How to Plan a Stress-Free Move with Your Autistic Child

Searching for a new home can be both an exciting and challenging time for families, particularly those with children on the autism spectrum. You’ll want to take your children's needs into consideration when selecting a home to make sure you're creating a safe and comfortable environment in which your family can thrive. Advanced planning before, during, and after the [move](https://www.angieslist.com/articles/how-help-autistic-child-cope-move.htm) can also go a long way toward ensuring a low-stress event for everyone.

Autism-Friendly Home Features

All children on the autism spectrum have their own [unique traits](https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/323758#what-is-autism). You know your child best, so before you start house-hunting, make a list of must-have features for your new home. For example, if your child has [sensory](https://www.spectrumnews.org/news/uncertainty-drives-anxiety-sensory-issues-in-autism/) issues, like sensitivity to stimuli such as loud noise, you’ll want to find a home in a quiet location. If your child has a tendency to wander, you may feel more comfortable in a gated community or a cul-de-sac to help reduce the potential for danger. If you’re working with mobility or separation anxiety issues, a single-story home may be better than a two-story one. Once you have your list of features in hand, you can share your needs with a real estate agent who can help you find the perfect location.

Tips For Home Financing

Of course, part of the home-buying process involves researching [various types](https://www.redfin.com/guides/down-payments-and-home-loans) of lending options. Different loans have different parameters around down payment needs, terms, and [interest rates](https://www.consumerfinance.gov/owning-a-home/explore-rates/). The amount you'll be expected to put down will depend on the type of loan you have and can range from three to 20 percent. Be prepared to assess your financial situation, including income, debt-to-income ratio, and credit score. A qualified home lender can help you examine your finances and offer options best suited for your family's needs.

Making A Smooth Transition

Moving to a new home can be an emotional time for all kids, and if your child has challenges dealing with change or uncertainty, Hidden Treasures notes that [pre-move preparation](https://htaba.com/tips-to-help-your-child-with-autism-move-homes/) can be enormously beneficial. Talk about what the new home will look like, and in particular, discuss their room. It’s best to pack your child’s belongings last and unpack and set up their new room as quickly as possible to create a sense of continuity and familiarity. Make sure your child has comfort items with them as part of the transition process. You may find it beneficial to have a friend or family member with your child on the day of the move to help manage emotions while you’re focused on logistics.

Creating The Perfect Bedroom

When setting up your child’s [bedroom](https://www.todaysparent.com/family/special-needs/how-to-create-a-calming-sensory-bedroom/) in the new home, consider what you can replicate from the previous home – like furniture, bedding, and even room design and organization. Muted colors are calming, and a [clutter-free environment](https://www.sensorykid.info/blog/essential-advice-for-creating-a-bedroom-for-children-on-the-autism-spectrum/) can reduce anxiety. If your child has a sensitivity to fluorescent lighting, make sure you have full-spectrum or dimmable LED light bulbs on hand, and that you buy floor or table lamps in advance if necessary. Personal items, like favorite stuffed animals, should be readily available as soon as you’re in the house. While some kids might be comfortable helping pack and unpack, others may have a hard time seeing empty rooms, so time yourself accordingly based on your family’s particular needs.

According to the Indiana Resource Center for Autism, moving is a [big transitional change](https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/irca/articles/transition-time-helping-individuals-on-the-autism-spectrum-move-successfully-from-one-activity-to-another.html), and the feelings that come around it differ from family to family. Look for ways to create a safe and quiet space during moving day in the event the situation begins to feel [overwhelming](https://www.autismspeaks.org/expert-opinion/parents-child-autism-seek-help-public-meltdowns). Keep your child's unique personality and needs in mind when making this all-important transition to ensure the experience is as low-stress as possible for all involved.

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