



With Mardi Gras quickly approaching, attending parades can provide challenges for families with children with autism and other developmental delays

Here are a few tips for families:

1. **Plan Ahead:** find parking spots and the easiest routes in and out ahead of time.
2. **Give a “Heads Up”:** use calendars and schedules to help prepare your child for upcoming events.
3. **Familiarize:** help your child know what to expect by reading books about parades, watching videos of parades, looking at parade pictures, or make up your own parade stories.
4. **Have a parade day plan:** write out or use pictures to show the sequence of events on parade day. Ask other family members for help with your plan.
5. **Pack the necessities:** have favorite snacks and activities for your child in case he/she loses interest in the parade.
6. **Be mindful of your child’s limits:** a successful 20 minute parade experience is much more enjoyable and memorable than a longer one that ended in distress for your or your child.
7. **Be comfortable:** bring chairs, a wagon, blankets, noise cancelling headphones, sunglasses... items that will help your child be comfortable.
8. **Be safe:** if your child has a tendency to wander, use a buddy system with other family members to keep your child close by, have identifying information on your child in the event you get separated.
9. **Have an exit strategy:** develop a plan and a time for leaving, it could be a time limit or the first signs that your child is “done.”
10. **Most important tip:** reinforce desired behaviors throughout the planning, preparation, and parade experience; notice and be lavish in your praise and attention when your child is doing well. Celebrate the small successes!

THIS MONTH’S FAMILY MEETINGS

- Houma 2/19 Group Meeting at **8:45am**
- Thibodaux 2/20 Group Meeting at **2:30pm & 6:00pm**
- Thibodaux 2/21 Group Meeting at **8:45am**
- Baton Rouge Group 2/20 Group Meeting at **1:00pm**
- Hammond Group Meeting 2/27 at **2:00pm & 5:30pm**
- Hammond Individual Meetings 2/28 **9-11:00am**
- Lafayette Group Meeting 2/21 at **8:30am**
- Lafayette Individual Meetings 2/21 **9:30-12:30**

Group sessions are open to any Touchstone parent or other legal guardian. Other caregivers may attend *with* parents/guardians. Please refrain from bringing children to the group meetings. Individual sessions can be held in centers, home, or community.

Join Us! If you are unable to attend the monthly meetings, please contact Angie Lanoux at: alanoux@tc-aba.com to set up individual meetings.

ONLINE BLINK PARENT EDUCATION

To check coverage, set up your online BLINK account, or to schedule an online session, contact Janice at

February Annual Review Meetings

Each February, Annual Review Meetings are held with each family to discuss annual goals and objectives, current and past progress, and the transition process. Meetings are led by your child’s Lead Technician or Supervisors.

Primary caregivers and other family members, and school personnel (as appropriate) attend the review meetings.

Be on the lookout for scheduling emails from our Family Services Coordinator, Angie Lanoux – alanoux@tc-aba.com