



Image via [Pexels](#)

Moving to a New Home When Your Child Is on the Autism Spectrum? Here's How You Can Make it a Smooth Experience

Moving to a new home is rarely an easy process. And when you have a child who is on the autism spectrum, there are even more considerations to keep in mind. However, if you prepare beforehand, you can make the process much less stressful for everyone involved. Thanks to Jenny Wise, [The Social Chase](#) has some practical tips on how you can have a successful house-hunting, and moving experience when your child is on the spectrum.

Determine Your Budget

Nothing can cause stress quite like purchasing a home that you can't really afford. Set yourself up for success by determining what kind of house you can purchase without depleting all of your finances. Start by [estimating](#) how much you will need to save for a down payment, mortgage insurance, title search fees and factor in your annual income and monthly expenses, including home insurance. Then research the housing market in the area you are interested in moving to for an idea of what kind of purchase price and taxes you can expect.

Involve Professionals

Another way to reduce the stress in your moving experience is to budget for professional help. For example, an experienced real estate [agent](#) can make the entire home buying process go much more smoothly. And be sure to consult your child's physician or therapist for suggestions as to how you can help your child through the moving process. Change can be very stressful.

Even if you're moving into a newer home, you may need to make some changes or upgrades to the space before moving in. Be sure to find qualified [contractors](#) to handle projects, both major and minor. Inform the contractors you have a child on the spectrum, especially, if your child has sensory challenges. And before you hire anyone, verify that they are insured and ask what you can expect from the process.

Provide Sensory Activities

Another thing to consider before moving in is how you can make your new home more enjoyable and relaxing for your child on the spectrum. Consider making room for a reading [nook](#) or quiet space in your home. Set up a tent or other type of retreat mechanism in the [backyard with a fence](#). Invest in a swing set, which not only encourages outdoor play but may help your child relax.

Talk with Your Child

While every child is unique, many on the spectrum value routine and predictability. Therefore, it's easy to see how a major life change like moving could be upsetting for your child. Ideally, start talking to your child about the move months in advance. Introduce the idea, discuss the reasons for moving, and highlight the positive aspects involved. You can also create a countdown [calendar](#) as a visual tool for helping your child prepare for the big day.

Include Your Child in the Process

Getting your child involved in the moving process will help them cope. Ask them to help you pack up boxes so that they can determine which box each item goes in. See if they want to participate in cleaning your previous home as you leave and/or the new home before moving in. Allow them to help you [unpack](#) in the new home. Start with unpacking your child's room so that they can occupy themselves with unpacking and organizing their belongings while you handle the rest of the home. Are you painting? Give your child a choice of three colors to pick for his or her room.

Understand this May Still Be a Tough Transition

Even if you do everything you can to prepare your child for the move and even if they seem calm leading up to it, it's important to realize that they may change their mind once the big day

arrives. Children with autism are [more prone](#) to anxiety than kids without ASD, so when their familiar surroundings and routines change — which inevitably happens when moving — they're bound to feel at least some stress.

They may refuse to leave the home when it's time to go, so you'll need to [handle the situation](#) as delicately as possible. Once you're in the new home, your child may even try to walk back to your old place, especially if they're prone to wandering. Be sure to inform local police in your new area (and in your old neighborhood, if this is a short-distance move) about your little one so they can keep an eye out for them should you encounter a worst-case scenario. Find out if the police have a database for calls where you can provide a picture of your child along with important information. These suggestions aren't meant to scare you, but it's always better to err on the side of caution.

While it may not be a cakewalk, advanced preparation for your move will make it less stressful. Remember to figure out how much house you can afford and bring in any professionals who can make the experience easier for you and your child on the spectrum. Also, think of any changes and improvements you can make that will help your child enjoy their new home and be conscious of how you break the news of the move. And above all, find ways to include them throughout the process.

Jenny Wise, the author of this article, is a homeschooling mom to four children, one of whom is autistic. She and her husband made the decision to home-educate when their oldest was four years old. She chronicles her family's ups and downs in homeschooling on her site, [Special Home Educator](#), as well as provides helpful homeschooling tips and resources.