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# Autism Agenda



Linn Benton Lincoln ESD-Cascade Regional Autism Program

## 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 rainbow 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.



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### 30 SUMMER FUN ACTIVITIES CONTINUED....

**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.

**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.



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### 30 SUMMER FUN ACTIVITIES CONTINUED....

**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).

**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 Butterflies** 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/>

## 10 AUTISM-FRIENDLY SUMMER ACTIVITIES

The Autism Blog

# 10 Autism-Friendly Summer Activities

The past two summers where I live, the temperatures got up to 110 degrees, record-highs for Washington State. The first summer, I had no AC, and for both summers, when that heat hit, I had to sleep on an inflatable mattress downstairs. It reminded me that I really don't like summer, even though it was once my favorite season. It was great to be out of school, but as an adult, I can't enjoy that benefit anymore. There are other reasons that summer can be a particularly tough time of the year for others on the autism spectrum like me.

### SUMMER IS A TIME FOR:

- Intense heat
- Sun getting in your eyes
- Sweat
- Remembering to hydrate
- Remembering to put on sunscreen
- Remembering to put on bug spray
- Large crowds in public places
- Loud beaches, parks, concerts, etc.



### THEN THERE ARE VACATIONS, WHICH INCLUDE:

- Long car rides
- Long plane rides
- Adjusting to a different time zone
- Sleeping in a bed different from your own
- Lost sleep
- Plans changing last-minute

### THEN THERE'S SUMMER CAMP, WHICH INCLUDES:

- Heavily athletic games
- Big emphasis on teamwork
- Getting thrown around by water toys
- Hyperactive counselors with megaphones
- Moving around while screaming to the camp's theme song
- Never hearing ahead of time what the day's schedule will be, and other "surprises" and "mysteries" meant to be fun (even the lights-out time can be intentionally left a mystery until it happens)

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*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.*

## 10 AUTISM-FRIENDLY SUMMER ACTIVITIES CONTINUED...

These items could potentially trigger a meltdown from an autistic child. So what might be good autism-friendly summer places to go?

**WELL, HERE ARE TEN IDEAS FOR BOTH KIDS AND ADULTS:**

### **A Big, Open Beach**

A couple of summers ago during late August, I went on an overnight trip to Ocean Shores, Washington, and it was a nice, big, cool beach on the Pacific. Without the heat or the large crowds, it was a pleasant time there as I walked in long sleeves, taking in the beautiful scenery at both dusk and dawn.

### **Visit a Beach at Low-Tide**

Early at dawn when the tide is at its lowest, a kid could get excited from lifting up a rock and seeing a dozen little crabs. Autistic kids usually understand animals better than humans, so spending a morning at a beach discovering aquatic life is a fantastic way to enjoy the beach before the heat and crowds arrive.

### **Whale Watching**

Whale watching can often feel like a vacation since the outing is usually a day-long commitment, with a boat ride that is far away from home, and long. Even without the whales, there are plenty of relaxing, pretty sights over the ocean. This is another suitable activity for autistic kids that's good when trying to avoid big noisy crowds.

### **Bring the Family Dog**

Bringing the family dog on family road trips could keep your autistic child from developing anxiety attacks, especially if the dog is certified as an emotional support animal. Lots of places, including Disney parks, warmly welcome service dogs, so having your four-legged member of the family can be greatly beneficial, especially since dogs can sense early on when their owners are distressed.

### **Birdwatching**

Give your kids a booklet of birds in the area to look out for, and they can be kept busy all afternoon trying to complete this scavenger hunt in a nice, shady forest (albeit not one too full of hills or difficult trails). It's also a nice hobby that encourages kids to stay still and listen to nature.

### **Go to the Zoo**

Summer is the best season for zoo trips, and it can be an oddly comforting environment for people with autism because of the wide-open walking areas and the presence of animals. It would be especially great if you visited a zoo with a petting area because feeling a fuzzy goat can be quite therapeutic for autistic children.

### **Berry Picking**

Berry picking can be a nice quiet activity where you're surrounded by the wonderful smells of strawberries, blueberries, or blackberries. The best part is when you're done, you get to enjoy the fruits of your labor (pardon the pun) by eating a pie made from the berries you just picked fresh off the bush!

### **Log Cabins**

Carrying your stuff on your back for hours to then sleep inside a tent may not be your cup of tea, but with a log cabin, you're surrounded by nature without the tent camping discomforts. A cabin always has an actual bathroom, a setup to make good food, and a warm bed.

### **Tent in the Backyard**

Or if you do like tents, here's a fun idea: put up a tent in your backyard! That way, you can enjoy the outdoors in a controlled environment. You can sing campfire songs, make s'mores, tell ghost stories, watch the stars, and sleep in a hammock. Best of all, home is just a few steps away, giving you the freedom to use your bathroom and get stuff from your kitchen.



### **Conventions, Theme Parks, etc.**

Most kids with autism have a special interest (or an intense encyclopedic interest in a particular area). So if your autistic child loves Disney, take them to Disneyland! Even with the extreme heat, crowds, and loud noises, the Disney brand should motivate them to have fun. It's also worth noting that Disney Park employees have an excellent reputation for helping guests with special needs.

Now, one last thing to know is that there's no such thing as a universally autism-friendly environment; what may be very relaxing to one autistic person could be sensory overload to another. Not all of the options I listed above will make your autistic child 100% happy, some kids with autism may have zero tolerance for seasickness while others may have no problems with being at a loud concert that lasts until midnight. At the end of the day, the summer experience is whatever you make it; while it may take some creativity, you can have fun this summer no matter what your ability.

<https://www.seattlechildrens.org/clinics/autism-center/the-autism-blog/10-autism-friendly-summer-activities/>

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## HOW TO PLAN A FANTASTIC SUMMER BREAK...

# How to Plan a Fantastic Summer Break for an ASD Child

Summer is full of memorable moments such as family vacations to the beach, day trips to the zoo, or going to a certified autism center theme park, such as Sesame Place. But as a mother of a child with autism, I've learned the season also involves careful and strategic planning, like any activity that is outside of the daily structure for my children.

The season brings a mix of emotions for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). While they are excited to have more time for their favorite, and known, activities, they also have anxiety about the unexpected—a new routine, new supervisors, new peers.

Not only do children have to adjust to this everyday newness for a few months, but there is also the challenge of singular events that include new sounds, feels, and smells. Quintessential summer activities like watching fireworks on the Fourth of July or a trip to the beach can be overwhelming for children with autism and sensory needs.

But summer isn't something that needs to be feared. If you're a parent of a child with autism, here are a few tips to help you take advantage of everything the sunny season has to offer.

### ESTABLISH A NEW ROUTINE

While every child is unique, it is common for children with ASD to have difficulty with a disruption in their routine. First and foremost, it's important to ease your child into a summer break by creating a daily schedule. At the minimum, you should focus on creating a bookend structure that follows a fairly consistent routine including a wake-up time and bedtime.

Having structure mixed with some flexibility and choice activities can also be a healthy learning opportunity for your child, all while in a safe, familiar environment. Consider making the schedule visual and placing it in a common area where it can be reviewed daily by family members.

At the beginning of each week, sit together as a family to discuss upcoming plans and any changes to the schedule. It is important to include your child with ASD in the plans, so he/she is prepared for the unexpected.

### SEARCH FOR INCLUSIVE SUMMER PROGRAMS

Extended school year programs provide families with educational opportunities in the summer if the child qualifies through his/her IEP. However, the majority of these programs are half day and only run for a few weeks. What are families to do for the rest of the time off?

Many families, like mine, choose to look into a summer program or camp to ease summer stress. Thankfully great progress has been made in educational offerings over the past decade for children with autism, but options can still be limited. If this is something your family is considering, be sure to start your research early.

Get together with other families of your child's peers that may also be looking—not only will this help your search, but the placement with a peer your child is familiar with will help minimize the unknown.

### PLANNING INCLUSIVE FAMILY OUTINGS

Summer is filled with parades, fireworks, and town fairs that bring crowds and extreme sensory experiences that can be difficult for children with autism, but enjoyable for other family members.

Find a way to balance activities for all family members. Whether it's sending brother and sister along with the grandparents for the county fair, or taking turns with your partner—determine what works best for your family.

## HOW TO PLAN A FANTASTIC SUMMER BREAK FOR AN ASD CHILD



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## HOW TO PLAN A FANTASTIC SUMMER BREAK CONTINUED....

Also, consider activities that could be fun for everyone—with just a few small adaptations. Physical activity is important, and often children with ASD need an outlet for their energy and heightened sensory awareness. Swimming is a shared favorite for many families juggling sensory needs. You can also go on a nature walk, create a scavenger hunt with clear directions and a defined pattern for success, have a family yoga session, or take a walk around town and stop at your favorite ice cream shop.



### SUMMER SURVIVAL KIT

If you and your child decide to overcome an unknown, such as a carnival or trip to the boardwalk, prepare your child with a 'summer survival kit.' We recommend including sensory toys or items your child enjoys, such as buttons, playdough, ribbons and string, as well as headphones, and a stress ball to help adapt to the loud and overwhelming environment.

Another easy item to throw in your survival kit is a guide to social stories. *Social Stories for Autistic Children*, for example, is an illustrated guide that sets up different social scenarios that may be challenging for a child with autism and provides visuals to help parent and child work through how to prepare and respond to the unknown. Social stories were first conceptualized in 1991 by pediatric doctor and autism researcher, Dr. Carol Gray, in an effort to improve the social skills and behaviors of people on the autism spectrum.

### TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF

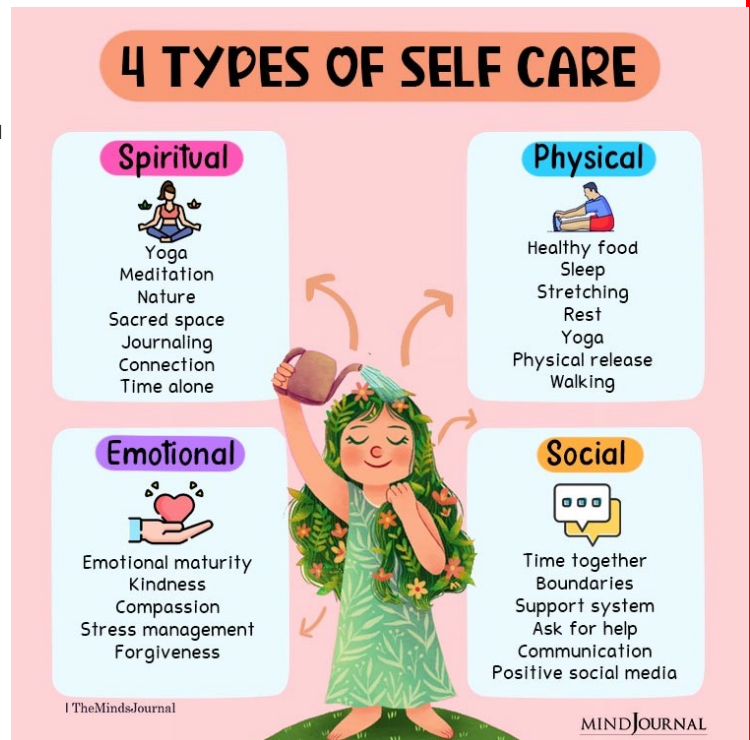
Make sure self-care is a part of your routine. For any parent, finding personal downtime in the summer can be difficult. For a parent of a child with autism, that challenge increases dramatically. Don't forget to find ways to break away and de-stress.

If your child has designated screen time or will engage in quiet time, take those few minutes for some "me" time—perhaps looking through a magazine, catching up on Facebook, calling a friend for a chat, or just sitting outside to enjoy the quiet. By taking care of yourself, you will be able to better care for the rest of your family and enjoy a memorable summer with your family.

As any parent of a child with autism knows, we often need a vacation from our vacation. There is no right or wrong way to plan your summer; each new experience will create lasting memories for your family and teach you what accommodations your child may need. My family's trip to Sesame Place, although it is certified, was not the right activity for my daughter.

My family enjoys spending time at the pool, trips to the beach, and just being together in our own backyard. Choose activities that allow your family to be together to create lasting memories. Each family is different, but that's what makes it your family.

<https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/plan-fantastic-summer-break-asd/>



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## SENSORY PLAY IDEAS AND SUMMER ACTIVITIES

# Sensory Play Ideas and Summer Activities For Kids With Autism

Does your child with autism become overstimulated or bored easily? With the school year coming to an end, are you looking for sensory play ideas for your child? This guide will provide a variety of ideas for fun sensory activities for children with autism.

### HOW DO SENSORY ISSUES AFFECT CHILDREN WITH AUTISM?

The study found that *“Ninety-five percent of the sample of children with ASD demonstrated some degree of sensory processing dysfunction...These findings, considered with similar published studies, begin to confirm the prevalence and types of sensory processing impairments in autism.” (Tomchek & Dunn, 2007)*

Many children diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have a secondary diagnosis of **Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD)**. For this reason, sensory activities for autism should be a part of their routine.

A study published in the **American Journal of Occupational Therapy** by Scott D. Tomcheck and Winnie Dunn examined “differences in sensory processing among age-matched children between ages 3 and 6 years with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and those who are typically developing.”

The study found that *“Ninety-five percent of the sample of children with ASD demonstrated some degree of sensory processing dysfunction...These findings, considered with similar published studies, begin to confirm the prevalence and types of sensory processing impairments in autism.” (Tomchek & Dunn, 2007)*

Children who struggle with SPD or sensory processing issues may become bored easily, struggle to regulate their emotions, become overstimulated, or experience hyper or hypo sensitivity in relation to specific sense(s).

By incorporating sensory play into your child’s summertime routine, he/she is more likely to keep the skills learned during the school year. He/She might also increase the chances of adapting well to school routines in the autumn.

Consistency is key in all children. Speaking to your child’s teacher about sensory activities he/she especially enjoyed at school and carrying them over into the summer could be helpful during this time of transition.

But to keep things fresh, here are five ideas for sensory activities for autism that are great for the summer.

### 1. Engage a child’s visual perception skills

Parents who grew up in the 1970s (or during their resurgence in the 1990s) will likely remember the mesmerizing effects of lava lamps. Now imagine controlling the multidimensional color and congealing motion of the lamps without worrying about heat or toxic materials.

With four ingredients your child can create his/her own **“Lava Lamp in a Bag”** that will likely keep him/her entertained and engaged for hours.

- Fill a large freezer-sized, resealable sandwich bag about a quarter of the way full with baby oil.
- Next, add a few drops of liquid food coloring in your child’s preferred color.
- Right before you give the bag to your child, add a couple drops of water.
- You may want to tape the bag shut to prevent leaks.
- Your child can lay the bag flat and manipulate the droplets and splotches to form patterns or create movement.

Alternatively, he/she can shake the bag and watch the oil, water, and color separate and reform into new and interesting formations.



This **“Lava Lamp in a Bag”** can be an excellent form of visual therapy for children. Visual therapy is defined as “[The] process of retraining the visual perceptual system, so it functions with optimal efficiency. The process follows a sequence of steps aimed at improving the visual system.” (Brockett)

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## SENSORY PLAY IDEAS AND SUMMER ACTIVITIES CONTINUED....

The act of tracking the “lava” both with the eyes and making hand-eye connections while moving the lava around in the bag can help strengthen the visual perceptual system in a fun and engaging way.

### 2. Strengthen the sense of smell through sensory play

Sensory play activities that engage the olfactory system can be particularly soothing to anxious children. If your child has a favorite scent, feel free to substitute it for the lavender used in this example. For a more energizing scent, you may consider using coffee beans or grounds or orange zest.

**For this sensory activity, you will need:**

- several cups of *uncooked rice*,
- a *bag or container*,
- *lavender essential oil*,
- *purple food coloring*,
- and *lavender stalks* (optional).

Place the uncooked rice in a bag or container that you do not mind being dyed. Add several drops of purple liquid food coloring. Mix the rice thoroughly until it is dyed light purple. Next, add about 4 drops of lavender essential oil per cup of rice and mix.

If you have access to lavender stalks, you can add the dried flowers into your mixture. Your child can run his/her fingers through the rice in a large tub, or you can place the rice into a sock or other fabric pouch to add “squish.”

Aromatherapy can also help children with autism through transitional periods and managing stress (Articles, 2016).

Check out this [guide and free PDF](#) to learn about the [best essential oils](#) and their benefits for children with autism.

### 3. Create a soundscape to aid auditory processing disorder

In many parts of the world, summer is synonymous with the occasional downpour. Kim Staten from [Life Over C's](#) has created a dry sensory bottle that mimics a summer rainstorm.

**To make Kim's [rainstorm sensory bottle](#), you will need:**

- *two clear plastic cups*
- *toothpicks*
- *cotton balls*
- *glue to secure the cups (she recommends hot glue)*
- *rice*
- *glitter and blue liquid food coloring are optional*

This more visual take on the rainstick engages not only your child's sense of hearing but also his/her visual sense and motor skills. Giving your child a visual and auditory representation of a rainstorm might help him/her strengthen auditory connections between sounds and sources.

According to *Tomcheck and Dunn's study*, auditory processing difficulties are one of the most [common sensory issues](#) children with autism experience and several other studies support these findings:

“Differences in auditory processing are one of the more commonly reported sensory processing impairments with the full range of atypical responding noted. In one retrospective chart review of developmental patterns in 200 cases with autism, *Greenspan and Weider (1997)* reported that 100% of the participants demonstrated difficulties with auditory responding.

Several authors have reported auditory hypersensitivity (*Bettison, 1994; Dahlgren & Gillberg, 1989; Gillberg & Coleman, 1996; Rimland & Edelson, 1995; Vicker, 1993*). Furthermore, *Dahlgren and Gillberg (1989)* found that sensitivity to auditory stimuli in infancy was a powerful discriminator between children with and without autism.” (**Tomcheck & Dunn, 2007**)



*Continued on page 10.*

## SENSORY PLAY IDEAS AND SUMMER ACTIVITIES CONTINUED....

### Method:

- To begin, you may choose to dye the rice blue to mimic raindrops.
- You can then fill both cups with cotton balls and toothpicks and pour the rice over the top. The more toothpicks you add, the more the bottle will sound like actual rainfall.
- Next, add a sprinkle of glitter to the cups if you so choose.
- Finally, glue the cups together at the brims—be sure the seal is tight, so no rice or glitter falls through the cracks.

When the assembly is complete, you can show your child how to turn the bottle upside down to recreate the sound of rain. (Staten, 2018)

This more visual take on the rainstick engages not only your child's sense of hearing but also his/her visual sense and motor skills. Giving your child a visual and auditory representation of a rainstorm might help him/her associate sounds with their sources. According to Tomcheck and Dunn's study, challenges in auditory processing are one of the most common sensory issues of children with autism. Several other studies support these findings.

The study states that: "Differences in auditory processing are one of the more commonly reported sensory processing impairments with the full range of atypical responding noted. In one retrospective chart review of developmental patterns in 200 cases with autism, Greenspan and Weider (1997) reported that 100% of the participants demonstrated difficulties with auditory responding. Several authors have reported auditory hypersensitivity (Bettison, 1994; Dahlgren & Gillberg, 1989; Gillberg & Coleman, 1996; Rimland & Edelson, 1995; Vicker, 1993). Further, Dahlgren and Gillberg (1989) found that sensitivity to auditory stimuli in infancy was an accurate way to detect autism." (Tomcheck & Dunn, 2007)

### 4. Turn sensory activities for autism into something yummy to eat

Engaging your child's sense of taste can be as easy as a trip to the pantry. Depending on what you have on hand, you can either pull dry items of different shapes, colors, or flavors.

To start with this sensory activity, lay your chosen items out on parchment paper. In no particular order, allow your child to sort them either by color (colored cereal or dried berries), by shape (circular cereal, tortilla chips, square crackers), or by flavor (sour lemon, sweet orange, spicy pepper).

Be sure that the items you chose for your child are safe for them to taste. This will help them explore their sense of taste while working on organizational skills or pattern forming.

For parents of children who are picky eaters, a game like this one might help introduce new foods in a unique way. A study published in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics highlights the need for "an interdisciplinary approach to managing atypical eating patterns in children with ASD."

Creating a game out of unfamiliar foods can be a way to explore new foods (or enjoy old favorites) without the pressure.

**Note:** While the ideas listed above are "taste-safe," please supervise your child to prevent choking.

### 5. Create a tactile treat to address a sensory disorder

Nicolette Roux of Powerful Mothering has created a handful of tactile sensory doughs, but this fizzy cloud dough adds something extra to playtime.

**To create this non-stick dough akin to kinetic sand, you will need:**

- *all-purpose flour*
- *vegetable oil (2 cups of flour per ¼ cup of vegetable oil)*
- *you can mix in powdered food coloring.*



*Continued on page 11.*

## SENSORY PLAY IDEAS AND SUMMER ACTIVITIES CONTINUED...



After mixing your ingredients together, it is ready for your child to squish, mold, and soft.

When your child gets bored with the dough, add vinegar, and it will fizz as the vinegar reacts with the baking soda.

Use a dropper for more controlled fizzing or directly pour the vinegar for a more monumental fizz. (Roux, 2014)

Tactile activities for autism can be an excellent way to help your child overcome his/her aversions or fears. If your child struggles with a sensory aversion to sand, check out Leslie Burby's [article](#) on how she helped her daughter become comfortable touching the sand and eventually vacationing at the beach. She writes, "The process I used was simple. Just

think—baby steps. Babies do not walk overnight and neither will a severe sensory aversion." (Burby, 2014)

There are dozens of [ideas for DIY sensory activities](#) for autism, but be sure you pick the ones that you know your child will enjoy.

### Choosing the best sensory activities for your child

Finding the best sensory activities for your child may take some trial and error. Carryover activities from the school year can be an excellent starting place as your child makes the change to a new summer routine. Including siblings or other family members in sensory games for autism can help maintain social and integrative play skills your child worked on in the classroom.

If you are struggling to find summer project ideas, your child's occupational therapist, teacher, or pediatrician might have suggestions for fun activities that help your child reach his/her sensory integration goals.

<https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/best-sensory-play-ideas/>

<https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/sensory-play-ideas-and-summer-activities-for-kids-with-autism.pdf>

## SENSORY-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES IN OREGON

### Sensory -Friendly Activities in Oregon Travelers of all ages can enjoy sensory-friendly fun around the state

For neurodiverse visitors and those with other sensory sensitivities, the simple act of travel — whether it's across town or around the world — means visiting a place that wasn't typically designed to meet their needs. Attractions across Oregon have been working hard to change that by bolstering their sensory-friendly offerings. In some cases, theaters turn up the lights and turn down the sound to help more moviegoers enjoy the show. In other instances, museums offer special times or spaces for sensory-sensitive visitors so they can enjoy exhibits in a quieter environment. Here's a look at how theaters, museums and even playgrounds around Oregon are adjusting programming to be more inclusive for both neurodivergent kids and adults.

#### Relax Before Flying out of Portland

Air travel can be stressful at the best of times. And for neurodiverse travelers, the steady stream of stimuli can quickly overwhelm. To help children with sensory needs, [Portland International Airport](#) has partnered with a pair of local organizations — the [Autism Society of Oregon](#) and the Portland chapter of the national nonprofit [KultureCity](#) — to create a sensory room.

*Continued on page 12.*



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## SENSORY-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES IN OREGON CONTINUED....

Located on Concourse D near gate D10, the room includes a large window that overlooks the runways, soft lighting, wooden puzzles, reading chairs, textured walls and other tools that help travelers relax and engage all five senses for a quiet spot to recharge in the airport.

The airport has also implemented an innovative program to help visitors with hidden disabilities, who can opt to wear a **sunflower lanyard** to indicate they may need extra help while traveling.

### Outdoor Fun for Kids in Portland and Forest Grove

Leading the way in inclusive kids' activities, playgrounds have made huge strides to help visitors feel more comfortable. In 2010 **Harper's Playground** launched as a nonprofit dedicated to building inclusive playgrounds for children from all backgrounds. Today you can find more than a dozen such play areas that avoid wood chips, stairs and other barriers for certain children.

The organization's first inclusive playground, **Harper's Playground at Arbor Lodge Park** in Portland, features natural ramps and hills, accessible saucer swings and soft surfaces. West of Portland in Forest Grove, another Harper's Playground project, **Anna & Abby's Yard**, is enchanting for children of all ages. The open play area draws inspiration from the natural surroundings — most notably through an "infinity tree" crafted from the stump of a 200-year-old sequoia tree, a wooden dragon named Wilder and magical fairy huts.



### Ride a Carousel in Style in Albany

In the summer of 2017, the **Historic Carousel & Museum of Albany** opened its doors to the world, inviting visitors from all walks of life to ride roughly 50 hand-carved, hand-painted animals and fantastical creatures. As part of those efforts, the Willamette Valley attraction hosts sensory-friendly rides on the first Wednesday of each month. Each time, lights are dimmed, the carousel slows down and organ music is turned lower for riders who'd like to hop aboard a zebra, unicorn, dragon or 7-foot-tall giraffe.

### Enjoy a Family-Friendly Film in Hermiston

We all enjoy a night out at the movies — munching mouthfuls of popcorn, watching superheroes save the day and getting swept up in the magic of film. At **Hermiston Stadium 8 Cinema** in Eastern Oregon, a monthly sensory-friendly movie event ensures everyone can enjoy the experience.

Each month the theater shows a family-friendly film that caters to neurodiverse moviegoers. During the movies, all of which appeal to kids, staff also turn up the lights, lower the sound volume and allow audience members the freedom to stand up and move around during the screening.

### Shipwreck Exhibit and Soft Blankets in Astoria

The **Columbia River Maritime Museum**, a long-standing Astoria institution, covers a wide range of weighty topics — like shipwrecks and the dangerous Columbia River bar. It works to make that history and insight more accessible with its Sensory Sunday programming, held on the first Sunday of each month.

As part of the fun, the museum dims its lights, offers arts and crafts activities, turns off video presentations and lowers its audio — or shuts it off altogether. A self-regulation station, meanwhile, provides additional support with soft blankets, bean-bag chairs, foam flooring and other tools.

### Special Exhibit Hours and Goodie Bags in Bend

Over the years, the **High Desert Museum** has earned acclaim for an expansive look at Central Oregon's history, industry and wildlife through a variety of indoor-outdoor exhibits. Its quarterly "Museum and Me" program strives to make that accessible to all visitors — children and adults alike — by remaining open after hours exclusively for those with disabilities.

Even if you aren't in town for the program, feel free to request what's called a "Brain Break Bag" to use whenever the museum is open. The bag is filled with coloring pages, communication cards, noise-canceling headphones and other items to help reduce anxiety and overstimulation.

<https://traveloregon.com/things-to-do/trip-ideas/accessible-travel/sensory-friendly-activities-in-oregon/>

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## VIRTUAL ACTIVITIES

Looking for at-home ideas to keep busy? Browse activities by area of interest by clicking on a link below. While many of these resources offer courses for those with special needs, this is not a list of exclusively autism-friendly programming. Thanks to Autism Behavior Consultants and Los Angeles Unified School District, which together curated many of the activities listed. Thanks also to New England Center for Children, Gateway Learning Group, Helping Hands Family, Kadiant, Neurabilities and Early Autism Services for contributing resources.

- [Learning Activities](#)
- [Art and Crafting](#)
- [Games](#)
- [Movement and Mindfulness](#)
- [Music](#)
- [Outdoors and Animals](#)
- [Reading](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Technology](#)
- [Theater](#)
- [Virtual Field Trips](#)



### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- [123 Homeschooling](#) – Homeschooling worksheets. Free.
- [ABCya!](#) - provides free educational games organized by grade and subject area
- [All Kids Network!](#) – Resources for children’s crafts, worksheets, coloring pages, mazes, dot-to-dot, and more. Free.
- [BrainPOP](#) – Educational website with over 1,000 short animated movies for students in grades K-12, together with quizzes and related materials, covering the subjects of science, social studies, English, math, engineering and technology, health, and arts and music.
- [Boom Cards](#) - premade or customizable flashcards for skill building/maintenance (utilizes discrete-trial training format)
- [Daily Science Project from Easton Children's Museum](#) - easy-to-do-at-home science experiments
- [Crash Course](#) – A YouTube channel offering engaging educational videos suitable for **high school students**. The channel features a wide range of subjects, from anatomy to world history.
- [Edgenuity](#) – For **K-12** students to access core curriculum. Each student has an individual code that will allow them to access lessons in English language arts and mathematics. Science and history/social science lessons are available for **middle** and **high school students**.
- [Highlights Kids](#) – Online magazine with activities, games, recipes.
- [Kids Activities Blog](#) – List of education companies offering free subscriptions due to school closing.
- [KidsKonnnect](#) - printable worksheets for teachers & homeschool parents
- [Math Play](#) - provides online math games organized by grade level, content and game type
- [Math Worksheets 4 Kids](#) - provides Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social studies printable materials
- [The Math Worksheet Site](#) - provides Mathematics-related printable materials
- [Mystery Doug](#) - posts a new video every week answering scientific questions

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## VIRTUAL ACTIVITIES CONTINUED....

- **Mommy Poppins Poppins at Home** – e-learning, crafts, activities and games for a range of ages. Topics include cooking, gardening, STEM, crafts, languages story time and more!
- **Nassau County Museum of Art** - engaging kids on the autism spectrum
- **PBS SoCal, KCET, and PBS** – Free, standards-aligned videos, interactives, lesson plans for at-home learning. Available for students in *Pre-K* through *12th grade*.
- **LA Parent Magazine** – Activities and information on remote learning for children and families.
- **Originator** – List of educational mobile and tablet applications for children and families. Fees apply.
- **Reading A-Z, RAZ kids and Vocabulary A-Z** - provides leveled books, passages, comprehension printable materials, quizzes for interactive reading practice and vocabulary word lists/lessons with online practice. Subscription
- **Scholastic Learn at Home** – Allows open access to daily learning journeys divided into four grade spans: *Pre-K – K, Grades 1-2, Grades 3-5, and Grades 6-9+*, covering ELA, STEAM, science, social studies, and social-emotional learning. Free.
- **Starfall** - provides Reading and Math games, movies, books and music
- **Universal Class** – Classes to guide parents and teachers to build their own unit study courses for homeschool purposes. Free access with a Los Angeles Public Library card (which can now be obtained online).
- **Virtual School Activities** – A collection of sites to live webcams, virtual tours/tips, and other miscellaneous fun educational sites for homeschooling.
- **www.EdHelper.com** - provWriting, Math, Science, Social Studies printable materials as well as Reading and Math online games. Subscription
- **www.EnchantedLearning.com** - provides Writing and Science printable materials. Subscription
- **www.mathworksheetsland.com** - provides Mathematics-related printable materials. Subscription
- **www.edmentum.com** - provides Reading, Grammar, Math and Science printable materials. Subscription
- **www.Education.com** - provides Reading,

## ART AND CRAFTING

- **Autism Speaks DIY Weighted Lap Buddy** - Create a DIY weighted lap pad for yourself or a sensory-seeker in your family.
- **Autism Speaks DIY Sensory Bottle** - Create a DIY sensory bottle for yourself or a sensory-seeker in your family.
- **Autism Speaks DIY Stress Creatures** – Create fun stress-relieving fidget characters.
- **Camp BuddEConnect** - A virtual summer camp for children with special needs, Camp BuddEConnect runs 5 days a week for 3 hours a day with seven one week sessions staffed by high school and college students. The activities are focused on fun, socialization and engagement with virtual activity cabins including music, games, film, arts & crafts, story telling and much more.
- **Neurabilities Art with Heart – Caterpillar** craft for ages 2-3.
- **Neurabilities Art with Heart – Ladybugs** craft for ages 2-3.
- **Neurabilities Art with Heart – Butterflies** craft for ages 2-3.
- **Neurabilities Make Your Own Instrument Crafts**
- **Kadiant Sensory Fun: Rice Bins**
- **Poppins at Home from Mommy Poppins Make Fluffy Slime with La Piattura Studio** – Create fluffy slime using ingredients around your house.
- **Elise Gravel** – Free, printable coloring pages by children’s author and illustrator.
- **Google Arts & Culture** – Guide to museums and galleries offering virtual exhibits and tours.
- **Khan Academy** – Walt Disney Imagineering partners with Khan Academy for Imagineering in a Box. The program is designed to pull back the curtain to show you how artists, designers, and engineers work together to create theme parks. Go behind the scenes with Disney Imagineers and complete project-based exercise to design a theme park of your very own.
- **Lunch Doodles with Mo Willems** – Children’s author, Mo Williams welcomes you into his study at home and guides you through drawing activities using one of his favorite characters for inspiration.
- **Louvre** – Visit the museum’s exhibition rooms and galleries.
- **National History Museum of Los Angeles County** – Make Your Own Dinosaur Shadow Puppet and Screen.
- **Yaymaker Paint Nite** – Virtual events from Paint Nite, including events for kids, teens, and adults. Events are presented through a streaming platform. Fees may apply.



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## VIRTUAL ACTIVITIES CONTINUED....

### GAMES

- [ABCya](#) – Pre-K to Grade 6 Games
- [Splash Learn](#) – K to Grade 5 Math Games
- [Nick Jr.](#) – Kids Games
- [PBS Kids](#) – Kids Games
- [Crazy Games](#) – Kids to Teens Arcade Games:
- [Playing Cards](#) – Card Games
- [Play Drift](#) – Online Games

### MOVEMENT AND MINDFULNESS

- [American Ballet Theater](#) – ABT will host daily virtual classes on Instagram (@abtschool) taught by former ABT dancers and artist. These classes will engage ABT's youngest students and their families by exploring musicality, fostering creativity, imagination, and teaching ballet fundamentals.
- [Emergent Learning Academy](#) Mindful U program – Short, interactive mindfulness lessons daily for kids ages 4-14 years old
- [Go Noodle](#) – Virtual classes to help children stay active, focused, and calm while infusing good energy into their lives.
- [Neurabilities Let's Dance](#) – Caterpillar Moves for ages 3-5.
- [Neurabilities Let's Dance](#) – Ladybug Theme for ages 3-5.
- [Neurabilities Morning Moves: Butterflies](#) for ages 6-12 months.
- [PopFit Kids](#) - Virtual movement and activities
- [UCLA Recreation](#) – Virtual yoga classes for kids on Tuesdays and Thursday afternoons.
- [YMCA of Metro North \(Mass.\)](#) - virtual swimming and water safety course

### MUSIC

- [Amped Guitar + Gibson](#) – 3 month free trial of Amped Guitar lessons through Gibson Gives.
- [Carnegie Hall](#) – Resources and teaching videos for teachers and K-5 students.
- [Fender Play](#) – 3 months of free online guitar, bass and ukulele lessons to the first 500,000 to sign up for Fender Play.
- [Inkshed](#) - The Inkshed team creates art, writing, music, and theater video lessons to share their love and passion for the arts.
- [Music and the Brain](#) – Video tutorials and keyboard instruction for K-12 students.
- [Neurabilities Three Cool Music Activities at Home](#) – Make musical instruments from common household items.
- [Neurabilities Unlocking Musical Creativity at Home with the Launchpad App](#)
- [Neurabilities Unlocking Musical Creativity at Home with the Keezy App](#)
- [Neurabilities Unlocking Musical Creativity at Home with BlaBlaBla App](#)
- [New York Philharmonic](#) – Watch the famous Young People's Concerts at home.
- [Prodigies](#) – Video library of engaging musical activities and curriculum for kids ages 2-12.
- [Kadiant Make a Musical Instrument](#)
- [Save the Music Foundation](#) – A list of free and low-cost music instruction and performances.
- [Soundfly](#) – Free video courses about producing, playing and writing music taught by industry professionals and educators.



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## VIRTUAL ACTIVITIES CONTINUED....

### OUTDOORS AND ANIMALS

- **American Museum of Natural History** – Their Ology science website provides games and activities for kids and covers a range of science topics, including archaeology, paleontology, astronomy, and marine biology.
- **Center for Discovery** – Safe indoor and outdoor activities for families in the time of the coronavirus.
- **Explore Mars from NASA** – Explore the real surface of Mars, recorded by Nasa's Curiosity rover.
- **Google Arts & Culture and National Parks** – Google has teamed up with five national parks in the US so people can enjoy the beauty of the natural world virtually: Kenai Fjords National Park (Alaska), Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park (Hawaii), Carlsbad Caverns National Park (New Mexico), Bryce Canyon National Park (Utah), Dry Tortugas National Park (Florida).
- **Live Science** – Breaks down stories behind the most interesting news and photos on the Internet, while also digging up fascinating discoveries that hit on a broad range of fields, from dinosaurs and archaeology to wacky physics and astronomy to health and human behavior.
- **Los Angeles Zoo** – Videos of animals.
- **Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute** – Resources from the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute introduce students to the impacts of climate change on marine habitats; explain the adaptations of animals that live in the deep sea; and present the challenges faced by ecosystems invaded by nonnative species, such as the so-called zombie shrimp.
- **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)** - Tour marine sanctuaries and ocean habitats with a collection of virtual dives from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.
- **San Diego Zoo** – Videos, activities, and games from the San Diego Zoo.
- **Smithsonian's National Zoo** – Animal webcams at the zoo.
- **The Nature Museum in Chicago** – How do butterflies eat? What's the difference between frogs and toads? The Nature Museum in Chicago has videos and activities to acquaint kids with the natural world and to inspire their curiosity about the plants and animals in their own backyards.
- **Virtual Field Trips** – Videos to explore the world, organized by curriculum, by grade, by location, for grades **K-12th**.
- **Yellowstone National Park** – Virtual tours of some of Yellowstone National Park's main attractions around the park.

### READING

- **Audible** – Free audiobooks for kids and teens.
- **CommonLit** – Free reading passages and literacy resources in all literary and nonfiction genres for **Grades 3-12**.
- **LA County Library** – Sign up for a Digital Library Card to get free access to all of the Library's digital offerings, including ebooks, audiobooks, magazines, movies, TV, homework help, online classes, and more.
- **PJ Library** - sign up to receive free books and participate in virtual storytimes.
- **Storytime at Los Angeles Public Library** – Recorded storytime with the Los Angeles Public Library staff. There are also guided storytimes so that families can create their own version at home.
- **Time for Kids** – For **elementary** and **middle school students**, digital subscriptions are free for the duration of the school year. This is the first time that the magazine is fully accessible at home.
- **Tumblebook** – An online collection of animated, talking picture books, which teach young children the joys of reading. Books available in seven different languages. Free trial available.

### SPORTS

- **Baseball** – Baseball – A Film by Ken Burns.
- **Basketball** – Free preview of NBA League Pass.
- **Football** – Complementary access to Game Pass.
- **Hiking** - A custom program designed by PopFit!
- **Hockey** – 'Pause Binge' replays of archived games.
- **Swimming** - A custom program designed by PopFit!



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## VIRTUAL ACTIVITIES CONTINUED....

### TECHNOLOGY

**Scratch (MIT Media Lab)** – Learn to code for ages 8-16, but used by people of all ages. Program your own interactive stories, games, and animation and share with others in the online community. Scratch helps young people learn to think creatively, reason systematically, and work collaboratively.

### THEATER

**The Met Opera Stream** – Each day, a different encore presentation from the company's Live in HD series is being made available for free streaming.

**Playbill** – Guide of Broadway plays and musicals available to watch online.

**Shakespeare's Globe Theater** – Theater lovers can browse a range of classroom activities and plays by Shakespeare.

### VIRTUAL FIELD TRIPS

Neurabilities **Virtual Field Trips & Learning Experiences** (infographic)

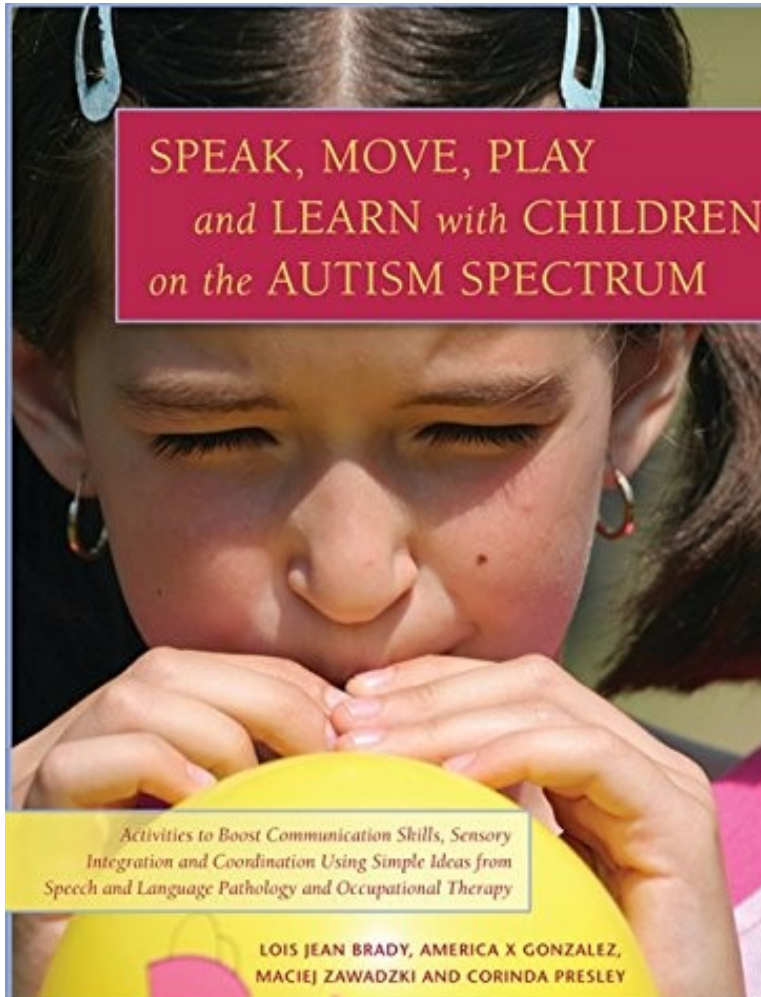
· **NASA Live** – NASA TV and live events streaming on a variety of space topics.

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/virtual-activities-kids-autism>



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## BOOK REVIEWS



## ***Speak, Move, Play and Learn with Children on the Autism Spectrum***

by Corinda Preseley

This practical resource is brimming with ideas and guidance for using simple ideas from speech and language pathology and occupational therapy to boost communication, sensory integration, and coordination skills in children on the autism spectrum. Suitable for use in the classroom, at home, and in community settings, it is packed with easy-to-follow, goal-oriented activities and lesson plans centering around arts and crafts, music-making, cookery, sensory activities, and skills for daily living. The activities all use materials and objects which are readily available in the home or classroom, and can easily be adapted to suit children of different abilities, including those who are non-verbal.

### ADDITIONAL SUMMER SUPPORT LINKS

- Sensory play ideas and summer activities for kids with autism: <https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/sensory-play-ideas-and-summer-activities-for-kids-with-autism.pdf>
- Camp, Social & Recreational Tool Kit: <https://www.milestones.org/resources/tool-kits/camp-social-recreation-tool-kit>
- Summer Activity workbook: <https://www.speciallearninghouse.com/summer-activities-for-kids-with-autism-free-printable-summer-workbook/>
- Website with lots of free supports: <https://www.speciallearninghouse.com/>
- At Home Summer Camp: <https://happymomhacks.com/summer-camp-at-home-ideas-activities/>

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**VISUALS**

Sample of the item is below. Here is the link to a great free item on Teachers Pay Teachers: <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/FREE-At-Home-Visual-Supports-5377700>

Linn Benton Lincoln ESD  
 Cascade Regional Inclusive Services  
 Autism Program  
 905 4th Ave SE  
 Albany, Or. 97321  
 Tel: 541- 812-2600  
 Fax: 541 926-6047  
 E-mail: webmaster@lblesd.k12.or.us

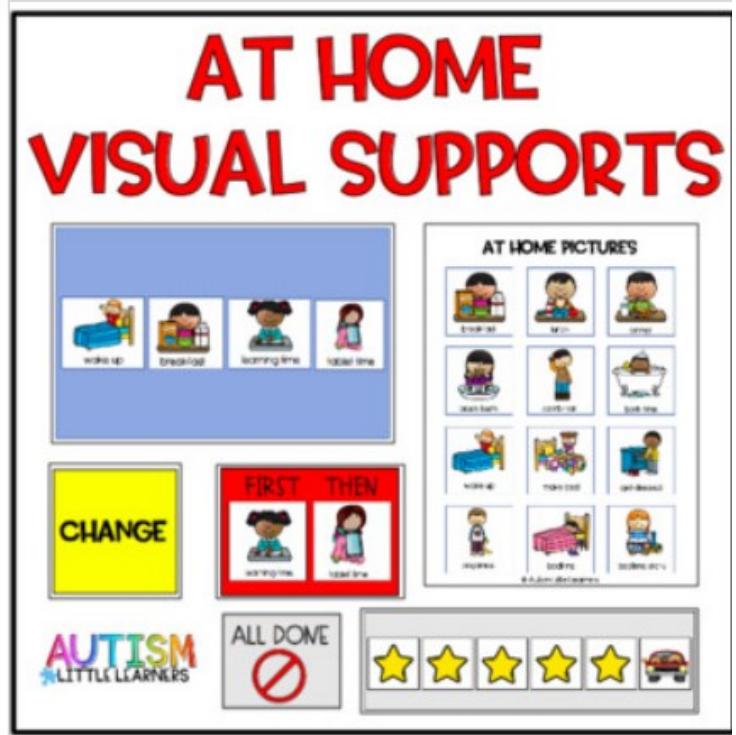
**Autism Consultants:**  
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Jill Sellers-  
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Michelle Neilson-  
 michelle.neilson@lblesd.k12.or.us

Ryan Stanley-  
 ryan.stanley@lblesd.k12.or.us



[www.livespeaklove.com](http://www.livespeaklove.com)

Love Speak Love webpage has free resources for you to download, this is on sample from their webpage: <https://livespeaklove.com/2012/02/17/visual-supports-for-behavior/>



[www.livespeaklove.com](http://www.livespeaklove.com)

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