

# FAQ Sheet

## Attending a Birthday Party



FAQ-043

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Attending a birthday party can be extremely difficult for someone with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). There are many unknowns. Who will be there? Where is it? What is the theme? Will there be food served? A lot of new things can be hard for anyone to adjust to, but for someone with ASD, it can be too much. Here are a few ideas that may help lessen these difficulties and make the birthday party more enjoyable for all.

### Arrive Early!

- Arriving a few minutes early may help the individual adjust to the new environment.

### Stay Together.

- Stay with the individual during the party. Give praise and keep the time spent at the party short.
- Reward your child when it is time to leave the party; promise a favorite food or activity. This may help with the individual's anxiety about leaving a party early.

### Prepare!

- Talk with the people who will be hosting the party. Ask if there will be a quiet place available to go to if the individual feels overwhelmed.
- Bring sensory toys.
- Ask about food. Consider any sensory or dietary needs when it comes to birthday treats. Bring your own food if needed.
- What will be taking place at the party? Consider what activities they may want to take part in and what activities they may not. Bring activities that the individual enjoys doing as other options during those times.
- Bring support. Bring a favorite babysitter or classroom aide to support you.
- Create a social story to prepare for the birthday party. Try using actual photos of the people who will be at the party. Learn more:

<https://www.carautismroadmap.org/suggestions-for-a-birthday-party-social-story/>

### References:

<https://www.carautismroadmap.org/planning-a-birthday-party/>

<https://www.carautismroadmap.org/going-to-birthday-parties/>

*This Frequently Asked Questions Sheet was developed by the Autism Services, Education, Resources, and Training Collaborative (ASERT). For more information, please contact ASERT at 877-231-4244 or [info@PAautism.org](mailto:info@PAautism.org).*