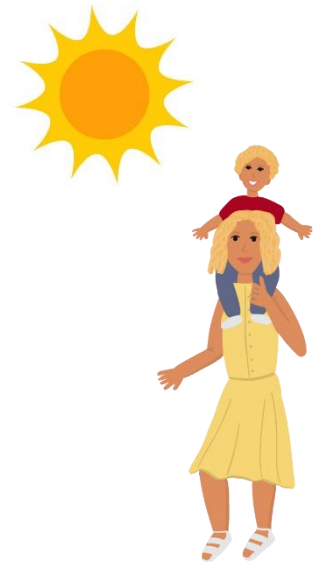


SEND Summer Survival Kit

Summer holidays have arrived and for a lot of families this is an exciting opportunity to spend 6 weeks together having quality time and having lots of fun. For others it is not so straight forward. For children with additional needs 6 weeks out of normal routine or away from school/nursery can be very difficult and it can feel incredibly overwhelming and daunting for their families too.

We have put together this **SEND Summer Survival Kit** with some resources, links, tips and strategies that may help to minimise the feeling of overwhelm and disruption during this time.



Routine



Children with SEN often rely on structure and routine. When they are at school or nursery their whole day is mapped out and this allows them to know what to expect throughout the day. You may find by introducing a daily or even a weekly visual schedule this may help your child to feel more informed and less confused.

For example you may want to create a full break down of the day ahead with timings and locations, activities and meals factored in, this may look a little something like this:

7:00am	<p>Breakfast</p> 
7:30am	<p>Get dressed and brush teeth</p> 
8:00am	<p>TV/Screen Time</p> 
9:00am	<p>Go to the park</p> 
11:30am	<p>Walk back home</p> 
12:00pm	<p>Lunchtime</p> 

If your child struggles to understand whole day schedules then it may be better to break it down into Morning or Afternoon or Now and Next.

This may look something like this:

Now	Next
 <p data-bbox="459 725 539 763">Park</p>	 <p data-bbox="1043 725 1150 763">Home</p>

As long as the information is presented to your child in a way they can make sense of your visual routine doesn't have to be anything fancy, it could be as simple as drawing "Now and Next" on a dry-wipe board.

[Twinkl Symbols](#) is a great free app where you can create lots of different resources and they have lots of templates too. You are also able to use your own images and photographs which may feel more familiar to your child. It is also a really handy tool to have when you are out and about as it is all on your phone.

Children with ASD/LD thrive on routine and not having a clear structure to the day can make them feel very confused, scared and upset which may then lead to them communicating this with expressive behaviours. However, try not to put too much pressure on yourself, it may be that having a structured day is just impossible to achieve as you must navigate siblings, work, elderly parents etc. If that is the case, then just try having structure around mealtimes and bedtimes for example.

Planning

It may feel really daunting to plan the whole 6 weeks up front, however, if you are able to create some kind of plan for the summer then this may be really helpful.

If you're lucky to have a friend and family network then maybe come up with some ways that they can best support you and your family over the summer. They may be able to help out by joining you on day trips or looking after siblings. You could also get some play dates or park trips booked in with them in advance.

Planning is crucial to ensuring that you have the smoothest 6 weeks that you possible can. Of course, there may be some occasions when plans change unexpectedly or don't work out but it may help you to feel more prepared and in control if you have things scheduled ahead of time. You may also find it helpful to take advantage of online food shops during this time instead of battling through the supermarket with an overwhelmed and disgruntled child.

There are a few ways you can do this whether its using a wall calendar, creating an Excel spreadsheet or using the calendar app on your phone. If you have a partner or other family members at home it may also be worth sharing this schedule or calendar with them so everyone in the house is aware of what is happening.

Check out your Local SEND Offer to see what activities may be running throughout the summer in your area. These can be excellent non-judgement and inclusive events for the whole family where you can meet other SEND families. Your Local Offer may also have details of accessible places to visit and details of other organisations who are running inclusive activities throughout the summer.

Please find below links to your Local Authority's website:

[Bristol](#)

[South Gloucestershire](#)

[North Somerset](#)









Communication

Try to prepare your child with a countdown to things happening during the summer. This may be a holiday or a big day trip. It may also help to create a countdown for going back to school in September.

Social stories are really great ways to present big events or conversations to your child in a way that is simple and clear for them. You may also want to prepare your child by showing them photos of places you might visit or people you might be seeing.

There is a resource available on the Twinkl Symbols app to create social stories or you could create a simple social on Microsoft Word and print it out for your child.

A simple social story may look something like this:

School is closed for the summer holidays	
No children are at school	
I will do lots of fun activities at home	
I will see my new teacher in September	
I will see the other children in September	
I will return to school after the holidays to my new class	

Sensory Input

Children with SEN are often highly sensory, and these needs may be heightened during periods of confusion and anxiety which 6 weeks off school can lead to.

Ensuring that your child is able to access their preferred sensory activities in a structured way will hopefully allow them to feel more secure.

Pop together a sensory bag to take out with you with all their preferred items such as ear defenders and chewelry.

If you are going out to the beach or a park for the day then you may consider taking a pop up tent for your child for them to use if it is too busy and overwhelming. You could take a bowl for some water to play with or even a little blow up paddling pool, along with other sensory bits and pieces to help keep them regulated.

Remember if it is very hot then this may have a big impact on your child. Children with ASD and LD can struggle to regulate their temperature and may use behaviour to communicate that they are hot and bothered.

If you are unsure of your child's sensory needs or preferences it may be helpful to complete this [Sensory Screener](#) to identify which sensory input may benefit them the most.

Choice

Give your child some control in plans and allow them to have some autonomy over what is happening. You can do this in a controlled manner by giving them choices of two activities (that you have approved) or set of clothes for example. If children feel that they are having some control over their lives, then they are less likely to try and find control in other areas.

Self-care

This may be one of the hardest things to achieve as the parent of a SEND child as, no doubt, your needs are never at the top of the priority list. However, finding pockets of time to have self-care will allow you the opportunity to regulate yourself and recharge your batteries.

Self-care can take many different forms from having a relaxing bath at the end of a long day, to going for a run if you are able to have some child free time or listening to an audiobook with headphones while you cook dinner. There's no right or wrong way to achieve it find what works for you and your family.

You may find some of these [self-care ideas](#) helpful.



Local Resources

Bristol

Bristol Parent Carers Forum are a pan-disability charity who provide information and support to all families regardless of their child's type of need or diagnosis status. A calendar of inclusive and accessible events can be found on their website [here](#).

Incredible Kids is a charity that provides play and support for families with young people with additional needs in Bristol. Information about



how to become a member and details of upcoming play sessions can be found [here](#) on their website. You **do not** have to live in Bristol to access Incredible Kids, as long as you are able to get to them you are able to use their services.

Bristol Autism Support are a charity who offer information, training and support to parents and carers of Autistic children, either diagnosed or undiagnosed in Bristol, South Glos, North Somerset and BaNES. They run regular coffee mornings for parents and carers and also have a closed Facebook group which is a great way to connect with other local SEND parents and carers in and around Bristol and to learn about accessible events going on locally. A calendar of local activities and events can be found on their website.

[Home - Bristol Autism Support](#)

[Bristol Autism Support | Facebook](#)

Bristol Pink Card

Bristol City Council are required by law to keep a voluntary register of Disabled Children in Bristol. Once you have added your child to the register you will receive a card, which can be used as proof of disability. You can also use it to get discounted entry and sometimes a free carer ticket to many local and national attractions. You can apply [here](#).

South Glos

Special Friends Club is a charity operating throughout the **City and County of Bristol** and the **County of South Gloucestershire**. The Charity was founded by and is run by parent volunteers. They are unique in providing support for families of children with special needs and disabilities by organising a wide range of weekend and School



holiday activities that can be enjoyed by the whole family. They support families who have a child aged 3-25 with a diagnosed disability. Find more information about becoming a member [here](#).

Brandon Trust - Playlink

Playlink supports children from 5 to 18 years of age, in the South Gloucestershire area. Playlink offers a variety of support to over 160 disabled children, with a motivated team of play workers enabling children to have the best experiences possible. They run play schemes, teenage workshops, a buddy scheme, forest skills sessions, and an annual summer activity camp. You can find out more [here](#).

SEND Registration Card

Much like the Bristol Pink Card, South Glos also have a version of this called the SEND Registration Card. Once registered, you will receive a SEND registration card (formally known as the pink card). This may allow carers free or reduced cost entry to some attractions, activities and events. When you visit places show your registration card to the organisation and ask if they have concessions for carers. You can learn more about joining the South Glos Children's Disability Register [here](#).

South Glos Parent Carers Forum have put together a summer holiday activity guide for children and young people with SEND. You can find it [here](#).

North Somerset

North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together Forum are a very supportive organisation specifically for families of children with additional needs. They run coffee mornings, stay and plays, wellbeing days and lots of different information events about a whole host of



issues that may be relevant to you and your child. Over the Summer they are running several fundays at their base in WSM.

You can find them on Facebook or at the following website

<https://www.nspcwt.org/>

SENDCAS Family Passes

Family passes for a range of different places such as Noah's Ark and The Wild Place.

The SENDCAS team know family time is important. They appreciate the barriers faced by many families who have children with additional needs and offer Family Time Passes so that families can visit attractions.

These are offered to families within North Somerset with a child or young person (aged 0 to 25) with a disability or additional need (who are on the Register of Additional Needs and Disabilities).

- passes are available on a first come, first serve basis
- they need five days to process your request
- the venue may ask you to provide evidence of carer status
- they can only offer one pass per family of a child with SEND per week
- your child must be registered on the Register of Additional Needs and Disabilities

For more information on how to get a Family Time Pass and a list of available venues, please contact

SENDCAS@n-somerset.gov.uk

SEND Clubs and Activities Service (SENDCAS)

The SEND Clubs and Activities Service (SENDCAS) run a variety of out of school and holiday activities and outings in Weston-super-Mare and Portishead. The activities support a range of additional needs from ages five (school year one) to 18 years old. These events are organised



by age, ability or friendship group, and planned trips can be tailored to a child or young person's individual needs.

They also provide family stay and play sessions during the school holidays.

SENDCAS@n-somerset.gov.uk