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Preparing for the summer holidays

The summer holiday can be a difficult time for autistic people and their families. Whether they are going away for some of the summer or staying at home, the change in routine can be a challenge. For those going away, everything from travelling to a holiday destination to using public transport and getting used to a new place and routine can prove difficult and create a great deal of anxiety. There can also be a number of sensory challenges with the change of weather, different smells, different noises, applying sun cream, wearing different clothes, all of which can be stressful.

For some, the summer may also be a time of transition - from primary to secondary school, school to college, university or to the adult world. Autistic people and their families may need support to manage this.

This document links to resources that offer advice on managing these issues.

Preparing for change

This guide gives advice on managing change and includes a section on going on holiday.

Change: preparing for change

<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/behaviour/preparing-for-change.aspx>

Preparing for a holiday or day-out

Key to a successful holiday or day out is being as prepared as possible. The following gives useful advice on planning a day out or a holiday:

Holidays: preparation and practicalities

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/family-life/holidays-trips/preparation.aspx>

Days out: planning your day

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/family-life/holidays-trips/planning.aspx>

Going on holiday (Scottish Autism)

<http://www.scottishautism.org/services-support/support-families/information-resources/going-holiday>

Our Autism Friendly Award champions businesses and services who commit to making sure autistic visitors receive the same warm welcome as everybody else. The Award holders include tourist attractions and leisure activities:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/professionals/autism-friendly-award/people.aspx>

Some museums have made adjustments for autistic visitors. Autism in Museums is a website/blog that aims to raise awareness of accessibility for all in museums and it has links to some useful resources.

<http://autisminmuseums.com/>

We produced an autism guide for tourism venues, created in partnership with Visit England (LINK) and England's Inclusive Tourism Action Group.

Welcoming autistic people: a guide for tourism venues

<https://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/media-centre/news/2018-05-22-visit-england.aspx>

The guide offers advice to tourist venues and other services to improve autistic people's experience by making small changes that can make a big difference.

The guide includes information on:

- how they can help autistic people before they visit and suggestions on what to include in accessibility guides and how to create visual stories.
- how to make their venue accessible by assessing it for sensory sensitivity and creating low arousal environments
- tips for interacting with autistic people

- how achieve the Autism Friendly Award.

Using visual supports

Visual supports can be useful to help prepare an autistic person for change.

Visual supports

<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/visual-supports.aspx>

Sensory sensitivities in the summer

Many autistic people can encounter sensory difficulties in the summer, such as problems with applying sun cream, insects or bright sunlight. Below is some information and advice on sensory differences.

Sensory differences

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/behaviour/sensory-world.aspx>

Transition

The summer break can be a period of transition from primary to secondary school, school to adulthood, or school to college/university. Below are some articles that may be helpful:

Pre-school to primary transitions for autistic children

<http://network.autism.org.uk/good-practice/case-studies/pre-school-primary-transitions-children-autism>

Transition

<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/transition>

Transition from secondary school to adulthood

<http://network.autism.org.uk/knowledge/insight-opinion/transition-secondary-school-adulthood>

Bath Autism Summer School: a residential event that gives autistic students the chance to experience various aspects of university life

<https://network.autism.org.uk/good-practice/case-studies/bath-autism-summer-school>

Author: Nathalie Dick
Organisation: The National Autistic Society
Date of publication: 27 June 2019

Our Transition Support service is a free service for young autistic people aged 14 years plus and their parents or carers, looking for information and advice on the transition to adulthood. This includes young people preparing to leave school as well as further and higher education.

<https://www.autism.org.uk/services/helplines/transition-support.aspx>

Travelling

Many airports now offer specific assistance to autistic travellers, and some have our Autism-Friendly Award.

<https://www.autism.org.uk/professionals/autism-friendly-award/people/holders.aspx>

Birmingham Airport

<https://www.birminghamairport.co.uk/at-the-airport/terminal-facilities/special-assistance/>

Bristol Airport

<https://www.bristolairport.co.uk/at-the-airport/special-assistance>

Edinburgh Airport

<https://www.edinburghairport.com/prepare/travelling-with-additional-needs>

Gatwick Airport

<https://www.gatwickairport.com/at-the-airport/passenger-services/special-assistance/hidden-disabilities/>

Other airports that offer autism-specific assistance:

Belfast

<http://www.belfastairport.com/special-assistance/autism-awareness>

Cardiff

<https://www.cardiff-airport.com/special-assistance/>

Heathrow

<https://www.heathrow.com/airport-guide/assistance-at-heathrow/hidden-disabilities>

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Manchester: Manchester airport autism awareness booklets and accompanying video can be downloaded from the Childcare and Family Information Directory.
<https://stockport.fsd.org.uk/kb5/stockport/fsd/service.page?id=U7gQ5anVdZ0>

Liverpool
<https://www.liverpoolairport.com/assisted-travel/hidden-disabilities>

Newcastle
<https://www.newcastleairport.com/passenger-assistance/hidden-disabilities/>

For more information about assistance at UK airports and with airlines, please visit the Civil Aviation Authority website
<http://www.caa.co.uk/Passengers/PRM/Special-assistance-guidance-from-airports-and-airlines/>

Personal stories

Travelling the spectrum: a parent's perspective on holidays and days out with her autistic sons.
<http://acuriousjourney.com/start-here/>

"We're all going on a (autistic) summer holiday..."
<http://aspertypical.com/2014/05/16/were-all-going-on-a-autistic-summer-holiday>

Help and advice

The Autism Helpline <http://www.autism.org.uk/services/helplines.aspx> provides impartial, confidential information and advice for autistic people, their families and carers.