

Our National Parks are as diverse and unique as the people who come to visit them. Regardless of which National Park guests are visiting, the goal is to have all guests enjoy the beauty and wonder of the park in a safe, inclusive environment. This resource was created with support and reviewed by individuals on the spectrum.

Here are some ideas to help ensure individuals on the spectrum can safely enjoy their visit to your National Park:

- Post our Visiting a [National Park Social Story](#) on your website. Many individuals on the autism spectrum like routine and visiting a National Park is probably not part of their daily routine. Reviewing a social story can help them better prepare for what to expect.
- Mark high sensory areas with visual warnings. Examples: mark areas that may be loud with a picture of someone covering their ears or using headphones. Or in an area that may have bright or strobing lights, use a visual of someone covering their eyes or wearing sunglasses.
- Offer a visual map of the park.
- Provide a visual schedule map. Include visuals in your park maps. If a loud waterfall is approaching, use a picture of a waterfall to help individuals on the spectrum prepare for what is coming next.
- Provide visuals next to displays. For example, include visuals along with a description to explain a volcanic eruption, the creation of a mountain range or the history of an artifact or a battle.
- Have visuals for don't touch/keep out/stay on path (use a stick figure here or some type of visual demonstrating to stay on the path).
- Provide visuals for rules and where you can and cannot walk.



- Create and/or highlight a sensory friendly area (a place that is quiet and not heavily populated with guests) in the park where individuals can go when they are feeling overwhelmed. Use visuals both at the sight and on a map that designates the area as sensory friendly (perhaps use a visual here of headphones or someone shushing).
- Some individuals may engage in repetitive behaviors, called stimming. This may be in the form of flapping hands, spinning, pacing or making sounds. If the behavior is not causing harm to the individual or others, do not stop this behavior as this may be the way an individual on the spectrum is coping, showing joy, etc.
- Provide a list of menus for all park restaurants so that families are aware of the food options and can prepare ahead of time.