

medina county board of developmental disabilities - Supporting People with Developmental Differences in our Community -

Celebrations for All!

Realizing a thriving community is diverse and includes all different types of people is important. Looking at ways to include people with developmental differences and making them feel a "part of" instead of "apart" from things is important to supporting and developing inclusion.



Birthdays, graduations, holidays and other special occasions are celebrations people look forward to attending. As you plan your next big celebration, don't forget to be intentional about making it accessible for people with disabilities so they also feel welcome and included.

Offer Support Before Your Gathering

In your invitation, ask your guests if there are any accommodations or things you can do that will improve their visit. Remember to ask about dietary restrictions and preferences. It can also be helpful to give a schedule of events so guests feel prepared and know what to expect. This communication beforehand, gives people the chance to speak up about what they need to feel welcome in your home.

Adjust Your Physical Space

Make sure your home is as physically accessible as possible to everyone attending. This could mean renting a ramp for front door steps, or rearranging furniture so that people can navigate your space safely. Make sure that everyone is able to reach table tops that hold food, activities, or gifts. Consider making a space in your kitchen for people who may need to bring their own meals and supplies so they can enjoy the event in the way that works best for them.

Create a Sensory Space

Consider creating a sensory space in a room that is not being used for the celebration. Sensory spaces are where guests can go to take a break from the typical hustle and bustle of a holiday gathering. A child that needs a nap, a person with sensory concerns, or a new parent with their baby can all benefit from this quiet and relaxing space. To make the space comfortable use low lighting and provide items like pillows, blankets, fidget toys, or books and magazines.

Be Mindful of Sensory Input

Celebrations often come with a lot of decorations, music, foods, and scents. Experiencing too much of these can be very overwhelming for some people with sensory concerns. Some flashing holiday lights can cause visual overload, distraction, headaches, and even trigger seizures. Also try keeping background noise to a minimum to help guests follow conversations better and prevent folks from becoming overstimulated.

Provide a Remote Option

Whether it is due to a disability, sickness, or not being able to travel, it's common for people to feel left out if they cannot attend a celebration in person. Having a remote video option gives guests the chance to connect with those at the gathering. You can even mail or drop off a package which includes food, decorations, or supplies for activities beforehand so they can participate virtually in the festivities.

Finally, remember to enjoy your gathering! Don't let accessibility and inclusion stress you out. If you are reading this list and considering these tips, you are already doing more than most. Stay positive, smile and have a great time!

SCAN TO LEARN MORE



COMMITTED TO INCLUSION