

Preparing to Have Fun on a Trip

Written by: Nancy Franco, Parent



Since my son was diagnosed with autism at an early age, I have realized that he will face many challenges as he tries to live a healthy and happy life. Knowing this, I have made and will continue to make every effort possible to ensure he is equipped with the proper tools necessary to help him succeed.

My son is very set in his ways and taking him out of


his normal routine is a rather “unique” experience, to say the least. I have often put off the idea of vacationing for fear of how this may affect him. That all changed last year when I noticed he was mesmerized by the Walt Disney World commercials. I was determined to give him something that typically developing children experience. I knew there had to be a way to

for him to experience Disney without completely distorting his little world. I began planning and ironing out the details of a possible trip.

My son responds very well to personal stories, so I reached out to his Transition Coordinator to assist in creating one for this trip. We included pictures of family members, itinerary details and places we would see. The

story explained step by step what would happen on departure day, the trip and our return home. We began reading it together and I would quiz him about the details. This was fun for him. Prior to our trip, I took him to the airport a few times so he could get used to the noise level and relate to some of the pictures from our story. Every new visit became more and more fun for him and I could see the excitement in his little eyes. My son also enjoys watching the Mighty Machines, so we watched the one about the airport quite a few times to help him take it all in.

Thankfully, due to all this preparation, I’m very proud to report that we had an amazing airplane ride and Disney vacation. My little man was in complete awe of everything he experienced!

 For additional resources and ideas for creating priming materials ask your Supervising Therapist or Transition Coordinator about some of the following titles from the TPAS Parent Library: *Out and About*, *The New Social Story Book*, and *The Child with Autism Goes to Town*.

Respite Care – It’s Worth It!

Written by: Heidi Smits, Transition Coordinator, TPAS

Everyone needs to take time for themselves to escape from the stresses of everyday life. Parents that have a child with autism often have additional physical and emotional demands placed on them, and it becomes even more important to take a break and relax. This is why respite care for your child can be so valuable.

Respite care can involve hiring someone to take your child out in the community or taking your child to a respite program. It may be difficult to imagine introducing a new person or people into your child’s life. Here are some key steps you can take in order to prepare yourself and your child. First of all, it is important to learn as much as possible about the person or program that will be involved with your child. If you are hiring a respite worker, meet them on your own first. When you are comfortable, let them spend time with your child while you are

around. You will be able to see how your child responds to the respite worker and if it is a good match. Similarly, if using a respite program try to visit the program in order to observe the routines and meet the staff.

It is essential that the respite workers and your child become comfortable with each other. Make time to meet with the worker before the respite care begins to discuss the strengths and needs of your child, and any strategies that have been successful. In addition, prepare your child for respite care by showing them pictures and talking about what will happen during respite services.

Arrange respite care for your child. It’s worth it!



Get connected by visiting www.respiteservices.com or calling (416) 322-6317 to speak to an Access Facilitator.



Priming: What to Do Before You Get There

Written by: Dania Buttus, Instructor Therapist, TPAS

Summer provides opportunities to experience many new fun activities for you and your child. There are a variety of strategies to help you prepare: one such strategy is known as priming. Priming allows for slow exposure and practice for an upcoming event such as a family BBQ, a trip to the zoo or perhaps a camping trip.

Priming for an event can include viewing pictures of the place where you are going, so that your child has a visual representation of the surroundings he will encounter. If a trip to the zoo is in your plans, you can prime your child by looking at books with pictures of animals or playing with toy animals together, and discussing what sounds they make. You can also look at a map of the zoo so that your child can take an active role in planning. Another idea may be to go to the location where the event will take place. For example, if you are attend-

ing a BBQ at a park, take your child to that park a few times before the event. You can also provide exposure in your home environment. You can have a BBQ in your backyard leading up to the event in the park.

If you are going camping, prepare your child by practising camping in your backyard. First you can set up the tent and have him play around it. Once he becomes comfortable with having the tent in the backyard you can place some toys inside and play some games. Then, you can try having a nap with your child in the tent, eventually building up to spending the whole night. This slow build up to making the tent fun and comfortable will get you on your way to a successful camping trip.

Using priming as a strategy involves a time commitment but once you have invested the time, you will see that it is worthwhile.

For more information on using priming with your child speak to your Supervising Therapist or Transition Coordinator

Upcoming events:

Please visit www.surreyplace.on.ca for more information & other events

TPAS Fall Festival

Saturday September 10, 2011

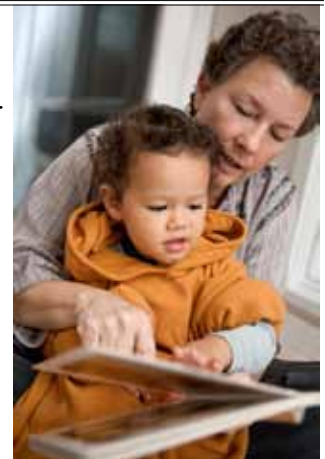
11:30am – 2:30pm

Come be a part of our 3rd annual TPAS Fall Festival. Join us for a BBQ and play event for the whole family. There will be lots of games and activities. The TPAS Fall Festival is a chance to meet and talk to other parents, win prizes, and have fun. We look forward to seeing you there.

Priming Materials Made Easy

Written by: Julie St. Amant, Autism Program Assistant, TPAS

Is there an event or trip coming up in the future that will take your child out of their routine? Does making priming materials feel like it may be a challenge to you as a parent? There are many resources to help you create materials for priming your child for upcoming experiences. You could use items around the house such as a photo album containing pictures, text, and small related objects to review with your child before an event. If your child is interested in the computer, use software such as Power Point to put pictures and words together into a slideshow. You can also view a variety of websites of destinations and attractions you will be visiting to access photos and other priming activities. By using widely available software such as Windows Movie Maker, it is also possible to make priming videos. Priming materials can be easy to make and still be very effective.



Visit www.connectability.ca to access a Visual Search Engine that includes a variety of pictures that may be used in priming materials. The Connectability website also contains a tip sheet on [Creating Personal Stories](#).