



Planning a Social Event: For Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

There are a lot of things to think about when putting together or hosting a social event. The following steps will help you to make sure you are prepared before and during your event:

1. **Decide on the type of event you want to host:** dinner at a restaurant, gathering at your house, gathering at a park, museum tour, etc.
2. **Make a list of people you would like to invite, with their contact information.** Think about what size group be appropriate for your type of gathering. Remember that some people might not be able to come, so it is usually ok to invite a few more people than the size for the group you are thinking.
3. **Pick a date and time.** Keep in mind the weather for the time of year. Check the schedules of the people you would like to invite. Be sure to also check schedules and hours of the location you have chosen.
4. **Invite people from your list to your gathering.** Ways you can invite people: Call them with the details, email the details, mail a paper invitation with your contact information to RSVP, create a Facebook event or some other form of social media to invite people. If the event you are planning costs money to attend, be sure to let your invited guests know if you will be paying for the event, or if they need to pay for it. If they need to buy a ticket in advance, be sure to include the instructions to purchase in the invitation.
5. **Know who is coming.** Keep track of who is planning to come and who cannot make it so you know how big the group will be.
6. **Prepare the entertainment.** If you are planning a gathering at your house, park or other place, make sure you plan activities to keep people entertained and/or engaged with each other for the gathering.
7. **Plan a menu.** If you are planning a party, you may want to provide snacks and beverages for your guests. You can also ask people to bring something to share. Some people may have allergies or dietary restrictions, so you may want to ask your invited guests if there is anything they do not eat.
8. **Keep invitees informed.** Let people know as soon as possible about any changes to the event schedule. Remember, people with ASD can have a difficult time coping with changes in plans. The more time they have to plan for the change the better.
9. **Prepare for the event.** Know the schedule and make sure everything is ready to go that is needed to complete the plan. If you are playing a game, check that all of the pieces are there. If you are meeting for dinner at a restaurant, make a reservation with the restaurant to ensure seating. If you are going to a movie, purchase tickets online first to ensure the movie doesn't sell out before you arrive. If you are meeting at a park, choose a meeting place with a cover just in case it rains. If you are going on a museum tour, call first to let them know how many people are coming in your group so you can tour together.
10. **Enjoy your event!** It is possible that something will come up that will keep some of the people from attending your event that day. Focus on the people who did go and have fun with them. If something doesn't go as planned, try to accept it and/or move on to the next part of the schedule for the day or choose something else to do.
11. **Thank the people who attended your event for coming before they leave.**

This information 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

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