

TIPS FOR NAVIGATING NON-SENSORY FRIENDLY PLACES



For children with sensory issues, there will be times when they'll visit places that are not sensory friendly. Here are some tips to help make your child's time in the community a little easier:

- 1. When possible, visit places that are family friendly.** They tend to be more receptive to children who may get loud or have disruptive behaviors.
- 2. Prepare and then prepare some more!** Social stories, checklists, or visual schedules are great ways to help your child know what to expect.
- 3. Pack a "go bag" that includes your child's favorite toy, gadget, snacks, etc.** The idea is to include anything that will make your child feel calm and comfortable when they are out in the community.
- 4. If your child is sensitive to loud noises, wearing noise-cancelling headphones may help them self-regulate.**
- 5. Dress your child in brightly colored clothing and take a photo of your child before leaving home.** This is especially important if your child has a tendency to wander. Let your child wear an ID bracelet, shoe tag, or a GPS. The goal is to make it easier to find your child if s/he gets lost. You can even attach travel-sized lights to his/her bag, which can make it easier to spot him/her in a crowd.
- 6. If possible, travel with another adult who can provide additional support.** A second set of hands and eyes can make a big difference.
- 7. Arrive early to avoid large crowds and long lines.** When visiting places like the zoo, request a Guest Assistance Card upon arrival at the admissions booth. This will enable you to bypass long lines. Other locations throughout the city may have something similar. Check with guest relations upon arrival for help.
- 8. Keep your visit short and sweet.** Be prepared to leave early if your child gets overwhelmed, overstimulated, or has a meltdown.
- 9. Be flexible and have an exit strategy.** You may have arrived by train but if your child has a meltdown, consider another mode of transportation.