



Tips for Autism-Conscious Yard Design

All kids need a space to play outside. Time outdoors is vital for physical and mental well-being, and the backyard is the quintessential environment for this childhood pastime. However, an autistic child may not thrive in just any backyard. Here are some tips you can use to design a backyard with your little one's needs in mind.

Understanding Autism

Still learning? Here are some great resources for parents:

- Start by reading the "[About Autism](#)" page from the Autistic Self Advocacy Network.
- Learn more about [sensory overload](#) and think about how it will impact your yard design.
- Here's an expansive list of resources you can use to [learn even more](#).

Staying Safe

Autistic children often have a different relationship with risk than their peers. Here's how to keep them safe:

- Focus on making your yard [accessible](#).

- Prevent dangerous [wandering or elopement](#) by installing a fence and a safe, quiet place to sit, such as a playhouse.
- Allergies are common in autistic children, and they may not have the tools to let you know they're suffering, so pay attention to [allergy symptoms](#) and talk to your doctor if you're concerned.

Embracing Their Needs

Work with your little one to figure out the most comfortable yard possible:

- [Do not surprise them](#) with a new space: Communicate with your child (verbally or nonverbally) so they know you're changing the yard.
- Sensory experiences can make or break your yard, so avoid unpleasant textures, [strong scents](#), or sounds they don't like, and include those they do.
- If you can, find ways to include things they're interested in, such as setting up a space to perform [interesting science experiments](#).

Creating an autism-friendly backyard is a fantastic display of love and solidarity. The world is full of loud noises, uncomfortable textures, and difficult social encounters, all of which can leave autistic children feeling overstimulated, misunderstood, and out of place. With the right design, you can ensure that your little one has a space where they know they always belong.

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