

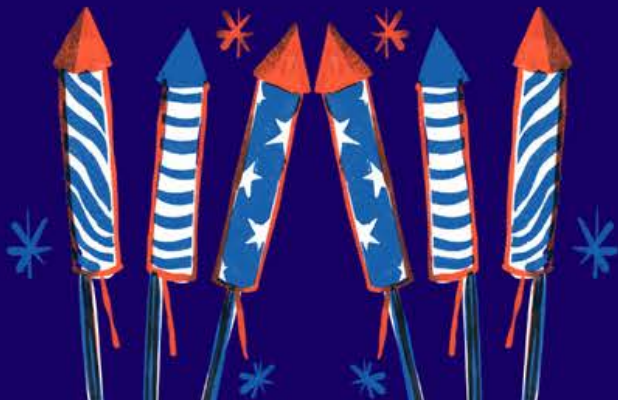


FIREWORKS: NAVIGATING THE SPECTACLE WITH SENSITIVITY

AUTISM FRIENDLY GUIDE



**NEBRASKA
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Fireworks: Navigating the Spectacle with Sensitivity

Fireworks are a beautiful, mesmerizing, and exciting spectacle that many people look forward to, especially on the Fourth of July. However, for children and those with autism, the loud noises and bright lights of fireworks can be overwhelming and distressing. With proper preparation and a few simple strategies, you can help your child enjoy fireworks and make the experience a memorable and joyful one.



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#1

Prepare in Advance



Before the fireworks display, talk to your child about what to expect and why there will be loud noises and bright lights. Explain that it's a celebration and a temporary event. Show them pictures or videos of fireworks so they can get an idea of what they will look like and sound like. This preparation can help reduce their anxiety and fear of the unknown.

#2

Attend Rehearsals or Smaller Displays

If possible, consider attending smaller-scale fireworks displays or rehearsals before the main event. These displays often have fewer crowds and a less intense sensory experience, providing an opportunity for your child to become familiar with the sights and sounds of fireworks in a more controlled environment.

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#3

Create a Safe and Comfortable Environment

Create a safe and comfortable environment for your child. Find a spot away from the crowd and the noise, where your child can still see the fireworks but not be too close to them. Bring a comfortable chair, blankets, and snacks to make them feel at ease. You can also use noise-canceling headphones or earplugs to reduce the noise level.



#4

Use Ear Protection

To help minimize the noise level and protect your child's sensitive ears, consider using ear protection. Earplugs or noise-canceling headphones can be effective in reducing the intensity of the fireworks sounds. Make sure to choose ear protection specifically designed for children, ensuring a proper fit and adequate noise reduction.

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#5

Use Calming Techniques Your Child Responds To

Practice deep breathing or other calming techniques with your child before the fireworks display. Practice ones that you know your child responds too well with. This can help them relax and cope better with the loud noises. You can also try sensory-based activities such as squishy toys, fidget spinners, or chewable necklaces to help your child focus on something else and reduce their stress.



#6

Plan for a Quick Exit

In the case that your child becomes too overwhelmed or distressed during the fireworks display, plan for the quickest and quietest exit. Have an exit route in mind, and make sure your child knows where it is. Try to have a car nearby and your keys ready, so you can leave quickly if needed.

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#7

Teach Fireworks Safety



Educate your child about fireworks safety to instill responsible behavior. Emphasize that fireworks are not toys and should only be handled by professionals. Teach them about the potential dangers of fireworks, including burns and injuries. Reinforce the importance of never picking up or touching fireworks they may find before or after the event.

#8

Celebrate the Event

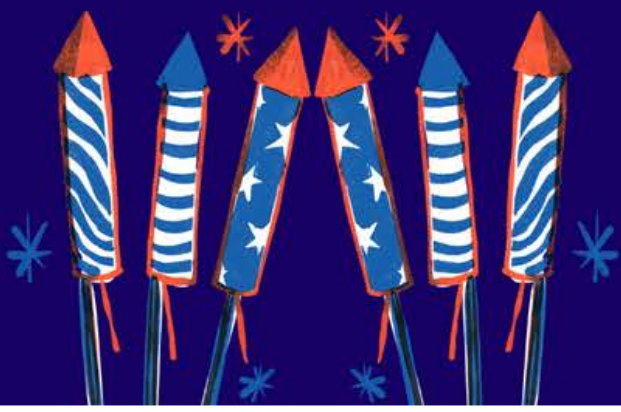


Make the fireworks display a celebratory event by focusing on the positive aspects. Talk to your child about the beautiful colors and shapes they will see, and encourage them to express their excitement and enjoyment. Celebrate the event as a family, creating positive associations with fireworks and fostering a sense of togetherness.





**A smile
with every
step forward.**



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