



July Monthly Topic:

4th of July

Neighborhood parties, community fireworks, grilling, and sparklers!
With the noise (booms, whistles, & pops), visual input (sudden flashes), unpredictable touch (crowds, people moving randomly), and different smells (picnic food, smoke from fireworks), children are prime for over-stimulation.

Getting Prepared Days Ahead

- ✓ Pick a party/event that will work for your family – size, location, level of noise, familiarity with the location, etc.
- ✓ Read a story about the 4th of July or watch videos online.
- ✓ Make a picture schedule of what to expect. Talk about the steps in positive terms (“Sometimes there will be a sudden noise, but we’ll be OK.”)
- ✓ Provide lots of heavy work and deep touch pressure on the days leading up to the holiday.
- ✓ With your child, pack a backpack with comforting items needed for sensory breaks away from the party – favorite stuffed animal, cozy blanket, etc. Careful not to have these cozy items near fireworks or the grill.
- ✓ Try not to have other highly challenging activities scheduled in the days before the party/event.

On the Day

- ✓ Make a conscious decision to have some quiet time before going to the party/event.
- ✓ Remember to pack:
 - noise filtering headphones or ear plugs
 - extra shirt – perhaps larger in size – so the child has an extra “barrier” between him and the world around him
 - extra clothes in case of spillage so your child can get rid of the itchy/gooey clothes; maybe even comfy pajamas for the end of the evening
- ✓ Ask the host to help you identify a safe spot at the party/event for intermittent breaks from the noise and hub-bub.
- ✓ At the party, set up a spot where your child can have his/her “own space” with a chair or large beach towel.
- ✓ Be mindful of your child’s signals that he/she is becoming overwhelmed before the meltdown happens.
- ✓ Plan on going straight home after the event so your child’s “insides” can relax.