



Children's Voice

Waukesha County's Children with Special Needs Program
Monthly Newsletter
June, 2022

How to Help Your Anxious Child Cope with Thunderstorms

By: Life Skills 4 Kids

The warmer months of the year bring all kinds of fun such as swimming, picnics, and fun outdoors. Kids love to play outside and kick off their shoes. Unfortunately for some, the warmer months also bring thunderstorms. And while some of us love a good thunderstorm, if you have an anxious child, you will know that thunderstorms are not fun. For some kids they are a source of sheer terror and as a parent, you have to try to calm them down, keep them safe, and help them cope.

Thunderstorms Cause Sensory Overload for an Anxious Child

For some kids on the autism spectrum and others with Sensory Processing Disorder or sensory sensitivity, thunderstorms cause sensory overload and they can't cope. It's a common fear among all children but for kids with anxiety or sensory issues, their fear goes to a whole new level. So what can you do as a parent to reassure your child and restore calm to the situation?

1. Ask Open-Ended Questions

With some kids, talking them through their fears is a strategy that works well. Ask open-ended questions about why they are afraid of storms - is it because of the noise or the flashing of the lightning? Is it because they are worried there will be a blackout and it will be dark? Do they fear something bad happening as a result of the storm? Does it bring back memories of a time that something bad did happen to themselves or someone else because there was a storm?

Once you find out what the specific fear is, be as reassuring as you can. Try to help them reframe the fear into something less scary - such as the thunder being just sky giants playing with their bowling balls. Try to find something about the situation that makes your anxious child laugh. Funny fears are not as big and scary when they are reframed that way.

2. Use Distraction Techniques

Some children respond well to being given something to do. You can use this time to suggest that you snuggle up for a story or some special family time. Try to keep everyone in the family together so that they feel reassured that everyone is safe.

3. Play Thinking Games

You can suggest that you play a game using your minds; some kids find this technique engaging and will readily take up the challenge. You could think of all the animals or foods that start with a particular letter of the alphabet, or you can play a guessing game where one person thinks of a word and gives everyone else clues until they guess it. There are many ways that you can be creative with thinking games.

4. Use Headphones

For kids that struggle with the noise of a thunderstorm, noise-cancelling headphones work well. Try to find a comfortable spot in the middle of the house away from the windows where your child can put on the headphones and read a book, watch their favorite cartoon on an iPad, or snuggle up with you or a pet.

5. Give Your Anxious Child Something to Hold

Sometimes an anxious child will find it reassuring to have something to hold, especially if it is a favorite comfort item. Try giving your child a favorite stuffed animal or blanket or a fidget toy. Your child may find it calming to hold something that is special as a way of distracting them from their fears.

6. Prepare Ahead of Time

For some kids, it's important to know ahead of time that you are prepared if storms come. This is especially applicable to autistic kids. You can involve them in the preparations and reassure them before a storm strikes that your emergency plans are alive and well. You can prepare a visual reminder of what your family plan is if you lose the power, where the emergency supplies are, and what you will do if someone is injured. Then when your anxious child needs reassurance, you can go over the visual with them and take them to see for themselves that all the preparations are in place if you need them.

7. Make it an Adventure

While an anxious child might fear storms because they are unpredictable, you can turn the unexpected into an adventure. If you lose the power, for example, you can tell your child that you'll have to eat all the ice cream before it melts and so you're going to have an ice cream party. Or you can build a "cave" out of a table or chairs and blankets and all get in it for a special story by torch light. Kids love the imagination and adventure that goes with this approach and it might be an effective distraction from the storm. It's also likely to be a fond childhood memory in later life of the time that you all got under the table in a special cave because there was a storm.

Storms can be scary, but you can help your child cope with a little thought and planning.



7 Engaging Summer Activities for Children with Special Needs

By: Pathways

When you have a child with behavioral and intellectual disabilities, summer offers its own unique challenges. If you're like most special needs parents, you're probably looking for ways to keep your children happy and active during the break from school. Here are a few engaging summer activities for children with special needs.

Sensory Bins: As every special needs parent knows, sensory activities are not only soothing, but can also help with fine motor skills. A beach bin is perfect for summer, with sand, a plastic shovel, sand molds, and tactile seashells or toy fish.

Finger Painting: Another great activity for improving fine motor skills, finger painting also allows children with behavioral and intellectual disabilities to express their creativity. Don't be afraid to let your child get messy, whether they're using washable, non-toxic finger paints, or shaving cream!

Chalk: Chalk is an easy activity that can offer endless hours of fun over the summer months. Encourage older children to draw and to practice spelling words or writing sentences. For younger kids, chalk is a great way to learn letters and shapes, or scribble to their heart's content. Then, turn on the hose or sprinkler and watch the colors blend!

Water Play: Speaking of sprinklers, water play is a great way to keep cool and burn off some energy during the summer months. It can be as simple as letting kids run through a sprinkler in the yard, or it can be as complex as setting up a water balloon fight or water table. You could even visit a splash pad or take a dip in a pool! Just be sure to stay near and watch kids closely when around water.

Indoor Camping: Whether it's piling up pillows and draping sheets over sofas and chairs, or setting up a tee-pee or small tent in the living room, building a fort is a great activity for special needs kids. Create a calming retreat for indoor camping on blazing hot (or rainy) days, filled with favorite books, a cozy blanket, stuffed animals, and even some healthy snacks.

Gardening: Especially good for older kids, gardening is a physical activity that gets everyone outside in the sunshine. It's also an educational tool that teaches children about science and math. Plant some seeds, and use a ruler to see how much your plants grow each week. Gardening also helps teach responsibility, as your child waters and cares for their garden.

Star Gazing: When the sun sets, set out a picnic blanket and gaze up at the night sky. Look for the moon and stars, and try to identify different summer constellations. This educational activity is great for calming sensory overload after a busy day or simply getting children to wind down before bedtime.

Sensory Friendly COVID Vaccine Clinic

Join the Autism Society SE WI and the Waukesha County Health Department for the sensory friendly vaccine clinic. *Deadline to sign up is June 12, 2022.*

Where: Waukesha County Health Department, 514 Riverview Ave., Waukesha

When: Wednesday, June 22, 2022

Time: 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Cost: Free

To Register and For Additional Information: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/vaccine-education-initiative-sensory-friendly-clinic-waukesha-health-dept-tickets-305039530447>

Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin: June Online Support Groups

To register for any of the groups below and for additional information: https://www.autismgreaterwi.org/events-cal/?tribe_page=1&tribe_event_display=list&tribe-bar-date=2022-06-01

Online Teen Hangout

Teens with autism are welcome to join us online to chat and play games! Each month will have a different theme.

When: Sunday, June 12, 2022

Time: 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Online Adult Support Group

This online support group is for adults (18 and over) with autism. It's an opportunity to meet other autistic adults in a casual and welcoming environment, to share experiences, resources, challenges, triumphs, and to lessen feelings of isolation. The group is peer-led.

When: Tuesdays, June 14 and June 28, 2022

Time: 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

New to Autism Virtual Parent Support Group

The New to Autism Group is a monthly virtual group for parents of children newly diagnosed with autism. Join us to connect with other parents for a casual discussion about shared experiences, community resources, and to learn more about the Autism Society. The group will be facilitated by Kelly Brodhagen, Resource Specialist and mother to three sons, two of whom are on the autism spectrum.

When: Thursday, June 16; Monday, June 20, 2022

Time: 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

NEW FORMAT, SAME GREAT CONTENT!

The Children with Special Needs Program would like your feedback regarding our newsletter! What can we add? What should we change? Do you have resources to share?

Please email Michelle Lim at MLim@waukeshacounty.gov.

THANK YOU



SCHOOL'S OUT! Fun Activities!

Family Picnic and Fishing Jamboree at Zachariah's Acres

We're intentional about nature-based experiences that allow our guests to shine and experience something that they don't get a chance to do elsewhere. Our events are designed specifically for children with special needs and provide priceless memories for years to come. Nature-based experiences are exclusively for children with special needs, and their families.

Where: Zachariah's Acres, N74W35911 Servants Way, Oconomowoc

When: Friday, June 3, 2022

Time: 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

For Additional Information: <https://www.zachariahscres.org/service-page/family-picnic-and-fishing-jamboree>

Movie Mondays at We Rock the Spectrum

We Rock the Spectrum - Milwaukee is a sensory-safe gym committed to providing a fun environment to foster learning and exploration. We cater to children of ALL abilities. Every Monday, a movie plays at no additional cost!

Where: We Rock the Spectrum, 140 E. Rawson Ave, Ste 314, Oak Creek

When: Every Monday

Time: 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Cost: \$12.00

For Additional Information: <https://www.mkewithkids.com/event/movie-mondays-at-we-rock-the-spectrum/2022-06-06/>

Waukesha Library - Outdoor Story Time

Join us for a fun-filled, drop-in story time for all ages! Bring a blanket, your lunch, and enjoy stories and fun! (No story time on Monday, July 4. Story time will be moved indoors to the Children's Program Room during inclement weather.)

Where: Cutler Park, 321 Wisconsin Ave, Waukesha

When: Mondays and Wednesdays, starting June 13 through summer

Time: 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

For Additional Information: <https://waukeshapubliclibrary.evanced.info/signup/EventDetails?EventId=5268&backTo=Calendar&startDate=2022/06/01>

Sussex Summer Story Walk

A Story Walk takes a children's book and spreads its pages across a nature trail to allow families to experience a story and the outdoors together. The featured book is *How to Make a Cherry Pie and See the U.S.A.* by Marjorie Priceman.

Where: Village Park, W244N6260 Weaver Dr, Sussex

When: Daily, June 20 - July 5, 2022

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

For Additional Information: <https://www.villagesussex.org/Home/Components/Calendar/Event/988/19?curdate=7-2-2021&curm=6&cury=2022>

Monday Night Movies in the Park

Bring the family and enjoy family-friendly movies under the stars!

Where: Les Paul Performance Center at Cutler Park, 321 Wisconsin Ave, Waukesha

When: Monday, June 20, 2022 - Frozen II

Monday, July 18, 2022 - Tom and Jerry The Movie (2021)

Monday, August 15, 2022 - Moana

Time: Pre-Movie Activity 6:00 p.m.; Movie Begins 7:15 p.m.

For Additional Information: <https://www.waukesha-wi.gov/residents/monday-night-movies.php>

Summer School - School District of Waukesha

Children from Kindergarten through Grade 12 can participate in credit or enrichment courses.

When: June 20 - July 15, 2022 (no classes on July 4)

For Additional Information: <https://sdw.waukesha.k12.wi.us/Page/3004>

Assist WI - WI Dells Summer Fun for Everyone

Assist WI is located in WI Dells and assists families in having a fun experience while visiting WI Dells. It is all volunteer and fundraiser based. They will assist at most of the water parks, will take a hike, or assist with whatever adventure you want to experience as well as provide adaptive equipment for some experiences.

For Additional Information: <https://www.facebook.com/AssistWI/>

City of Waukesha Summer Activity Guide

The City of Waukesha Summer Activity Guide is now available with lots of fun activities for the whole family!

For Additional Information: <https://www.waukesha-wi.gov/government/departments/activity-guide.php>

Discovery World

Discovery World has a sensory-friendly video guide and a sensory-friendly story book guide, for families to access before the trip there to help children prepare for their visit.

For Additional Information: <https://www.discoveryworld.org/visit/accessibility/>

Family Camping in Waukesha County

Learn about all of the great camping grounds available throughout Waukesha County!

For Additional Information: <https://lakecountryfamilyfun.com/camping-in-waukesha-county/>

Let's Craft!

DIY Non-Toxic Sidewalk Chalk Paint By: Vitacost.com

Help your child share their masterpieces with the world, and then wash it away for a brand new canvas!

What You Need:

- ✦ Cornstarch, 1 Cup
- ✦ Water, 1 Cup
- ✦ Measuring Cups
- ✦ Mixing Bowl
- ✦ Food Coloring
- ✦ Small Containers (one for each chalk paint color) or a Muffin Tin
- ✦ Paint Brushes



What You Will Do:

1. In mixing bowl, mix 1 cup cornstarch and 1 cup water until free of clumps.
2. Pour mixture into containers or muffin tin cups.
3. Add a few drops of food coloring to each container or cup until desired colors are represented.
4. Stir contents of each container or cup until completely blended.
5. Grab the containers or cups, paint brushes, children, and head outside!!

Helpful Tips:

- ✦ If the chalk appears to be thin and runny, add more cornstarch. If it appears to be too thick, increase the amount of water.
- ✦ If you don't have any food coloring on hand, you can substitute tempera paint instead.
- ✦ Don't limit chalk art to the driveway and sidewalk. Encourage children to paint other surfaces, such as rocks, too.
- ✦ Chalk paint isn't just for creating works of art. Kids can use it to practice their penmanship, design mazes, and play games such as tic-tac-toe, hangman, hopscotch, and four square. The possibilities are endless!



A Transition Presentation for Supporters of Young Adults with Disabilities

Join us for a discussion about the process of transitioning from children's services to adult services and supports!

Topics that will be discussed during this transition presentation:

- What is the ADRC and what role do they play during the transition process?
- What is publicly funded long term care and how is eligibility determined?
- What options are available for decision making?
- How will the young adult support themselves financially?
- What housing options are available?
- What opportunities are there for training, education and employment?
- Are there additional mental health resources available?

June 8th | 4-6pm

Guest: GWAAR (Decision Making)

Register Today

Space is limited

<https://forms.gle/2NCXbr5Mank7DEfq8>

Aging and Disability Resource Center
of Waukesha County

(262) 548-7848
514 Riverview Avenue
Waukesha, WI 53188

Summer Camps

Make your own at-home summer camp for kiddos with sensory issues that may not be able to go to a summer camp! There are helpful tips and tricks as you click through the page.

<https://www.theottoolbox.com/sensory-summer-camp-at-home/>

My Summer Camp Resource Guide

<https://www.mysummercamps.com/camps/wisconsin/waukesha-summer-camps-more2.html?campType=&ages=&gender=&miles=20&page=&h=&location=>

Special Needs Summer Camps in Wisconsin

<https://www.kidscamps.com/camps/wisconsin-specialneeds-camps.camp>

Art Summer Camp

<https://ottosartacademy.com/2022-summer-camps/>

Bobcat Camp

<https://www.richardsonschool.com/>

Boys & Girls Club Summer Camp - Camp Whitcomb Mason (Hartland)

<https://www.bgcmlwaukee.org/day-camp/>

Catholic Memorial Summer Camps

<https://catholicmemorial.net/admissions/youth-programs/>

Camp Vertical/Elmbrook Church Summer Camps

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

HAWS Summer Camp Program (Animals)

<https://hawspets.org/camp/>

Inspire Summer Camp Brookfield

<https://www.inspire-camp.com/optin1610650607775>

Lake Country Summer Camp Guide

<https://lakecountryfamilyfun.com/summer-camp-guide/>

Sports-related Summer Camps

<https://www.campnavigator.com/City/waukesha-summer-camps.html>

Summer Care

<https://www.stpmuskego.org/page/summer-care>

Waukesha Civic Theatre Summer Camps

<https://www.waukeshacivictheatre.org/production/wct-academy-summer-camp-production/>

WCTC Discover Camp for Middle School Students

<https://www.wctc.edu/events/discover-camp.php>

WCTC Discover My Future High School Camp

<https://www.wctc.edu/events/find-my-future-camp.php>

YMCA Camps

<https://www.gwcymca.org/Summer-Day-Camp/Waukesha-YMCA>

Youth Learning - Summer STEAM Programs UW Waukesha

<https://ce.uwc.edu/waukesha/catalog/category/youth-learning>

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Sensory Friendly Events

Sensory Friendly Sundays at the Germantown Community Library

Join the Germantown Community Library and the Autism Society SE WI as we open the library on Sunday mornings for guests and families with special needs including Autism. Explore the Early Literacy Area, check out books and DVDs, learn about the free library programs and digital resources.

New families are invited to come and experience the power in support and acceptance in a semi-private venue where you can network and connect with other families who share a similar journey.

Sensory Friendly Sundays at the Germantown Community Library provide a judgement free zone for families to be themselves and feel support... and not worry if your kid cannot be quiet or sit still. It is wonderful to be surrounded by others who understand.

Where: Germantown Community Library,
N112W16957 Mequon Rd, Germantown

When: Sunday, June 5, 2022

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Private Library Time
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Themed Activities

Cost: Free

To Register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/free-sensory-friendly-sundays-germantown-library-autism-society-se-wi-registration-246305334887>

Waukesha Civic Theater - (Musical) Mamma Mia!

The story-telling magic of ABBA's timeless songs propels this enchanting tale of love, laughter, and friendship, creating an unforgettable show. A large cast, non-stop laughs, and explosive dance numbers combine to make Mamma Mia! a guaranteed smash. A mother, a daughter, and three possible dads, and a trip down the aisle you'll never forget!

SENSORY KIT: Contains an emotion indicator card, a sensory manipulative object, noise softening headphones, and an oral sensory manipulative object. These kits are always available in the Box Office and are yours to keep and use when you return to WCT.

Where: Waukesha Civic Theatre, 264 W. Main St., Waukesha

When: Sunday, June 12, 2022

Time: Pre-show sensory friendly open house begins at 1:00 p.m.
Show start time: 2:00 p.m.

For Additional Information: <https://www.waukeshacivictheatre.org/box-office/accessibility/>

