

# 4<sup>th</sup> of July: Tips and Tricks

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What do grilling, fireworks, parades, spending time at the cabin with family, and time on the lake, all have in common? They are things that you can do on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. But if you have children with Autism or difficulties with processing sensory input, it may be hard to enjoy those things. Here are some tips to making the 4<sup>th</sup> of July easier.

- **Prepare your child on what to expect.** You can do this a week before or a couple days before. Tell your child what you will be doing and where you will be going. This can be comforting for the child.
- **Create Visuals.** You can draw pictures or write down the plan. This can be something your child can look at and refer to throughout the day to know what comes next or when they get to go home.
- **Have a plan B.** It never hurts to have a back up plan if your child has a hard day or cannot tolerate the parade or fireworks.
- **Find events earlier in the day.** Many cities offer events and parades in the morning,
- **Keep the day or events short.** Try not to over schedule the day with events. This can cause your child to get tired or worn out if there are multiple events in one day.
- **Bring preferred items.** This could be an activity, a comfort item, or a preferred toy. This can be helpful if your child needs a break or to help them warm up to the environment.
- **Provide sensory breaks throughout the day.** Wherever you are spending the day, decide a spot where your child can go if they need a break. If needed, bring calming items for them to use in that spot. It could be a preferred toy, a fidget, calming music, etc.
- **If your child tolerates headphones or ear plugs, have them wear them during fireworks.** These can help with blocking the sound of the fireworks, yet still allowing you and your child to watch them.
- **Stay Cool.** It can get very hot especially with many events being outside. Plan for water-based activities or breaks indoors to cool off. Keep your child stay hydrated by having water available.
- **Prioritize Sleep.** Make sure your child has a good night sleep the night before and if they are tired, allow them to sleep instead of going to fireworks.

