

# KENNEDY SPACE CENTER AUTISM AWARENESS GUIDE



FOR GUESTS WITH COGNITIVE  
DISABILITIES INCLUDING  
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER



**Kennedy**  
**Space**  
**Center**<sup>SM</sup>  
VISITOR COMPLEX



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## ABOUT THIS GUIDE.

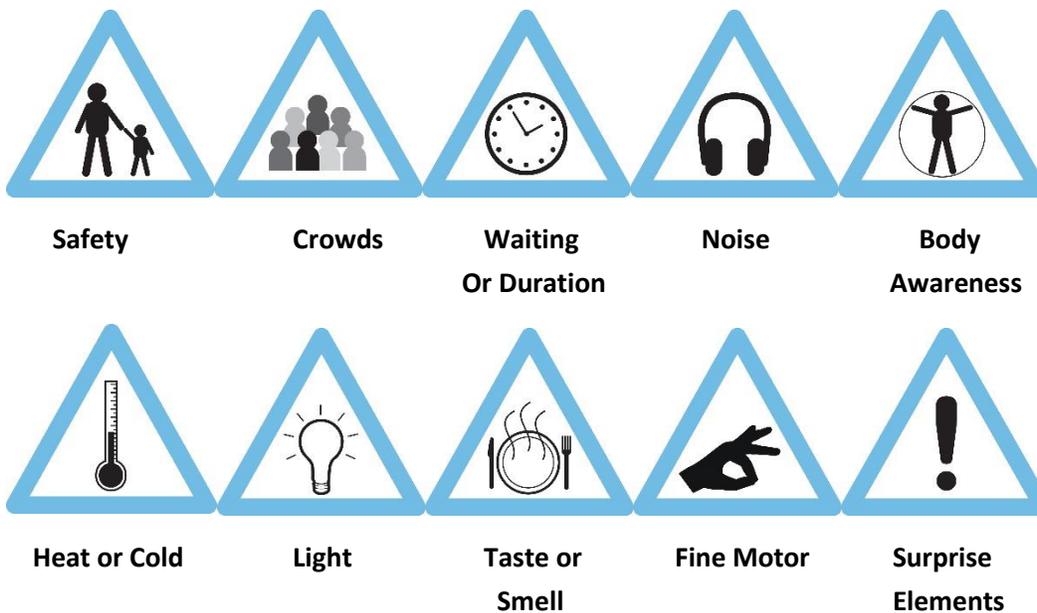
The information in this guide has been prepared by Autism Double-Checked in order to assist parents, or caregivers, of visitors with ASD when visiting Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex.

The objective, throughout, is to give advance information about sensory, and other, issues that may need extra consideration for visitors with ASD. The Guide gives information about the nature of these issues and some possible guidance for how to handle them.

Due to the wide variety of issues that may arise for individuals with ASD, such guidance is general in nature. If you encounter something that is not covered in this guide, please seek the help of a Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex Crewmember.

Throughout the Visitor Complex, you will see signs with the Sensory Issue Advisory Triangle.

Each Advisory Triangle is cross-referred to its section within this Guide.



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## PREPARING FOR YOUR VISIT.



Make use of the KSCVC Website at: [www.kennedyspacecenter.com](http://www.kennedyspacecenter.com). Download and use the Social Story™ for Visitors from the website.



**Crowds.** In general terms, crowding is not a big problem at KSCVC and may not be an issue for many visitors with ASD. This guidance is given for visitors who have a very low tolerance of crowds.

**Noise and Light.** Rocket launches are loud. Launches may be viewed from as close as 2 miles or as far as 8 miles, approximately. (Light is only a factor for nighttime launches).

**Heat or Cold.**

September and late January are the least visited months.

At any time of year, Launch Days are busy and may be better avoided. Visit our website [www.kennedyspacecenter.com](http://www.kennedyspacecenter.com) and click on the tab for information about upcoming launches.

Visitors may wish to utilize noise-cancelling headphones for launch days. Dark glasses (if tolerated) may be helpful for night launches. Alternatively, visitors may choose to visit on a day without a launch.

November to February is the coolest season.



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**Smell or Taste.**

Please see later section for guidance on food service. Visitors with allergies or complex dietary restrictions should review that section and, if nothing suitable is identified should bring their own food and beverage.

All visitors, regardless of ability should wear comfortable footwear. Do not forget water and sunscreen.



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## IMPORTANT GENERAL INFORMATION.



**Waiting or Duration.** For visitors who easily become fatigued.

Proceed to Information (just outside the entrance). There are strollers and wheelchairs available for rent. Strollers are permitted in all parts of the Center that have wheelchair access.

**Noise.** Levels at some of the presentations and exhibits can be loud.

Proceed to Information (just outside the entrance) and request the use of the KSC SmartGuide.

The KSC SmartGuide has jacks for the use of headphones. Visitors who already have their own headphones are advised to use them since they are familiar.

Visitors with noise sensitivity, should bring noise cancelling headphones if they are familiar with them in other circumstances.

**Light.** Many areas feature strong spotlighting in an, otherwise, darkened area.

Parents or caregivers are advised to check each area beforehand. Visitors with light sensitivity should use dark glasses if they are familiar with them in other circumstances.

**Heat.** Outside temperatures vary between warm and very hot.

When inside buildings, it may help to have extra clothing layers for individuals who are sensitive to cold. For individuals who are sensitive to heat, they may need their lightest possible clothing

Indoor areas are all air conditioned and the prevailing temperature is set to a level that is comfortable to visitors that do not have heat or cold sensitivity.

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**Waiting or Duration.** Visitors who may become highly engaged with a particular exhibit /attraction may require considerable extra time. There are many things that a visitor may find very engaging. The following are very approximate guidelines of the time required for visitors who do not have this challenge:

Space Shuttle Atlantis	45 to 90 minutes
Shuttle Launch Experience	30 minutes
IMAX® Theater Presentations	40 minutes (timed presentation, should not need extra time)
Journey to Mars	30 minutes
Apollo/Saturn V Center	45 to 90 minutes
Lunch with an Astronaut	75 minutes (timed event, should not need extra time)
Heroes and Legends	45 minutes
U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame	15 minutes



**Quiet Rooms.** Quiet rooms are available for calming a visitor who has become overstimulated or overwhelmed. In the Space Shuttle Atlantis Building one is located in the Seat Mockup Room on the bottom floor by the Shuttle Launch Experience.



**Safety.** Project Life Saver™ has coverage in the KSCVC area.

SafetyNet by LoJack™ does not have coverage in the KSCVC area.

For other services, check with your provider.



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## LOST PERSON HELP.



- If a family member gets lost, locate a KSCVC Crewmember and ask them to request an “ALL RADIOS” announcement so that all crewmembers who have a radio may assist in searching.
- When the first security officer arrives, give them as much information as possible including; gender, age, race, clothing being worn, last known location and direction of travel, if known, and communication abilities (verbal/non-verbal/understands verbal communication).
- It is recommended that you have a recent photo available on your mobile device so that you can share that with the security team.
- Ask the security officer to escort you to Information or the Main Exit, whichever is nearer, and stay there. This will enable the security team to locate you as soon as possible once your family member has been located.
- If you utilize an RF or GPS tracking system, inform the security officer of this, contact your service provider and ask them to cooperate with the KSCVC staff.

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# ENTRANCE.



**Crowds.** KSCVC opens at 9 am each day. By that time, there is a crowd waiting for admission.

Arrive after 9:15 am.

**Noise.** At opening time, our National Anthem is played over loudspeakers.

Arrive after 9:15 am.

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# INFORMATION.



**Waiting or Duration.**

**Noise.**

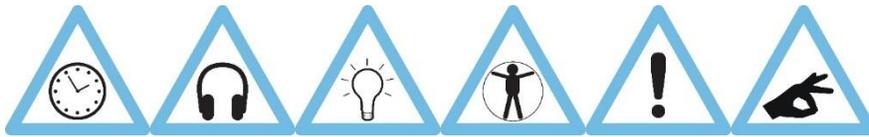
Request stroller or wheelchair rental.

Request the KSC SmartGuide rental and, if needed, noise cancelling headphones may be brought from home.



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## HEROES & LEGENDS, FEATURING THE U.S. ASTRONAUT HALL OF FAME.



**Waiting or Duration.** Entrance to the building is via two multi-media presentations. They are offered at frequent intervals.

The two presentations last for about 15 minutes, combined.

**Noise.** Soundtrack can be very loud.

Visitors needing a shorter wait time may ask to enter the building via lower level.

It is possible to exit the presentation early. If an early departure may be necessary, select a position near the doors available for exit.

Visitors who are noise sensitive may need a family member to check noise levels in one presentation before entering the next one offered.

Visitors who are noise sensitive may wish to utilize the KSC SmartGuide Tour.



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**Light.** The second presentation is in 3-D and requires 3-D glasses for best viewing.

Visitors who cannot tolerate wearing 3-D glasses may not fully enjoy this presentation.

This presentation utilizes overhead strobe lighting for a short period of time.

Visitors who are sensitive to this type of lighting may wish to avoid this exhibit.

**Body Awareness.** The movie presentation includes shots that can be disorienting for some. These are strong enough to create the impression of motion.

Visitors who have challenges with body awareness may wish to avoid the presentation.

**Surprise Elements.** Some scenes in the movie presentation are dramatic and surprising.

Visitors who are easily startled may wish to avoid this presentation or be prepared to leave early, if needed.

During the presentation some strong gusts of air may surprise.

Visitors who are easily startled may wish to avoid this presentation.

**Fine Motor.** A number of interactive exhibits operate with touch screen technology.

Visitors who may become engrossed should allow extra time.



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## DEBUS CONFERENCE FACILITY.



This is the venue for Lunch with an Astronaut. Please also see section on Restaurants and Food Service.



**Waiting or Duration.** Presentation lasts approximately 75 minutes.

Call ahead for reserved seating on the perimeter of the room so as to allow for easy exit without disturbing others. Call the Inside Sales Reservations Hotline (855) 413-2146.

With reserved seating, wait until the presentation begins before occupying seats.

Food is served from a buffet. When first opened for service there may be long lines.

Ask a food service attendant to tell you when the buffet is about to open so that you can be in the line early on.

**Crowds.** Seating is at large tables on a first come first served basis.

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**Noise.** Presentation is delivered via microphone and speaker.

**Smell or Taste.** The buffet offers a variety of selections and many gluten-free and other allergen-free foods are available

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# ROCKET GARDEN.



**Noise.** Commentary is by means of loudspeakers.

Visitors who are noise sensitive should utilize the KSC SmartGuide tour.

**Heat or Cold.** The Rocket garden is an outdoor area.

Visitors who are sensitive to heat may wish to avoid this particularly during summer months.

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### CHILDREN'S PLAY DOME.



**Body Awareness.** This is a jungle gym/maze style of attraction.

Visitors may benefit from familiarization with a similar facility near home before visiting KSCVC.

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## NATURE AND TECHNOLOGY HALL.



**Crowds.** This hall is less crowded than other areas.

This area may be suitable for calming down if overstimulated elsewhere.

**Noise.** This area is quieter than other areas.

**Light.** Lighting is more subtle than in other areas.



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## JOURNEY TO MARS: EXPLORERS WANTED.



**Noise.** Live presentations are delivered via microphone and speakers.

Visitors who are noise sensitive should utilize noise-cancelling headphones.

**Fine Motor.** A number of interactive exhibits require good fine motor skills and/or hand-to-eye coordination.

Visitors who may become frustrated because of difficulties with these skills should avoid these exhibits.

Visitors who may become engrossed should allow extra time.

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## UNIVERSE THEATER.



\*Note this exhibit also include Mission Status Briefings, Astronaut Encounter, and Eyes on the Universe NASA’s Space Telescopes.



**Noise.** Live presentations are delivered via microphone and speakers.

Visitors who are noise sensitive should utilize noise-cancelling headphones.

**Light.** The Eyes on the Universe NASA’s Space Telescopes presentation is in 3-D and requires 3-D glasses for best viewing.

Visitors who cannot tolerate wearing 3-D glasses may not fully enjoy this presentation.

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## IMAX® THEATER.



**Waiting or Duration.** Presentations are at set times.

Duration is approximately 40 minutes.

**Crowds.** The theater holds approximately 400 people and is frequently filled.

**Noise.** Soundtrack can be loud.

**Light.** The presentation is in 3-D and requires 3-D glasses for best viewing.

**Surprise Elements.** IMAX is a very large-screen format and the movie presentation is dramatic.

Check for start times in order to avoid waiting.

You may need to be there 15 minutes before the presentation begins in order to obtain seating near an exit.

Leave early if attention span becomes a problem.

The last show of the day is usually the most crowded. The earlier shows each day are usually less crowded.

Visitors who are noise sensitive should check noise levels before deciding whether to stay.

Visitors who cannot tolerate wearing 3-D glasses may not fully enjoy this presentation.

Visitors who are easily startled should either avoid this presentation or be prepared to leave early, if needed.

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# SPACE SHUTTLE ATLANTIS®.

## Entrance area



**Waiting or Duration.** Entrance to the Atlantis building is via a movie presentation. It is offered at frequent intervals.

The movie presentation lasts for about 5 minutes.

**Crowds.** The movie presentation can become crowded.

**Noise.** Soundtrack to the movie presentation is loud.

**Body Awareness.** The movie presentation includes shots that can be disorienting for some. These occur towards the end of the show.

Visitors who cannot wait for the next presentation should ask to enter the building via the gift shop on the lower level.

Visitors who cannot wait through the presentation should position themselves near an exit.

Visitors that have problems with crowds should position themselves near an exit.

Visitors who are noise sensitive should utilize the KSC SmartGuide Tour.

Visitors who have challenges with body awareness may wish to avoid the presentation.



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# ATLANTIS HALL.



**Light.** Some parts of this area have strong spotlighting/lighting contrasts.

**Fine Motor.** A number of exhibits in the area require fine motor skills or hand-to-eye coordination or both.

**Body Awareness.** The Space Walk Simulator requires the ability to readily distinguish left from right.

Parents or caregivers are advised to check the area beforehand. Visitors with light sensitivity should use dark glasses if they are familiar with them in other circumstances.

Visitors who may become frustrated because of difficulties with these skills should avoid these exhibits.

Visitors who may become engrossed should allow extra time.

Visitors who may become frustrated because of difficulties with this skill should avoid this exhibit.

Visitors who may become engrossed should allow extra time

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## INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION MOCK-UP.



**Crowds.** This exhibit is a scaled model and can become crowded if a number of visitors enter at the same time.

Parents or caregivers are advised to assess whether crowding might be an issue for the visitor.

**Body Awareness.** The mock-up has some very tight spaces.

Visitors who have problems with enclosed spaces should avoid this exhibit.

The exit to the exhibit is a transparent tube and is located 2 floors above the ground.

Visitors who have anxiety about heights should avoid this exhibit.

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## SHUTTLE LANDING EXPERIENCE.



**Noise and Surprise Elements.** Within the “approach” section, there is a foot-activated switch which triggers a simulated double sonic boom.

Parents and caregivers should be careful to help visitors, for whom this might be disturbing, to avoid this trigger.

**Body Awareness.** This section has a slide, angled at 23°. Use of the slide is supervised but only 1 visitor at a time is allowed on the slide. Safe use of the slide requires a legs-crossed, arms-crossed position.

Visitors who cannot assume the correct position and then take the slide unaccompanied should avoid this. It is possible to have 1 parent or caregiver at the top of the slide and 1 at the bottom, when needed.

## Astronaut Training Simulators.



**Fine Motor.** The exhibits in the area require fine motor skills or hand-to-eye coordination or both.

Visitors who may become frustrated because of difficulties with these skills should avoid these exhibits.

Visitors who may become engrossed should allow extra time.



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## SHUTTLE LAUNCH EXPERIENCE®.



**Crowds.** This is a popular attraction. Prior to entering, each visitor is required to stand on their own “spot”. Each spot corresponds to a seat inside the simulator.

Visitors who do not deal with crowds may need extra assistance to cope with this “boarding” process.

**Noise.** This simulation is loud.

Parents or caregivers should view a “launch” from the viewing gallery in order to determine suitability.

Visitors who are sensitive to noise may need to use noise-cancelling headphones.

**Light.** A flash photograph is generally taken at the entrance to the Launch Experience.

Visitors who are sensitive to light should request that no photograph is taken.

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**Body Awareness.** The launch experience has considerable vibration.

The experience requires that the seats tilt back. Although the actual angle is less, it is designed to give the impression of being tilted at 90<sup>0</sup>.

Part of the simulation involves changes to the seat back to give the impression of G-forces.

**Surprise Elements.** Towards the end of the experience, there is a sudden change of movement which can result in a jolt.

Visitors who are sensitive to vibration should avoid this or have a parent or caregiver try it first and then ask for a “ride swap” (the visitor gets the next turn after the trial).

Visitors who have issues with tilting back to this extent should either avoid this experience or look for opportunities to practice reclining at steep angles before their visit to KSCVC.

Visitors who have challenges with body awareness should avoid the Shuttle Launch Experience.

Visitors who are easily startled should avoid the Shuttle Launch Experience.



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## SPACE CENTER BUS TOURS.



**Crowds.** The tours of the launch sites and transfers to the Apollo/Saturn V Center are via 57-seater buses. These are very modern and comfortable.

Visitors who have challenges in dealing with crowds may find these buses too crowded and should request transfer in a mini-van. Call reservations 14 days prior to your visit if you wish to request mini-van transfers.

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# APOLLO/SATURN V CENTER.



**Waiting or Duration.** Entrance to the Center is via a movie presentation. It is offered at frequent intervals.

Visitors who cannot wait for the next presentation should ask to enter the building without waiting for the movie presentation.

The movie presentation lasts for about 5 minutes.

Visitors who cannot wait through the presentation should position themselves near an exit.

**Crowds.** The movie presentation can become crowded.

Visitors that have problems with crowds should position themselves near an exit.

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**Noise.** Soundtrack to the movie presentation is loud.

**Light.** Some parts of the Center have strong spotlighting/lighting contrasts.

**Body Awareness.** The movie presentation includes shots that can be disorienting for some. These occur towards the end of the show.

Visitors who are noise sensitive should utilize the KSC SmartGuide Tour.

Parents or caregivers are advised to check the area beforehand. Visitors with light sensitivity should use dark glasses if they are familiar with them in other circumstances.

If any of the above challenges need to be avoided, ask to enter via the gift shop.

Visitors who have challenges with body awareness may wish to avoid the presentation.



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## RESTAURANTS AND FOOD SERVICE.

### General Information.

Establishment	Indoor or Outdoor	Service Hours	Service Type	Seating Type	Cuisine	Wait Time	Seating Capacity	Lighting	Sound
Lunch With An Astronaut	Indoor	12:00 pm to 1:30 pm	Buffet	Table	Varied		480	Flourescent	Voice via speakers
Rocket Garden (Breakfast)	Outdoor	9:00 am to 11:00 am	Table Service	Table	Egg sandwiches, yogurt parfaits etc.	5 - 15 mins	140	Natural	Light Music
Rocket Garden (Lunch)	Outdoor	11:30 am to 3:00 pm	Table Service	Table	American fusion: flatbread pizza, fish tacos, salads, pulled pork sandwiches etc.	5 - 15 mins	140	Natural	Light Music
Moon Rock Café	Indoor and Outdoor	11:00 am to 5:00 pm	Carry Out	Table	American: pizza, hamburgers, chicken fingers, salads		140	Natural and Flourescent	Other guests - conversational
Rocket Fuel	Outdoor	8:30 am to 6:30 pm	Food Truck Carry Out	Benches nearby	Snacks, coffee			Natural	
Milky Way Parlor	Outdoor	11:30 am to 6:00 pm	Carry Out	Tables nearby	Ice cream, space dots, slurpees			Natural	Loud Music
Orbit Café	Indoor and Outdoor	11:00 am to 4:00 pm	Carry Out	Table	American: pizza, hamburgers, chicken fingers, salads		350	Natural and Flourescent	Other guests - conversational
G-Force Grill	Outdoor	11:30 am to 6:00 pm	Carry Out	Table	American: Hotdogs, bratwurst french fries etc			Natural	Loud Music

\*Please note that hours of operations vary depending on park hours.



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**Special Dietary Information.**

Establishment	Wheat/ gluten-free	Casein/ dairy-free	Soy-free	Vegetarian	Kosher
Dine with an Astronaut	Always available	On request	Always available	Always available	Not available
Rocket Garden (Breakfast)	Always available	Not available	Always available	Always available	Not available
Rocket Garden (Lunch)	Always available	Not available	Always available	Always available	Not available
Moon Rock Café	On request	Not available	On request	Always available	On request
Rocket Fuel	Always available	Not available	Always available	Always available	Not available
Milky Way Parlor	Not available	Always available	Not available	Not available	Always available
Orbit Café	On request	Not available	On request	Always available	On request Limited options
G-Force Grill	On request	Not available	Not available	On request Limited options	Not available

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## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

Further information about the Autism Double-Checked program can be obtained from:

**Autism Double-Checked LLC**

**156 Seaside Avenue, Suite 250**

**Stamford, CT 06902**

**Web: [www.AutismChecked.com](http://www.AutismChecked.com)**

**Email: [Info@AutismChecked.com](mailto:Info@AutismChecked.com)**

**Phone: (203) 750-0000**

This Guide has been prepared in order to give as much information as possible so that parents or caregivers can provide the added assistance that visitors with ASD may require. If, during a visit, you should encounter a sensory challenge that has not been addressed, please contact Autism Double-Checked, as above, and let us know of any suggested additional inclusions.

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