

Neurodiversity, Autism and Safety

Neurodiverse people, especially people with autism, may face extra safety risks. They may sense the world in different ways. They may also have trouble with speech or spotting danger. Studies show that people with autism are more likely to be hurt by accidents than other people (National Autism Association, Columbia University). Because of this, safety planning is very important.

Common Safety Risks for Neurodiverse Children

Caregivers, teachers and family members can help by knowing the main risks.

Wandering: Nearly half of children with autism may walk away from safe places (The Journal of Pediatrics). They may follow sounds, lights or water. They may also try to leave loud or stressful spaces. Wandering can lead to danger, such as cars, water or getting lost.

Drowning: Children with autism have a much higher risk of drowning than other children (National Autism Association). Water can be very tempting. Some children may not understand water danger.

Bullying: About 60% of autistic children and teens are bullied (JAMA Pediatrics). Social rules and body language can be hard to read. Bullying can cause fear, stress and harm.

Self-harm: Some autistic people may hurt themselves. This can include hitting, biting or scratching. This often happens during stress or sensory overload. Some children may also have thoughts of self-harm (Kennedy Krieger Institute).

How Loved Ones Can Help

Safety works best when families plan ahead. Door alarms or GPS devices can help prevent wandering. Locked gates around pools add protection. Swim lessons can help teach basic water safety.

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Sensory needs matter too. Loud sounds, bright lights or busy places can cause stress. Quiet spaces, noise-canceling headphones or weighted blankets can help children feel calm and safe.

Community support is also important. When teachers and first responders learn about neurodiversity, they can respond better in daily life and emergencies. Safety programs and support groups can also help families share tools and ideas.

A Safer Way Forward

Safety is not about changing a person. It is about lowering risk and giving support. With planning, care and simple tools, neurodiverse people can stay safer and feel more confident in the world.

#NeurodiversityChampions #WhatsStrongWithYou

If you or a loved one is curious about neurodiversity or may be neurodiverse, visit Neurodiversity Education Academy for more resources.

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