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Supporting Your Family

Sometimes grandparents are concerned about engaging with their grandchildren who have autism. They may feel uncomfortable about being solely responsible for their care, especially when they are out in public. They can, however, be especially good resources for their typical grandchildren who are sometimes overlooked because of the extra resources needed for the child affected by autism.

If you live nearby, consider inviting your typical grandchildren for sleepovers or take them to restaurants, parks, museums, movies, plays or other community activities. If possible, offer to transport them to after school classes, clubs, sports or religious programs. They need your special attention and reinforcement - and their parents will appreciate the respite time that will provide for them.

If you live at a distance, keep in touch with regular Facetime visits, phone calls, text messages or notes. Send small treats, gift cards or sponsor amusement park tickets. Invite them to visit or to take a trip with you. Be sure to reinforce them so that they feel special and loved.

Easter Tips



Go Beyond the Chocolate

For Easter baskets think about replacing candy with other items or having a mix of candy and non-candy items like stickers, balloons, squish balls, blueberries, organic fruit snacks, or money!

Practice Ahead of Time

If you are going to participate in any traditional activities like an Easter egg hunt, practice ahead of time with just a few eggs.

Bunny Talk

If costumed bunnies will be involved in any of your activities, talk about it ahead of time.

A Safe Place

Whether you're celebrating at home or away, designate a safe space ahead of time where your child can go if they are feeling overwhelmed. Be sure to include familiar toys, games, and lovies as well as music or movie players with headphones to help calm your kiddo.

Go Natural

Skip the chemical-laden food coloring and use all natural options instead if you plan on coloring eggs. Check out this article on how to dye eggs with everyday ingredients: <https://www.mommypotamus.com/how-to-dye-easter-eggs-naturally-with-everyday-ingredients/>

Plan a Special Event In Your Community

Winter Social Event 2018



GAN recently partnered with Northwood, a local high school in Irvine, CA, to provide a great social opportunity for young adults and their caregivers. Northwood High's talented faculty and students presented Disney's *The Little Mermaid* and GAN was given reserved seating for 100 people to attend a Saturday matinee performance. The music, sets and costumes were outstanding and our families enjoyed every minute of the musical. For some, it was their first time to experience live theatre. An added highlight was a photo opportunity with the cast members immediately following the production.

Every community has social opportunities for families. For example, AMC theaters schedule sensory sensitive monthly movie times. Local museums, parks and recreation departments, YMCA's and philanthropic organizations sponsor outings, fairs, and festivals. You can research from home for restaurants or events that will entertain and provide networking opportunities for families affected by autism. Learn about how you can meet other grandparents in your community on our website [here](#) and plan an event in your community for your grandchildren.

Find out how to host a social in your area using our [Social Toolkit!](#) Contact us at info@ganinfo.org if you would like more information.

Resources

Detecting Autism In Toddlers

How to Spot the Early Signs of **AUTISM** in Babies and Toddlers



Frequently grandparents are the first family members to detect that their grandchild may have developmental issues. These "Red Flag" behaviors from the [Autism Navigator website](#) are currently identified as early signs in children who are at risk for an autism diagnosis.

Social Communication

- Limited use of gestures such as giving, showing, waving, clapping, pointing, or nodding their head
- Delayed speech or no social babbling/chatting
- Makes odd sounds or has an unusual tone of voice
- Difficulty using eye contact, gestures, and sounds or words all at the same time
- Little or no pretending or imitating of other people
- Stopped using words that they used to say
- Uses another person's hand as a tool (e.g., putting parent's hand on a jar for them to open the lid)

Social Interaction

- Does not look right at people or hard to get them to look at you
- Does not share warm, joyful expressions
- Does not respond when someone calls their name
- Does not draw your attention to things or show you things they're interested in
- Does not share enjoyment or interests with others

Repetitive Behaviors & Restricted Interests

- Unusual ways of moving their hands, fingers, or whole body
- Develops rituals such as lining objects up or repeating things over and over
- Very focused on or attached to unusual kinds of objects such as strips of cloth, wooden spoons, rocks, vents, or doorstops
- Excessive interest in particular objects, actions, or activities that interferes with social interaction
- Unusual sensory interests such as sniffing objects or looking out of the corner of their eye
- Over- or under-reaction to certain sounds, textures, or other sensory input

The [Autism Response Team](#) has resources and information that can help you find support online and in your community, Here are some areas where you can get assistance:

- The Autism Response Team (ART) is specially trained to connect people with autism, their families and caregivers to information, tools, and resources.
- Families that have a child who has been diagnosed with ASD in the last 6 months can call ART to request a complimentary hard copy of the 100 Day Kit or Asperger Syndrome/HFA Tool Kit. You can also access these online.
- The *Autism Speaks Resource Guide*, is an online national database of autism providers and resources searchable by state and zip code.
- Online Tool Kits provide information, timelines, strategies, and more on many topics relevant to autism.

World Autism Awareness Day

April 2, 2018



World Autism Awareness Day was designated by the [United Nations](#) in 2007 in an effort to end stigmatization and discrimination against those with autism. World Autism Day is celebrated annually on April 2nd and fits in with the UN's Agenda for Sustainable Development, which promises to leave no one behind.

Autism Speaks is celebrating World Autism Awareness Day with a #LightItUpBlue campaign - visit their campaign site to share your story here - <https://autismmosaic.org/>

eBay Donations: Spring Cleaning

Donate to GAN's [Giving Works eBay Store](#)

Grandparents have lots of "stuff" like collectibles, unused gifts and household goods, clothing, vintage jewelry and things in good condition that our families "do not want."



Your "stuff" can benefit other grandparents and families affected by autism. The Grandparent Autism Network welcomes donated goods.

You can drop off tax deductible items at Jay's Catering, 10581 Garden Grove Blvd., Garden Grove, CA - or send them C/O GAN at 23785 El Toro Road, #103, Lake Forest, CA 92630 (USPS flat rate boxes may lower mailing costs!)

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**Networking together,
grandparents are a vital
resource for autism...
and each other!**