



## BEAT THE HEAT

With the high temperatures of July now upon us, it can be hard to find fun activities for children in the heat of summer. Summer can be an especially tough time for children with autism spectrum disorder, due to changes in routine and increases in free time. Here are few "beat the heat" summer activities.

**Cooking!** Getting in the kitchen might be a fun activity for both of you. Preparing food can be a great way to improve skills such as reading, listening, sequencing, and even math- measuring out ingredients or counting eggs.

- Try to begin a child's cooking experience by getting them engaged in how to make their favorite foods. Children may be more willing to participate if the result is something they already like to eat.
- Keep in mind, it might take repeated exposures to new foods before a child is willing to touch, taste, or eat a new food.
- Cooking can be messy, involve new smells, or be noisy. Start slow and simple. Introduce one new cooking experience at a time and provide lots of positive reinforcement for participation.
- If your child can read, re-write recipes with simple and direct language. For pre-readers, you could also print pictures of the steps to prepare a food. Using sequencing cards to visually show each step can let the child know what is next and gives caregivers an opportunity to reinforce completing each step.

**Water Play!** Swimming and other water activities may also be a fun and cooling summer activity.

- Swimming – safety first – consider swim lessons. Reach out to local swimming organizations or autism chapters to find swim lessons for children with disabilities.
- With any new experience, keep in mind it may take multiple opportunities and lots of positive reinforcement to help a child try new water activities or learn to swim.
- Water play -what better way to cool off in the summer than with a playful water gun or balloon fight with family and or friends?

**The Movies are Back!** Escape the heat with a trip to the movie theater.

- Many movie theaters in the summer have special viewings for children and some theaters have showtimes for children with disabilities. AMC Theaters in Baton Rouge and New Orleans offer sensory-friendly film days with the lights turned up and the sound turned down. Visit their website for the latest information on showing times and dates.
- Don't have sensory friendly movies in your area? See a movie early in the day that has been out for a while- the crowds may be smaller.
- Practice at home with turning down the lights, the volume up a bit and bring out the favorite snacks!

**Celebrate Small Successes!** Any new experience may present challenges – new sights, sounds, smells, locations. Touching a new food, dipping toes in the pool, or just sitting through the movie trailers may be a reason to celebrate for some children. Learning new skills takes practice and children with autism or other disabilities may need lots of practice.

**PRACTICE MAKES PROGRESS!**

## Parent and Caregiver FAQ

**Question:** My child has mastered a goal in the center but why won't he do it at home?

**Answer:** Reliably demonstrating a new skill in the environment in which it was taught and then demonstrating it in a different environment where it was not taught is called generalization. Generalization of skills is the overall long-term goal of ABA. We want clients to be able to use their new skills whenever and wherever they are needed. Unfortunately, generalization does not always happen automatically. The good news is we have strategies to help caregivers increase the likelihood of generalization. If you have questions about generalization, please reach out to Angie Lanoux to schedule a 1:1 meeting and/or your July Progress Meeting - see below.

## THIS MONTH'S FAMILY MEETINGS

Houma/Thibodaux 6/23 **Group Meetings in-person and online July 28 @ 9:30am, July 30 @ 12:00.** Both in-person meetings will be held in Thibodaux, 1000 Plantation Rd, Suite C. COVID safety protocols including masks are required.

**July Progress Update Meetings:** Each July, members of your child's treatment team will meet with you to review progress, discuss transition plans, and provide an opportunity for you to observe your child in session. Be on the lookout for an email to schedule or contact Angie Lanoux.



July

## New Family Orientations

Please join us for **one** of the following orientation sessions:

**Saturday, July 17, 9-11am**

**Sunday, July 18, 2-4pm**

**Wednesday, July 28, 1-3pm**

Please contact Angie Lanoux at [alanoux@tc-aba.com](mailto:alanoux@tc-aba.com) or [jhuber@tc-aba.com](mailto:jhuber@tc-aba.com) to register.

Sessions will be held online via ZOOM.

If you are unable to attend one of the sessions above, please contact Janice – we can schedule a session that works for you!