

Making Meetings Successful

In response to requests from parents and Scout leaders, Donna Rosinski, president of the Madison (Wis.) Area Chapter for the Autism Society of America, prepared a handout for area Scout leaders to increase their awareness about autism spectrum disorders.

In addition to providing information about the challenges of autism, she offered some general recommendations for **successful Scout meetings with a child who has autism**. These include:

- Provide structure and routine.
- Ensure rules and expectations are made clear.
- Use clear and simple communication.
- Be visual.
- Give processing time.
- Foreshadow the transitions. Let the Scout know, "In five minutes, we'll end this activity and start another."
- Alert parents if you're going to do an activity that may cause sensory difficulties for their son. They can then decide whether the child should participate or whether some accommodations are needed.
- Be prepared and plan ahead.
- Discuss friendship and social skills with the whole pack or troop. Let them know that you expect them to treat all members of the unit with courtesy and respect.