

# BIRTHDAY PARTIES & ASD

Are birthday parties a challenge for your child? Does the day always end in a meltdown? Fear no more! This guide will give you the recipe for a successful time!



## Craft a social story

A social story is a visual guide of what a child can expect in a certain situation. Children with ASD often want to know ahead of time what to expect at birthdays because surprises can make them feel anxious. Talk about where it will be, who will be there, and all the activities. This will also give them an opportunity to ask questions. See the back for an example.



## Encourage social interaction

Birthdays are an opportunity for kids to socialize. Invite other kids to spend time with your child and use prompting to help engage them. Give them a reward for good effort.

## Be flexible

If your child does not like a certain activity, make sure they have choices. Take breaks when needed. Bring a preferred item/activity. Change expectations such as staying at the party for one hour rather than three.

## Consider sensory overload

Some activities, especially at birthdays, may not suit children with ASD well.

## Things that may be too stimulating:

- Loud or sudden noises
- Crowds
- Environment



## Model behavior

Encourage your child to wish their friend happy birthday and tell them what they liked about the party. You can model this behavior by doing the same thing to their friend first.

## Debrief

Talk to your child after the party to find out what they liked and did not like. Children with ASD often have trouble with WH questions, so try asking yes or no questions. Prior to a future birthday, remind them of the previous party- what went well and what could have been better.