



PREP YOUR LOVED ONE

How to Prep Your Loved One for a Social Event: A Caregiver's Toolkit



Prep Loved One for a Social Events...

We understand that preparing your loved one for a social event can sometimes feel like an overwhelming task. Managing anxiety, creating a sense of emotional fulfillment, and ensuring they are well-prepared mentally and physically can require energy you may not always have.

This toolkit is designed to provide you with simple, practical steps to help your loved one feel more at ease, confident, and ready to enjoy their social experiences.

In this guide, we cover:



A step-by-step guide to reducing social anxiety



10 simple and fun activities to build social skills before and after the event



A community engagement starter pack to find and join local activities



A step-by-step guide to reducing social anxiety

Attending a social event can be both exciting and intimidating for adults with developmental disabilities (DD). Social anxiety is a common challenge, but with the right preparation, you can help your loved one feel more relaxed and comfortable. This guide provides a simple, actionable plan to reduce anxiety before, during, and after the event.

Social gatherings can feel daunting, but with the right preparation, your loved one can approach them with calm and self-assurance. Here's a customizable routine that helps reduce anxiety and prepares them mentally and emotionally for social interaction.

Pre-Event Preparation:



Set Expectations: Talk through the event, use visual aids and examples, review the schedule.

Create a Comfort Kit: Include familiar items, prepare relaxation tools.

Practice Scenarios: Role-play common social situations and review coping strategies.

Calming Activities: Practice mindful breathing, engage in light physical activity, listen to calming music.



During the Event:

Personalized Conversation Starters: Help them prepare simple questions and practice active listening

Help Them Identify a Safe Space: Find a quiet area and set a signal for when they need to step away

Encourage Small, Manageable Interactions: Set small goals and use positive reinforcement.

Safe Exit Strategies: Teach them how to politely exit conversations and use nonverbal signals for breaks.

Use Calming Techniques On-Site: Practice deep breathing or mindful observation to stay grounded.

Check-in Points: Schedule regular check-ins or mini-breaks.

Post-Event Reflection:

Celebrate Their Achievements: Focus on the positive moments and successes.

Reflect Together: Review the experience and discuss any challenges.

Relax and Recharge: Allow downtime and incorporate a self-care ritual post-event.

Gratitude and Positivity: Encourage them to express gratitude and celebrate their small wins.





10 Fun Activities to Build Social Skills

These fun activities can be integrated into your routine to help build your loved one's social confidence and communication skills in a low-pressure environment.



Role-Playing Conversations

Practice common scenarios they might encounter at events, such as introductions or small talk.

Social Bingo

Create a bingo card with social tasks to complete during the event, turning interactions into a fun challenge.

The Compliment Circle

Practice giving and receiving compliments in a group setting.

Nonverbal Communication Game

Take turns acting out emotions without speaking to practice reading body language

Two Truths and a Lie

Play this game to improve active listening and conversational skills.

The "Help Someone" Challenge

Encourage them to offer small acts of kindness to create positive social interactions.

Memory Match Game

Sharpen recall skills by remembering details shared during conversations.

Charades

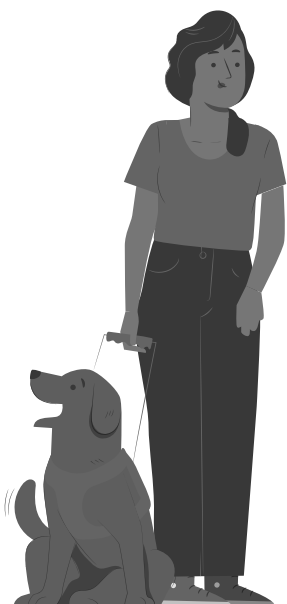
A fun way to practice expressing and interpreting nonverbal communication

Conversation Jar

Use a jar filled with conversation starters to engage in meaningful discussions

"Best & Worst" Reflection Game

At the end of the day, reflect on the best and worst parts, helping them express and process their emotions.





Community Engagement Starter Pack

Finding and engaging in local activities can bring joy and connection into your loved one's life. This section helps you discover, choose, and participate in local events that foster emotional fulfillment and social engagement.

How to Find Local Activities:

Search Local Listings: Check community centers, libraries, and recreation centers.

Ask for Recommendations: Reach out to service providers and local nonprofits.

Use Online Tools: Explore platforms like Facebook Events and Eventbrite.



Choosing the Right Activities:

Match Interests with Activities: Choose activities that align with their interests and comfort level in social settings

Evaluate Accessibility: Ensure the venue is accessible and inclusive.

Preparing for Community Engagement:

Research the Event: Check event details and familiarize your loved one with the venue.

Prepare Social Tools: Set expectations, pack a comfort kit, and encourage small wins

Engaging in Activities with Confidence:

Start Slowly: Allow them to ease into the event at their own pace.

Use Social Cues: Guide them in recognizing social cues and encourage positive interactions

Post-Event Reflection:

Discuss the Experience: Focus on the positives and review any challenges.

Plan the Next Engagement: Build excitement for the next event by setting future goals.



READY TO HELP

Your loved one thrive?

We know how much you care about giving them the best opportunities to grow and enjoy life to the fullest. That's why Smiles Like Yours is here to support you and your family every step of the way. With our day support, outings, social skill-building, and personalized programs, your loved one can experience the joy, independence, and connection they deserve.

Let's take the next step together

Click below to book a free consultation or learn more about how we can create a rich, fulfilling life for your loved one. Your journey to more smiles starts now!

Get Started

or visit <https://smileslikeyours.com/start>