

Community Outing Tips

Playground

The playground is a place for children to slide, swing, learn social interactions, and be a kid. Explore the area to help teach the skills needed to have a fun and safe adventure in the playground. Start teaching the skills needed for safe and successful trips to the playground or park at home. Use a privately owned playground set or ask a neighbor to use theirs. Practice this as much as possible. Demonstrate the action and break down into sequential steps to make them easier to teach. You can modify each of the suggestions below to fit the person's needs. Invite friends to a play date at home or the playground. This is an easy way to transition from the yard to the playground. Surrounding the child with familiar faces might make them feel more comfortable socializing.



When you and your child are ready, visit the playground when it's not crowded. This way you're able to explore the elements of a playground with little interruption from other patrons. Perform a walk through of the playground to check for hazardous equipment or dangerous material. If your child tends to wander, take note of the exits and stay in visual contact with your child. Bring snacks and drinks for your child. You can use them as reinforcement for their behavior. Having a well stocked first aid kit readily available could come in handy.

Below are some teaching suggestions to use with your child. Modify for use at home or at the playground.

The Swing:

- Demonstrate how to use a swing for the child. Remind him or her about the importance of waiting for your turn and to not walk behind, close in between or stand in front of a moving swing.
- Teach how to sit down on the swing, using one hand to hold the seat and one to hold the chain or harness. Reinforce using two hands to hold on.
- Teach the pumping motion while standing still: hold out child's legs out to teach "front" then "back". You may also want to teach swinging straight and not in the path of others.
- Show the child how to stop swinging (decrease pumping) and how to exit the swings carefully.
- Use smaller swings (if possible) to teach the "swing" motion. Swing gently with the child until comfortable.
- Once comfortable with the swing and pumping motion, move to a larger swing and put skill in motion.

The Slide:

- Start with a small, straight slide.
- Introduce and show climbing the ladder.
- Demonstrate by going up the ladder and down the slide.
- Remind your child about the importance of waiting his/her turn and that only one person should slide at a time.
- Teach your child to look to see if someone is sitting or standing at the bottom of the slide.
- Stand behind the child. Pick up the child's foot to show climbing the ladder and descending.
- Help your child get ready to slide by holding the cross bar with both hands.
- Remind your child to always slide feet first.
- When your child gets to the bottom, they should stand up and move out of the way so the next person can slide.



Monkey Bars:

- Show the action.
- Help them climb the ladder or mount the monkey bars.
- Stand close by or hold your child to get them used to hanging.
- Demonstrate the importance of using both hands and guide your child across the bars.
- Teach right hand over left hand.
- Show the child how to properly dismount the monkey bars.

www.childrens-specialized.org/KohlsAutismAwareness

For more information about this program contact: KohlsAutismAwareness@childrens-specialized.org



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