



“ Tips for autism-friendly sleepovers



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As an autistic kid, I always dreamed of going to sleepovers — who wouldn't want to stay up all night playing games and hanging out with friends? But instead, I often felt left out while others got to enjoy these special moments.

That's why, with the help of parents and caregivers in our community, I've put together some tips for a sleepover kit to help autistic kids have fun without feeling like they don't belong.

With a little planning, you can make sure that your child feels comfortable and included. Everyone is different, so make sure you customize your sleepover kit to meet your child's needs.

Before the big night, it can help to create a teaching story that walks your child through what to expect so they'll feel more comfortable and prepared. Go to autismspeaks.org/teachingstories for templates you can customize.



Some essentials to pack in your sleepover kit:

“About me” cheat sheet:

Pack a cheat sheet with important information about your child to share with hosting parents. Don't forget to list emergency contacts! You can find one at autismspeaks.org/aboutme.

Go-to activity or game:

Bring your child's favorite game or activity to make it easy for them to share their interests and play with their friends.

Phone or tablet: Be sure your child has a way to contact you if needed. Consider agreeing on a “code word” to use if they want to come home but don't want to tell their friends.

Safe foods and favorite snacks: Include safe, sensory-friendly food options – especially if your child has specific food preferences or allergies. And if you're packing their favorite snack, consider bringing enough to share with their friends!

Comfort items: Pack your child's favorite toy, blanket, fidget spinner or stuffed animal so they feel comfortable while away from home.

Headphones: If your child gets overstimulated easily, a pair of headphones can help them block out noise and calm down before rejoining their friends.

Comfy clothes: Pack a pair of cozy clothes to keep your child relaxed, especially if they're sensitive to certain textures.

