



Celebrating with Special Needs Children

Celebrating the 4th of July can be an exciting and memorable event for most of us, but for some families with special needs children, the celebration may be overwhelming. The good news is - It doesn't have to be! There are many things families with special needs children can do in order to make the 4th of July and many other celebrations something everyone enjoys and looks forward to.

Many things about celebrations such as fireworks on the 4th of July, music at concerts, crowds at parties, etc. can cause sensory overload, fear and/or anxiety for some children and even for some adults. The key to a positive experience is planning and preparing! You know your child best, so plan around his/her needs. Below are some ideas for making your celebration one that you and your child can enjoy together.

- For firework shows - Bring hats, headphones, sunglasses or anything that will help block out as much of the sounds and bright lights as possible.
- Bring along your child's favorite snacks (preferably healthy ones).
- For any event, prior to attending, watch some videos together showing similar events so your child knows what to expect.
- Bring along some of your child's comfort items such as favorite stuffed animal, book, tablet (to play favorite music or distract with favorite show or game if necessary).
- Discuss ways to cope with fear and anxiety with your child's pediatrician. They may suggest using a weighted blanket or other sensory friendly items.

- If the event is simply too overwhelming for you or your child to handle don't feel pressured into attending. Instead, find an alternative that can be just as fun but less overwhelming.

For example:

- Bake a 4th of July cake and decorate it together.
- During the 4th of July, watch the fireworks on TV or go somewhere where you can watch them away from the crowds and in a quieter, calmer place.
- If you have pets that are scared of fireworks, you can have your child help take care of them and give ideas on ways to comfort them. This may help your child focus more on the pet rather than on their own fear and anxiety.
- If your child is too scared of the fireworks even while at home: listen to music, play games, watch a movie and/or make jokes until the fireworks are over.

Many celebrations are too sensory-heavy for children with special needs. Preparing and making the best out of the experience can help families not only cope but potentially create positive and lasting memories. Take these opportunities to learn what works best for you and your child. Not every child and family are the same, so it may take a few tries before you find what works best. Most importantly, don't give up! You and your family deserve to enjoy whatever celebration comes your way!

Happy 4th of July!

- Mey-ling Cortinas

News & Events

• **Happy Independence Day! Enjoy a safe and fun 4th of July!**

• **Kohl's adds adaptive clothing to its three top kids' brands!**

Check out their new line of adaptive clothing by clicking on this link. www.kohls.com/search.jsp?sub-mit-search=web-regular&search=adaptive&spa=2&kls_sbp=37950975634577687473432105404775742173

• **Where to Watch 4th of July fireworks in Dallas**

For a list of events visit: www.dmagazine.com/arts-entertainment/2019/06/where-to-watch-fourth-of-july-fireworks-in-dallas/

• **Where to Watch 4th of July fireworks in DFW**

For a list of events visit: https://fortworth.citymomsblog.com/2019/06/17/guide-to-fourth-of-july-tarrant-county/?mc_cid=1a348639ae&mc_eid=2397803faf

• **Where to Watch 4th of July fireworks in Austin**

www.austin360.com/entertainment/2019/07/01/where-to-watch-fourth-of-july-fireworks-around-austin

• **Rays of Light Night Lights**

Giving parents of special needs children 4 parent night out hours. 1st, 2nd and 3rd Friday of every month - 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. at Lovers Lane United Methodist Church, at White Rock United Methodist on the 1st Friday, and at Christ Foundry United Methodist Mission on the 3rd Friday for Spanish - speaking families. www.raysflightdallas.org/programs

Resources

• **VIVA Pediatrics Resources**

In an effort to help our families, we constantly strive to provide them with relevant and helpful resources and information. Visit our resources page online at: www.vivaped.com/resources

For current events visit us on Facebook. www.facebook.com/VIVAPeds

• **Care Starter App**

The Connections App is a complete resource guide for families of kids, teens and adults with special needs. Their goal is to help you find providers, organizations and other resources in your community to help you along your path of care. Download the CareStarter App now! www.carestarter.co/connectionsapp



• **The Parker Lee Project**

The Parker Lee Project is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping families of children with medical needs obtain the necessary supplies & equipment, education, and support they need. While most supplies are covered by insurance, some are not, or not enough supplies are provided. If you have a need for medical supplies or have supplies to donate, please visit their website at www.theparkerleeproject.org

• **Texas Star Kids**

The Texas' Star Kids mandate threatens the lives of our weakest and most vulnerable little citizens. Join us in standing up for those who have no voice. Click this link to sign up: www.facebook.com/ProtectTXFragileKids
For more info visit: www.protecttxfragilekids.org

• **Thrive Magazine**

Need Resources for your child with special needs? Thrive Magazine shares resources and stories of other families in the DFW area who are living and thriving with special needs. www.dfwchild.com/thrive/directory

• **Recognize a VIVA Star**

Viva Pediatrics has an Employee Rewards and Recognition Program to thank and recognize employees that go "above and beyond". Both employees and patient families are welcome to recognize a VIVA employee! Call one of our offices and let us know if a VIVA employee has gone above and beyond!



Get Healthy with Giggles

More Summer Safety Tips!

Summertime has finally arrived in Texas and the heat is just plain HOT. Giggles is all about fun in the sun, but he wants you to know how to be safe as the heat index rises. The number one thing we all need to do is HYDRATE. Did you know that Infants and children are more susceptible to dehydration than adults? Children's bodies contain more water than adults, they also have underdeveloped temperature regulation systems, and they often don't freely consume enough fluids to stay hydrated. Certain medications and medical conditions can also interfere with a child's ability to stay hydrated. Be sure to ask your child's doctor what their adequate fluid intake for the day is during the summer, or during periods of high activity. Setting a family goal of how much to drink in the am and pm can be fun tasks and helps form good habits moving forward. Giggles likes to stay hydrated with water, juicy fruits and vegetables like grapes and cucumber, and be eating popsicles from time to time. What are your favorite ways to hydrate?

Food for Thought



Roasted Parmesan Rosemary Potatoes

Ingredients

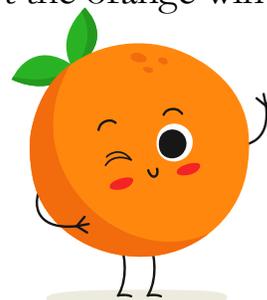
- 1 1/2 pounds new potatoes, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh rosemary
- salt and ground black pepper to taste

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C). Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil.
- Mix potatoes, olive oil, Parmesan cheese, and rosemary in a bowl. Season with salt and pepper. Spread potato mixture over prepared baking sheet.
- Bake in preheated oven until potatoes are golden brown and tender, stirring once, about 40 minutes.

Serve and enjoy!

Why didn't the orange win the race?



Because it ran out of juice!



Just for Giggles!