

## **Resources Available in the Chattanooga Area for Caregivers of Children with Autism or Other Developmental Disabilities**

Here are some community resources in the Chattanooga area that provide services such as respite care, support services, fun activities, and more!

IF YOU KNOW OF ANY OTHERS, PLEASE EMAIL THEM TO **INFO@STAINEDGLASSTHERAPIES.COM**

### **Aquarium**

At the Tennessee Aquarium, they have partnered with KultureCity with the goal of making the aquarium more accessible and sensory-friendly. Some examples of the everyday offerings at the aquarium are:

- Sensory bags (containing fidget toys, headphones, etc.)
  - FREE at Guest Services (must leave ID)
- Weighted lap pads at the IMAX theater
  - FREE at the theatre (must leave ID)
- Social Story online
  - FREE at <https://tnaqua.org/app/uploads/2020/12/final-TN-aquarium-social-story.pdf>

The aquarium also has events occasionally that are aimed at meeting diverse needs. Check their website for future events or more information.

Website: <https://tnaqua.org/plan-a-visit/accessibility-inclusion/>

Location: 1 Broad Street, Chattanooga, TN. 37402

Phone: 800-262-0695

### **Buddy Break Respite**

This is a free respite care program for kids with special needs and their siblings to come and play, engage in activities, and experience various types of entertainment.

For specific dates and more information, contact the church or email

[gphixson.buddybreak@gmail.com](mailto:gphixson.buddybreak@gmail.com)

Coordinator: Deanna Edwards

Phone: 423-309-5024

Link: <https://nathanielshope.org/our-programs/buddy-break/>

When: Some Friday nights and Saturday mornings; typically 3 hours long

Where: Grace Pointe Assembly of God; 6613 Hixson Pike, Hixson, TN 37343

MUST RSVP IN ADVANCE

## **Creative Discovery Museum**

At the Creative Discovery Museum sensory nights and Club Discovery are two ways they help to increase accessibility and participation for children with disabilities.

Sensory nights are free, but limited to 100 visitors. During these times, all sensory input is regulated to the best of their ability to provide a stress-free experience.

Website: <https://www.cdmfun.org/programs/sensory-night>

Club Discovery is a program that offers an inclusive playtime for children ages 6-12 of all abilities. These cost \$25 per person to sign up. Register at the following link:

<https://www.cdmfun.org/programs/club-discovery>

Location: 321 Chestnut St, Chattanooga, TN 37402 - Phone Number: 423-756-2738

## **The Dream League Baseball**

Rivermont Youth Athletic Association created a baseball league for players in the Chattanooga area who have mental or physical disabilities. The Dream League aims to teach basic skills of baseball while also teaching important social skills and teamwork. Cost is \$70 to register, which covers uniforms, trophies, maintenance, etc.

For more information, contact Dave Dake (coach and league commissioner) at 423-413-7979

Link: <https://www.rivermontyaa.org/Default.aspx?tabid=378470>

## **Hunter Museum**

The Hunter Museum offers sensory-friendly maps as well as social stories to help children and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder or Sensory Processing Disorder. Their maps focus on light, sound, and touch to help with museum navigation. Find more information at <https://www.huntermuseum.org/visit#accessibility> and check their calendars for the occasional sensory-friendly event.

The museum admission costs \$20 for adults and is FREE for children 13 & under.

Address: 10 Bluff View Chattanooga, TN 37403

Phone: 423-267-0968

Email: [info@huntermuseum.org](mailto:info@huntermuseum.org)

## **Miracle League**

The Miracle League of Chattanooga supports children and adults from ages 4-99 with disabilities by providing a baseball league that is accessible for all needs. Players are paired with buddy volunteers to help encourage them throughout their experience. This costs \$30 to sign up for a team, but there are financial supports available.

Where: Rotary Field at Warner Park in Chattanooga

When: 2025 season: April 19 - May 24

- Orientation: April 12, 10 AM - 12 PM
- Games: 9 AM - 1 PM

Sign up here: <https://www.ymcachattanooga.org/programs/sports-family/miracle-league>

## **Night OWLS (Night Out With a Loving Sitter)**

NightOWLS is a respite care program for families of children (1 month- 13 years) with special needs and siblings. A volunteer will be assigned to your children, or multiple volunteers, depending on their needs and how many children with disabilities are

included in the group. These volunteers have training and help lead individualized activities and entertainment throughout the night. Also present at Night OWLS will be a nurse to help with any medical needs and a security officer for emergencies. Upon arrival, you will get to meet the volunteers/ nurse and get a tour of the facility. Email [callen@signalpres.org](mailto:callen@signalpres.org) for more information.

When: 7 months of the year (not December, January, June, July, or August); Friday groups meet 6-10 PM; Saturday groups meet 1-5 PM

Where: Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church (612 James Boulevard, Signal Mountain, TN)

MUST PRE-REGISTER: <https://signalpres.org/nightowls>

## **Ruby Falls**

At Ruby Falls, a Low Sensory Cave Walk is available upon request. This tour is made for a smaller group size, minimal audio presentations, and guests are able to see the waterfall without the music and color-changing lights. To request a Low Sensory Cave Walk, go to <https://www.rubyfalls.com/contact/>.

Address: 1720 South Scenic Highway Chattanooga, TN 37409

Phone: 423-821-2544

Link: <https://www.rubyfalls.com/plan-your-visit/amenities-accessibility/>

MUST REQUEST AT LEAST 2 WEEKS IN ADVANCE.

## **The Star Center In-Home Companion Care**

The STAR Center aims to help families of children or adults with disabilities by providing care services, education, job opportunities, and therapy services to most areas in Middle and West Tennessee. The In-Home Companion Care program's mission is to help families stay together and stay in their homes. These services are

not free, but can be funded or partially funded by DIDD, CHOICES, ECF CHOICES, the Veterans Administration, or private pay. Learn more at their website or contact [info@star-center.org](mailto:info@star-center.org)

Link: <https://www.star-center.org/in-home-companion-care>

Phone: (731) 554-5100

Address: 1119 Old Humboldt Road, Jackson, TN 38305

## **Therapeutic Recreation of Chattanooga**

Therapeutic Recreation provides Chattanooga with numerous recreation and leisure activities for people of all ages and abilities. Some of the services offered by

Therapeutic Recreation of Chattanooga include:

- Bowling
- Bingo
- Camping
- Climbing
- Cycling
- Golf
- Basketball
- Pickleball
- Swimming
- Dancing
- Hiking

For more information, and a link to their Facebook page that posts updates, go to <https://chattanooga.gov/things-to-do/athletic-therapeutic/therapeutic-recreation>

Phone: (423) 643-7866

Division Program Coordinator: Elaine Gossett, CTRS

Contact: (423) 643-6607

Therapeutic Recreation Coordinator: Jessie Mock, CTRS

Contact: (423) 643-6606

## **Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral Network**

This organization provides many supports and services for families of children with all abilities. The family & group child care services they provide are geared to help educate and work with child care providers to ensure that your child's unique and individual needs are being met. Follow this link to contact a coach to help connect you to the supports and information you need:

<https://www.tnccrr.org/region/southeast>

## **Tennessee Caregiver Coalition: Respite Voucher Program**

This program is for family caregivers to receive financial assistance for respite care services. Follow the link to apply or email [respite@tncaregiver.org](mailto:respite@tncaregiver.org) for more information.

Link: <https://tncaregiver.org/respite-voucher-program/>

Website: <http://www.tncaregiver.org/>

Phone: 615-269-8687

## **Online Resources for Caregivers of Children with Autism or Other Developmental Disabilities**

Here is a list of links to websites that provide information, education, or other lists of resources that may be helpful for you and your family.

### **General Information & Support**

KidCentral TN: <https://www.kidcentraltn.com/development/special-needs/have-a-child-with-a-disability-you-need-support-too.html>

Administration for Children & Families Office of Childcare:

<https://childcare.gov/consumer-education/services-for-children-with-disabilities>

## **Resources, Services, & Education**

Chattanooga Autism Center:

<https://www.chattanoogaautismcenter.org/resources>

Family support & services at Easter Seals: (for Georgia residents)

<https://www.easterseals.com/southerngeorgia/programs-and-services/adult-services/family-support.html>

Tennessee Childcare Resource & Referral:

<https://www.tnccrr.org/>