and other roads. Knowing these will help keep your child's safety top of mind should they explore the area.

### 5. IT TAKES A VILLAGE

While vacationing or sunbathing with friends or family, welcome them to become part of your team. By sharing your concerns and requests for support, your community can be mindful and diligent with any possible safety or wandering risks. Helping others understand how they can best support you and your family, can make your experience more relaxed and enjoyable.

### 6. GET SUPPORT FROM YOUR TEAM

Remember to use what works for your child while planning your family's activities. If you're working with an ABA provider, ask for assistance with goals that support a specific outing or trip.

### 7. DON'T FORGET TO HAVE FUN!

Summer is the perfect time to maximize learning opportunities, access resources that may have been limited due to school schedules, and work on intensive programs that require a larger time commitment.

While that is all true, it's still important to find time to have fun, enjoy the activities summer has to offer, and watch your child thrive!

Here are some additional resources to help make the summer season a success for the whole family:

Autism Speaks: [Traveling with Autism](#)

National Autism Society: [Big Red Safety Toolkit – to prevent wandering](#)

Pathfinders for Autism: [Parent Tips: Summer Camp](#)

<https://learnbehavioral.com/blog/7-tips-for-creating-summer-fun-for-autistic-kids>



## MAINTAINING SKILLS OVER THE SUMMER

# Maintaining Skills Over The Summer

Keep your child with autism engaged with structured activities during summer break.

## How adding structure to summer days can reduce stress for kids with autism and keep them engaged with learning and fun

While the free-flowing days of summer can be relaxing for some children, the break from school routines may be stressful for kids with autism, who often thrive in structured and predictable settings.

Parents can work with their children to ensure they don't lose the skills they gained or forget what they learned during the school year. Keep the momentum going during the summer with these strategies for continued learning and engagement.

- Plan ahead and discuss these plans with your child. Give her an opportunity to ask questions about any activities.
- Maintain a **familiar routine**, even when traveling. As much as possible, stick to the same **mealtimes** and **bedtimes** you keep during the school year.
- Keep a homework regimen in place. You may use this time to focus on social and emotional skills instead of academic skills.
- Turn everyday activities like **going to the grocery store** or helping around the house into learning opportunities. Use these events to teach a new skill or practice one she already has.
- Reinforce positive behaviors. Reward your child for practicing skills like reading and following house rules.
- Help your child **learn through play** and **encourage time outdoors**. Play-based activities are crucial to improving skills in every developmental area.

Although scheduling is key, make sure to allow for breaks and **down time**. And don't forget to focus on having fun—it might lead to discoveries and development your child doesn't normally find in a classroom.

<https://www.marcus.org/autism-resources/autism-tips-and-resources/maintaining-skills-over-the-summer>

## ADDITIONAL SUMMER RESOURCES

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-FR3vCXN60>
- <https://belfasttrust.pagetiger.com/summersurvival> This resource has 25 pages of Summer supports and activities for Families.
- <https://www.middletownautism.com/social-media/summer-bored-board-6-2021>
- <https://www.autismni.org/games>
- <https://www.marcus.org/autism-resources/autism-tips-and-resources/summer-scheduling>
- <https://www.marcus.org/autism-resources/autism-tips-and-resources/getting-a-good-nights-sleep>
- <https://www.marcus.org/autism-resources/autism-tips-and-resources/managing-screen-time>

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## SUMMER ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

# Summer Activities for Children with Autism

## Outdoor and Indoor Activities to Support Your Child's Development

Summer gives families a new opportunity to make memories and to give kids new experiences. Kids are getting out of school and parents may have to adjust their daily routines, whether they work outside the home or stay at home with their kids.



Children with autism may have trouble with the changes that come with the season. One common challenge for children with ASD is having difficulty with changes in routines. This might create some hurdles for them and their parents when summertime arrives. Kids with autism may struggle with the transition from a structured daily routine in which they know what to expect and what is expected of them.

It's important to understand how a child with autism experiences the transition to summer. Parents can also help their children during the summer months by giving their children opportunities to expand their skills, improve their behaviors, and develop important life skills.

## Summer with Autism

Let's briefly consider some of the challenges (and opportunities) that a child with autism may experience during the summer months as it relates to common traits of ASD.

- Kids with autism may experience some relief from the break from school, because they don't have to interact with others as much. Since social skills may be a challenge for them, the chance to stay home more often instead of going to school every day can be a good thing. Even kids who attend some sort of summer childcare may experience less stress when it comes to social interactions since the pace is often slower, and it's easier for them to escape social interactions that make them feel uncomfortable.
- For kids who have made friends in schools or who have started opening up to peers, summer often means that they will have fewer opportunities to maintain those friendships. This can make it difficult for the child to develop or maintain friendships.
- Sometimes kids with ASD who have restricted and repetitive behaviors (RRBs) will increase these behaviors because of the lack of structure within their day. Some research shows that lack of activity can increase RRBs. On the other hand, sometimes RRBs will decrease during the summer due to less stress the child experiences.
- Kids with autism can have more time to focus on their special interests during the summer when they are out of school and have more free time on their hands.
- Depending on your child's sensory issues, summer can make their sensory issues problematic for them.

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## SUMMER ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM CONTINUED...

### Outside Activities

Let's now jump in and discuss some summer activities recommended for children with autism, especially activities that can be done outside. We'll explore activities that will help support your child's development and overall well-being.

### Going for a Walk

Going for a walk is an excellent activity for all kids, including for children with autism. Walking gives kids exercise and walking with other people, such as parents and siblings, can provide an opportunity for improving social skills, as well.

If you take a walk or go on a hike in a community location, you can help your child develop safety skills and support their abilities related to appropriate interactions with people they encounter in the community.

For instance, moving over on the trail to allow for an oncoming walker or bike rider is something that you can teach your child to do. You can also work on so many other skills during a hike, such as identifying things in the natural environment, having conversations, knowing what to do if you encounter someone else's dog, and giving your child the opportunity to talk about their special interests, and much more.

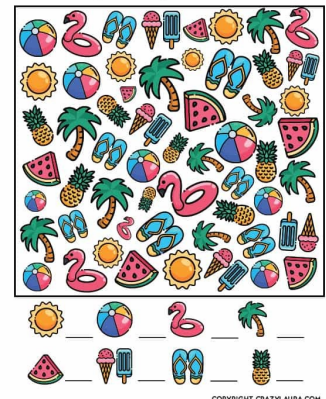
### Playing I-Spy

If you are hanging out with your child in your backyard, you can play a game of I-Spy. You can play this game anywhere really. This game involves one person giving a clue about an object they see around them and then having the other person guess what that object is, such as by saying "I-Spy something blue."

This helps to support receptive language skills by supporting a child's ability to listen to the clues being told to them and then trying to use complex thinking skills to figure out the targeted object. This game also helps support a child's communication skills by allowing them opportunities to give clues to another person.

The game encourages patience, as well, specifically because the players have to be okay with getting the answer wrong sometimes. They also have to wait their turn to guess the object if there is more than just them guessing in the game.

#### I SPY SUMMER



### Having a Playdate

Social skills are a broad category of skills important for everyday life. Social skills can be practiced in a formal or informal way. Parents can encourage their child with autism to participate in playdates or get-togethers with peers, neighbors, cousins, or local groups to give them opportunities to practice their social skills.

It's important, though, not to push a child too much into making friends and fitting in. Allow them to be themselves, but, if you think it's right for your child, it's okay to encourage opportunities for social interactions at times, in ways that support your child's well-being and potential.

Of course, playdates can be an outdoor or indoor activity, but planning an outdoor playdate can provide the added benefits of movement and exercise, getting fresh air and sunshine, and giving your child a new experience outside their typical routine being indoors.

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## SUMMER ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM CONTINUED...

### Go to the Park

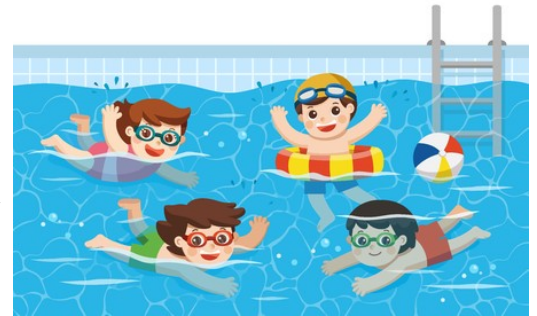
Going to the park is an excellent outdoor summer activity for children with autism. Being at the park gives a child an opportunity to practice interacting with others, managing unexpected situations, and engaging in gross motor activities which some kids with ASD struggle with.

Being at the park also creates a somewhat more structured environment where a child with ASD can hang out with other kids as opposed to an open backyard which may not have many physical items which guide the activities for them to participate in when they are hanging out with kids.

Having more structured activities can help some kids with autism when they are hanging out with other children because there is more clarity on what the child should do and it's easier for the child to know what to expect during the social interaction. Although just being at a park is not as structured as other activities, it does allow the child to have something more concrete to do while they are hanging out with other kids.

### Swimming and Water Play

Swimming is an excellent activity for children with autism to do during the summer. If a child has the ability to learn to swim, it is definitely recommended that they learn this skill. Summer, of course, makes sense as a great time to practice swimming. Whether you enroll your child in swimming lessons, or you play in the water and teach your child to swim yourself, your child will greatly benefit from learning to swim.



On the other hand, even if your child doesn't know how to swim or if they are not likely to learn to swim, playing in the water in safe ways can still be enjoyable and can still offer many benefits for your child's physical development through the gross motor and fine motor skills they use in the activity of water play.

## Indoor Activities

For those really hot days, you might consider encouraging your child to stay inside especially during the warmest hours of the day. Let's explore a few ideas for fun summer activities that your child can do during the summer.

### Artistic Creative Activities (Crafts, Music, and Art)

Craft projects are fun any time of year. They offer many benefits for children with autism including the development of fine motor skills, supporting your child's ability to follow directions (either written instructions or verbal instructions from you), and provide an opportunity for a child to be creative as well as to express themselves in a way that typically doesn't require words.

Many children with autism struggle with expressing their thoughts and feelings with words. Sometimes they find it easier to write down their thoughts and feelings (if they have writing abilities that allow them to do so). Other times, it's still difficult for a child with autism to label and understand their own emotions.

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## SUMMER ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM CONTINUED...

Difficulty with understanding and expressing one's own emotions is called alexithymia. Some research suggests that up to 50% of individuals with autism spectrum disorder experience alexithymia (Poquérusse, et. al., 2018).

Artistic creative activities, like crafts, music, and art, have been found to support emotional regulation and to have a positive impact on a person's mood (Fancourt, et. al., 2019). Crafts and other creative activities may support a child's ability to express themselves as well as their ability to regulate their emotions.

### Family Movie Day

Having a family movie day is a good indoor activity which can involve a variety of activities that can help children with autism. From planning and making a snack to being considerate of others (particularly when someone chooses a movie the child doesn't particularly care for) to being polite and respectful during the movie, watching a movie together as a family provides many learning opportunities to encourage social, communication, and other relationship skills for children with ASD.

### Playing a Board Game

Playing a board game together with your child can be an excellent indoor activity for those hot summer days. Your child can improve their turn-taking abilities, their waiting skills, their language skills, and much more.

Depending on the game played, your child can improve their cognitive skills as well. This is accomplished while practicing problem solving during the game or taking part in strategy or planning tasks.

## Summer Activities for Kids with Autism

There are so many summer activities that can benefit children with ASD. No matter your child's current abilities, needs, or preferences, you can find activities that will help support your child's development and overall well-being while also being enjoyable for your child.

<https://behavioral-innovations.com/blog/summer-activities-for-children-with-autism/>

### Summer Clip Art

summer collection 



## 30 SUMMER FUN ACTIVITIES

# 30 Summer Fun Activities

Maybe you are counting down the days until school is over in excitement. Maybe you are counting down the days in terror. (WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ALL SUMMER?!) I'm a little of both to be honest, depending on the day. Either way, I've got you covered! I've compiled 30 fun ideas for you to explore with your little ones this summer.

- 1. Go on a Bike Ride:** Or teach your child to ride. I know, this one is super scary at first. At iCan Bike programs, individuals learn to balance, pedal, steer and take off on their own, many in five days or less. Find more info [HERE](#). We taught both of my boys using [this do-hickey](#) called a Balance Buddy. It saves your back and made the whole process ten times easier. It's a serious game changer.
- 2. Michelangelo painting–** Tape paper to the underside of a low kids table or chair. Kids lie on their backs to create their own masterpieces. As an added bonus: This helps strengthen fine motor skills and core muscles too.
- 3. Freeze tiny toys** (ie dinosaurs, or other treasures) in a bucket, big bowl or bin and let kids excavate. Excavating Tools (toothbrush, squirt bottle, hammer, salt, shovel.)
- 4. Make your own obstacle course in the backyard.** There are some great ideas [HERE](#). And as an added bonus, you don't even have to leave the house!
- 5. Paint rocks.** Gather your own flat rocks while out exploring. Cool acrylic paint pens [HERE](#). These [tiny rain-bow bottles](#) are amazing too! Of course you need some [fun brushes](#). I seriously want to start painting some NOW! You will be the coolest house on the block with these supplies.



- 6. Make Play Doh.** Kool Aid is my favorite, and it smells amazing! Recipe: 2 ½ cups flour, ½ cup salt, 2 packets Kool Aid, 4 tsp. cream of tartar, 2 cups boiling water, 3 tbsp any oil

- 7. Shaving cream fight–** [This family](#) had an epic one! All you need is Bathing suits, shaving cream, goggles, a sprinkler, and towels.

- 8. Horseback riding–**“Equine Therapy” Dr. Temple Grandin says, “I wish more kids could ride horses today. People and animals are supposed to be together.” Ask Google about options in your own town.

- 9. Make lava lamps!** This is a super cool science activity. Supplies: empty water bottle, oil, water, food coloring and alka seltzer to make bubbles. Step by step instructions [HERE](#).

- 10. Movie Mornings** can be a great change in your regular Summer routine. Check for sensory friendly options at your local theaters. If you have any [Regal movie theaters](#) near you, they have \$1 movies. It's a 10-week program of family-friendly movies that play at participating locations on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 10am. For just \$1 per ticket, parents and kids are can pick between two different movies each week.



[AMC kid friendly movies on Wednesday.](#) \$4 gets you a movie, and snacks.

Continued on page 9.

## 30 SUMMER FUN ACTIVITIES CONTINUED...

**11. Big Box Art:** Save your BIG Amazon boxes and make something grand. You can make a car, a fire truck, a fort, or cut it in half and draw roads to drive cars on.

**12. Make a PVC sprinkler–** Great how to [HERE](#). I'm not the crafty type, but knock yourself out.



**13. Head to the Zoo–** We hate crowds, so we usually go right when it opens. Visual supports make it more fun for kids with and without autism.

**14. Make Sidewalk paint:** Supplies: Squeeze bottles, cornstarch, water, food coloring, sponge brushes. How to [HERE](#).

**15. Go camping** (even if it's just in your back yard.) Actually, that's pretty much the only place you will probably catch me camping for now. If you don't have a tent or play tent- make your own fort! Grab some sleeping bags, cook outside, make a campfire, have some s'mores, put glow sticks in a mason jar for a DIY lantern, play games- you are only limited by your own imagination.

**16. Have a Color coded outdoor scavenger hunt.** I saw [THIS](#) on Pinterest, and thought- heck, even I can do that.

**17. BOUNCE!** Have everyone in the neighborhood or friend group pitch in and rent a bounce house for the day. There's no need to wait for a birthday.

**18. Kid Camps:** Many churches here host a week long camp for kids. You don't have to belong to the church to attend. If your child is in Speech, Behavioral, or Occupational Therapy- Ask your therapy places if they do any learning groups, social skills groups, or camps. If yes, enlist your friends typical kid as peer models if the facility is in need of some. Also look to your zoo, your public library and ask around for any other camp options.

**19. The autism helper materials:** The Summer Slide is real. My boys still receive Speech and Behavior Therapy over the Summer. We also like to throw in some fun academic activities like these into the mix. It helps ease the back to school transition and makes sure we don't lose skills, like sitting and focusing for periods of time. Here's the [Summer Edition Adapted book](#). Here's the [Summer Vocabulary Mini Unit](#).



**20. Make a themed Movie day.** You can run the theme food, décor, art projects, outfits. My boys would love an UP movie day. You can make an "Our Adventure Book", have balloons everywhere, eat balloon decorated cupcakes, have chocolate (Russell and Kevin's FAVORITE, and mine too).



Continued on page 10.

## 30 SUMMER FUN ACTIVITIES CONTINUED...

**21. ORBEEZ:** Put [Orbeez](#) in a water table or big plastic pool and go to town. These little suckers are slippery and messy, so they are the perfect outdoor activity.

**22. Explore local playgrounds.** For this one, it's a great idea to set up a playgroup and plan in advance. Go the same day/ time each week to explore a different local playground. Bring snacks, sidewalk chalk, a bubble machine and more.

**23. Pack a picnic!** Sometimes it's just more fun to eat outside. Plus, you can have the kids help prepare the food-functional skills!



**24. Make something Monday.** On Sunday you can go buy all your prep materials and on Monday, cook, bake, or craft your heart out.

**25. Go to your local Library!** They usually have kid friendly events planned all Summer. It's air conditioned, you can go early, and you can reinforce love for reading at an early age. Don't forget about your public library.

**26. Go to a Splash or Water Park!** This is one I need to enlist help on because both boys enjoy running in opposite directions.

**27. Head to a Farmer's Market.** Meet Farmers, find a rainbow of fruits and vegetables, purchase healthy foods, let them practice communication skills – commenting, requesting and buying!

**28. Make Butterfly's** This kit comes with everything you need, including caterpillars. Kids can observe the butterfly life cycle up close. Make a complete learning lesson out of it with this [FREE book](#).

**29. Mom day:** Invite your friends kids over to one house, all chip in for a couple of sitters- Go do GROWN UP things. A long lunch, mani-pedi, shopping, whatever. YOU DESERVE IT.

**30. Explore your hometown like a tourist.** Take pictures, visit landmarks, eat at the places that tourists love, visit an Amtrak station, and just have fun exploring. I prefer to do these kinds of things on NOT a weekend day, to avoid too many crowds. Love where you live (or move) has always been my motto.

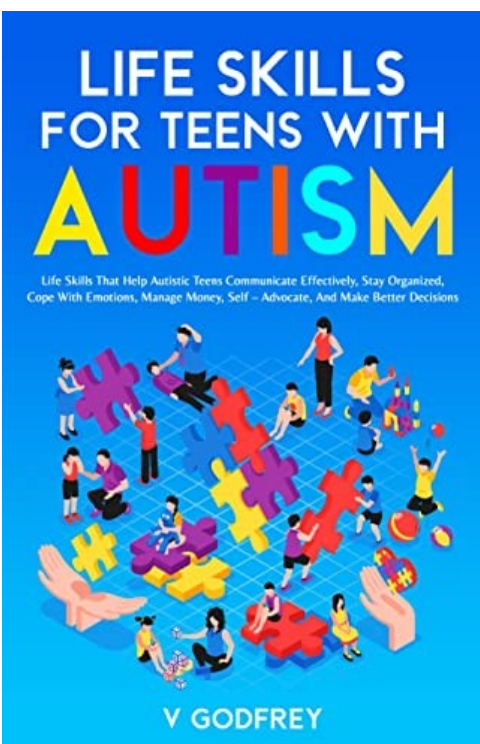
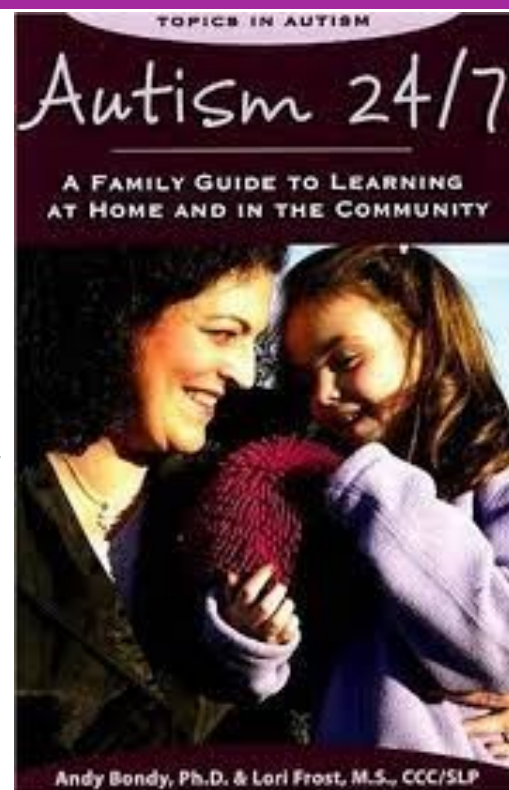
<https://theautismhelper.com/30-summer-fun-activities/>

## BOOK REVIEWS

## ***Autism 24/7: A Family Guide to Learning at Home and In the Community***

by Andy Bondy and Lori Frost

If your son or daughter is over-stimulated by noisy places or has trouble communicating or interacting with people, then everyday activities like going to the playground or helping out with household chores may seem outside your child's repertoire. Authors Bondy and Frost, the founders of the award-winning Pyramid Approach to educating children with autism, show how it is possible to keep family life running smoothly and teach a child with autism to participate in important and routine family activities at home and in the neighborhood. And their teaching strategies can be used during the course of everyday life without making too many adjustments or converting your home into a school. In a reassuring, easy-to-read style, **Autism 24/7** helps families identify **WHAT TO TEACH** and **HOW TO TEACH** it, providing concrete tools to integrate their child into life at home and in the community.



## **Life Skills For Teens With Autism**

By. V Godfrey

In *Life Skills for Teens With Autism*, you will find **precise, practical, effective strategies** such as:

- **12 tips for communicating effectively with others.**
  - The main **executive functioning challenges** for teens — and how to deal with them.
  - How **setting deadlines can be motivational** rather than stressful for teens with autism.
  - Why not all activities may have the same appeal — and how to discover those that your teen can feel passionate about.
  - The crystal clear signs that teens can use to **sharpen their social skills** and identify the right strategies for social interaction.
  - How to turn **personal care into a pampering** (rather than a boring) experience.
  - **Chaining methods** to make daily tasks more manageable for an autistic teen.
  - Dynamic activities that won't seem like work while boosting your teen's social, behavioral, and physical skills and abilities.
- **15+ tips that keep tough emotions in check.**
  - Safety advice covering transport, mobile devices, and emergency situations.
  - **How to help your teen discover recreational activities that ignite their passion and lend their life greater meaning.**

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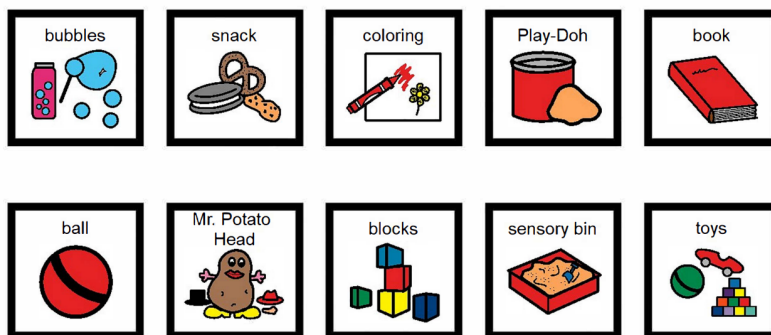
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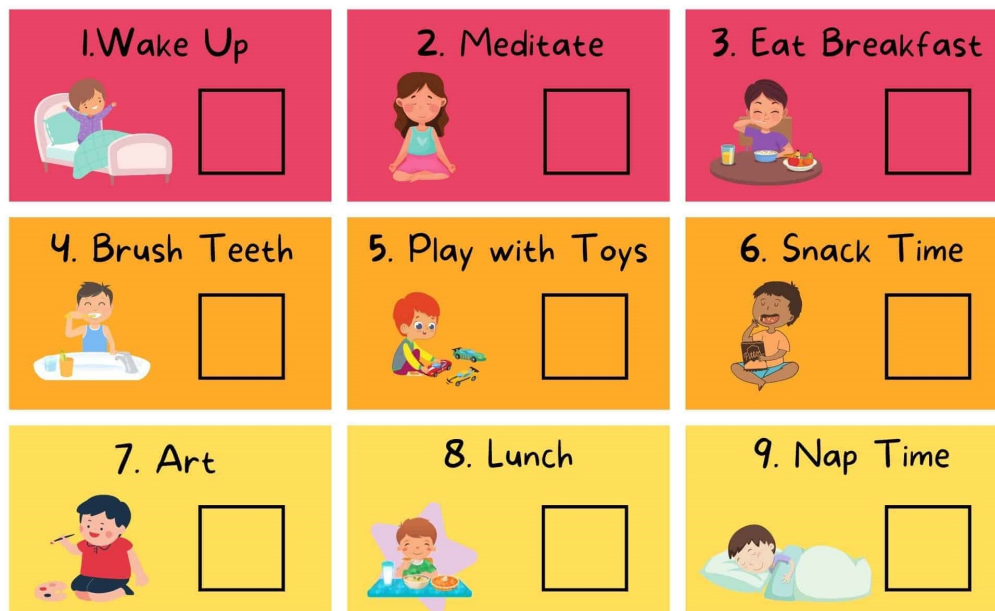
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### My Choice Board



## My Morning Routine



<https://adayinourshoes.com/free-printable-visual-schedules-for-home-and-daily-routines/>

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