



Resources for Parents of Children with Autism

Websites/Articles:



[National Autism Association](#)

The National Autism Association has created a website to help families with children that have Autism. This website can take parents to different pages that explain how to make a sensory room at home, how to use a social story to talk about the Coronavirus, and how to practice social distancing. Additionally, it has resources for parents that include how to help your child when their daily routine is interrupted and how to help kids and family members cope.

[AFIRM](#)

AFIRM stands for Autism Focused Intervention Resources and Modules. This website outlines seven support strategies that are designed to meet the unique needs of individuals with Autism during this period of uncertainty. In addition, examples and ready-made resources are included to help caregivers implement these strategies quickly and easily.

[Supporting Individuals with Autism Through Uncertain Times](#)

A PDF packet developed by the University of North Carolina that provides practical resources to support individuals with Autism through uncertain times.

[Washington Post Article](#)

An article that discusses how to help children with Autism cope with the chaos and uncertainty that surrounds the Coronavirus. A mother is interviewed on how her family is coping with a change in their daily routine and how she is explaining to her son why things have to be done differently at the moment.

Activities:



Social Stories are a social learning tool that supports the safe and meaningful exchange of information between parents, professionals, and people with Autism of all ages. The websites below provide examples of social stories to read with individuals about the coronavirus and how it is impacting lives. Parents and caregivers can create their own social stories with their children by taking their own pictures or drawing pictures together to make a book.

1. <https://northfieldschools.org/2020/03/covid-19-social-story-for-young-children/>
2. <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/learn-at-home-2020/coronavirus-social-story-elementary.pdf>
3. <https://paautism.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/SS-Coronavirus.pdf>
4. <https://paautism.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/SS-SocialDistancing.pdf>
5. <https://paautism.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/SS-HandWashing.pdf>

Make a Sensory Bottle

Fill a plastic bottle with a mix of water, glitter, and a few drops of food coloring to create a toy for your child. Drop in a few buttons or marbles and then seal the lid tightly using a hot glue gun. This activity is a really simple way to help your child learn to engage and stay focused. A step-by-step video guide to making your own sensory bottle can be found in the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2EynmvWyZiI>

Make a Stress Creature

This activity will help bring out the creative side of your child and is a great tool for sensory seekers. You will need an empty water bottle, balloons, rice, markers, and pipe cleaners. First, fill your water bottle with rice and blow up a balloon. Then, top your bottle with the blown up balloon and turn the bottle upside down so that the rice fills the balloon. Deflate your balloon and tie it. Lastly, decorate your balloon to make a silly creature. A step-by-step video guide to making your own stress creature can be found in the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=115mZNOQuNM>

Apps:



[Autism Core Skills School Edition: Academic, Communication, and Social Skills Plus Data](#)

Autism Core Skills includes academic and social learning lesson plans. In this app, students can remain engaged by switching from content that focuses on sight words to a fun activity that focuses on sharing. Team-based activities encourage positive social interactions that are built into the app experience. While some games can be a bit confusing without teacher support, students could easily navigate the activities independently with some prior guidance (Common Sense Education, 2017).

A dashboard screen displays student progress data from a variety of topics, such as color identification, sharing, and consonant-vowel-consonant combinations. Line graphs and charts display student progress and mastery of each concept.



[Children with Autism: A Visual Schedule](#)

Children with Autism: A Visual Schedule is an app for creating picture-based, personalized daily schedules. To begin creating a task, and to help students identify the type of task, choose from one of the 14 pre-made icons and colors, or add your own pictures (e.g., of a classroom or teacher). Provide a brief description of the task to go with the picture. Once you've got your tasks created, you can drag and drop them into a schedule for each day. You can add several "subtasks" to each task/activity, which students can tap to complete when they finish. There's also a time limit option that adds a countdown timer during the task. A vibration alert feature helps remind students of upcoming transitions from one activity to the next. Tap the "now" button in the lower corner to see what task is currently happening. If you want to see the entire week's schedule, tap the calendar icon in the upper left to see a color-coded picture of your upcoming activities (Common Sense Education, 2019).



[Social Story Creator Educators](#)

Social Stories Creator Educators is an easy-to-use app that allows you to view and create social stories with photos, audio, and text. Social stories are short vignettes created by a parent, teacher, or caregiver to help a child with a skill, concept, or situation that involves an emotional or social component. Examples range from activity transitions to dealing with emotions to helping students modify their behavior. The overall goal of a social story is to give students calm, encouraging information and direction. The app includes a collection of pre-made social stories organized by categories such as Self-Care or Friendship and Feelings. Users can also create their own social stories, using the camera or camera roll, the device's microphone, and text. Finished stories can be printed or shared with others who have the app. This pro version for educators has a flat-rate initial purchase price and no in-app purchases. There is also a free version available that includes just one pre-made story, allows users to save up to two of their own stories, and has in-app purchases for upgrades (VanderBorgh, Common Sense Education, 2015).



Podcasts:

NPR.org

A podcast highlighting some tips and ideas on how to talk about COVID-19 to people who have Autism. A mother shares her story on how she communicated the virus to her son.