How Others Can Help

Some advice was provided regarding how others in the child’s environment can help to make the child comfortable in social situations. This is what they had to say . . .

Reintroduce themselves

♦ “Frequently use [their] name. Recognition is a day-to-day thing. Never assume [they] can recognize you, even if [they] did the day before.” - Parent

Name people

Who will be arriving

♦ “I make sure to say people’s names when I am with my son and I greet someone, especially kids that he should know. When we go to Sunday School, there’s a sign-in sheet and I always read off the names while signing him in so he knows who to expect in the room as the class is different from week to week.” - Parent

♦ “Our son has always felt happy and secure at home as visitor numbers are controlled and names [are] known before they arrive. On trips from home we have used color, the family wave, and mobiles to aid recognition and hence confidence.” – Parent w/ Secondary School Student

♦ “Prepare [your child] before social events for who he might see and how he might be able to recognize them. (i.e. “Remember, he has dark black hair and wears glasses.”)” - Parent w/ 10-year-old

Use names when someone approaches

♦ “I remember my parents making a point to introduce me to their friends, even when I had supposedly known them for years. They would say "You remember so-and-so" and briefly say when and how I interacted with them in the past. Now that I’m older, they don’t do that in front of the person they are talking to, and instead wait until after the interaction to fill me in. While it would have been good to know during the conversation, I appreciate their discretion.” - Adult

Look for them in situations where recognition can be difficult

Swimming pools

♦ “[My daughter] recognizes people by their hairstyles and colour and what they are wearing – not so easy when everyone’s hair is wet!” - Parent

Wear the same thing

♦ “With a husband and a son with prosopagnosia, going out can be stressful as I know that I’m the only person who can recognize everybody in all circumstances. When our son was younger, he wore mostly red/orange/yellow so my husband could spot him. Hand holding went on to
an older age and at 12 years old he still does when in a big crowd such as on the [public transit system] at rush hour. We all carry mobile phones at all times and of course there is the family wave. I have a long line of scarves for all occasions that are all green. My very tall husband always wears a black fedora and our son also wears a very distinctive hat and coat.” – Parent w/ Secondary School Student

♦ “[We] would wear something obvious and [would] make sure he was aware of what we were wearing. I also wore the same pair of earrings for several years and never changed my style of glasses.” - Parent w/ 18-year-old

Tell them what you're wearing when you meet somewhere.
♦ “Once, I explained my disorder to a now-friend who has Prosopagnosia to some degree, too. Now, when we meet somewhere, we text ahead and describe what we are wearing so we can look for each other. A couple of friends who don’t have this problem do this for me, too, or know to approach me if we’re meeting rather than expect me to find them.” - Adult

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