

# Educating Children about Autism in an Inclusive Classroom



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## The Study

The purpose of this project was to contribute to the knowledge and implementation of best practices for children with autism. The study identified current teaching and parenting practices in Prince Edward Island which address the educational challenges and individualized needs of children with autism spectrum disorders in included settings.

Researchers hope that the findings will directly influence services by reinforcing current best practices, providing specific suggestions for home and school, and establishing directions for supporting students with ASD in the future.

The research findings were analyzed and summarized into a report. The report can be obtained by contacting Melissa MacIsaac, UPEI Research Coordinator, at (902) 894-2820.



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## INTRODUCTION

A research study, entitled **Inclusionary Practices for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders**, was conducted by the University of Prince Edward Island in partnership with the Prince Edward Island Department of Education between 2001-2005. Teachers and educational assistants who work with students with autism were interviewed by researchers.

These educators noted that the provision of more resources about autism spectrum disorders (ASD) would be extremely valuable. Researchers also found that providing peers with accurate information about autism and involving parents in the education process can be beneficial.

The research data collected from educators of children with autism on Prince Edward Island has been used to create this module. Suggestions and concerns shared by educators were compiled and summarized to help produce a useful resource for the classroom.

**If you have a child with autism in your class, this module will be helpful to you.**

Module objectives include:

- sharing the information obtained from the current study to help inform teachers,
- providing accurate information about autism and related characteristics to teachers and peers,
- providing teachers with suggestions about how to involve parents, and

- ⇒ designing a teaching resource that is easy to use and requires limited preparation time.

The activities in this module can be used to inform both teachers and peers about autism. This module also provides suggestions for including parents in their child's schooling.

All of the materials needed for the activities are provided within this module. You can supplement the activities with other useful resources you may have available and adapt the lesson plans for your class. When conducting the activities try to incorporate both visual and auditory learning strategies as this will benefit all the learners in your classroom.

**Happy Learning!**

## What is Autism?

Autism is a developmental disability that affects the normal functioning of the brain. Autism is present from birth and has an affect on how an individual learns. It is usually diagnosed by 3 years of age and continues through adulthood. Individuals with autism often have difficulty with communication skills, social skills, and reasoning.

Symptoms of autism vary widely and may include: repetitive use of objects, inability to communicate clearly, resistance to changes in routine, and difficulty with social interaction. Since symptoms of autism vary widely, it is often referred to as a **spectrum disorder**.

Common characteristics include: lack of eye contact, social aloofness, difficulty with expressing needs verbally, repetition of words or phrases, and responding differently to sensory input. It is important to keep in mind that behaviors change over time as the child develops and learns.

The term Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is often used to refer to children diagnosed with:

- Autism
- Asperger's Syndrome
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDDNOS)

These diagnoses reflect varying degrees of severity in relation to symptoms.

There has not yet been a specific cause identified, although autism appears to have a genetic basis. Specialized support, training, and, in particular, early intervention can help give individuals with autism the tools needed to lead meaningful and productive lives.

Refer to:

Powers, M. D. (2000). *Children with Autism: A Parent's Guide*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed).  
Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.

## Supporting Inclusive Practice

Inclusive education means that every child has the opportunity to learn in his/her neighborhood school. All children are welcomed into the school and learn together in a regular classroom.

Inclusive education concentrates on implementing best practices for children with special needs within the regular classroom. Within inclusive classrooms, all children have the chance to interact with and learn from their peers.

Inclusive environments can provide opportunities for children with autism to increase their social interactions and in turn improve their social skills. Interacting with peers gives students with autism a chance to practice communication skills, develop friendships, and see how peers behave in day to day situations.



Research has demonstrated that peers can help teach social skills to students with autism. In order for this to be successful, activities have to be appropriately structured, training has to be made available to peers, and teachers have to actively prompt and reinforce the interactions between students with autism and peers (Wagner, 1999).

Peers also benefit by having students with autism in the classroom. When peers of children with autism are educated about autism, and are given an opportunity to act as peer tutors/buddies, they learn acceptance and empathy, act as role models, and become more aware of individual strengths and weaknesses (Wagner, 1999).

In this section, a variety of lesson plans are included to help teachers



educate peers about autism as well as raise awareness about special needs in general. As the teacher, you will have to judge the maturity level of your class and adjust the class discussions and activities to meet their comprehension level(s). Please remember that uncensored questions and honest answers can often help students gain understanding and empathy.

Inclusion works best when:

1. administrators are supportive,
2. good communication and collaboration exists between home and school,
3. teachers have received specialized training,
4. student progress is documented and maintained, and
5. peers are educated.

Refer to:

Wagner, S. (1999). *Inclusive Programming For Elementary Students with Autism*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons, Inc.

"There is a good knowledge base about autism in this school and we work as a team..." [Teacher]



"I've learned so much from him and so has the teacher assistant....the joy of it all. The acceptance of the other kids is powerful stuff. We all benefit by building tolerance in our class and in our societies." [Teacher]

# Educating Peers about Autism

## Collaborative Planning

As with any student, children with autism benefit most when teachers and parents are on the same page and efforts in the home and at school are mutually supportive (Organization for Autism Research, 2004). Before planning a lesson, the teacher should **first** meet with parents to discuss the possibility of a class lesson about autism. It is important to get parent input, and if appropriate, input from the student with autism as well. Share why you feel the lesson would benefit the peers and the student; what is the expected outcome.

The following discussion points will help to ensure that everyone involved is comfortable with the plan.

### Discussion Points:

1. Does your child know that he/she has autism?
2. Do you feel comfortable with the class knowing your child has autism?
3. Do you think a presentation to the class would be beneficial?
4. How would you like to be involved?
  - ⇒ Give information to the teacher
  - ⇒ Be part of the presentation to the class
  - ⇒ Provide written or picture information about your child
  - ⇒ Suggest another family member to participate in the presentation
5. How would you like your child to be involved?
  - ⇒ Child in the room and part of the presentation
  - ⇒ Child in the room as a listener, but not a presenter
  - ⇒ Child not in the room
  - ⇒ Child as a co-presenter
6. Can you suggest helpful strategies or techniques that may help peers interact with your child?
7. Is there any specific information about your child you would like us to share?

The lessons that follow can provide a starting point for selecting the content and materials appropriate for your class. Materials may need to be simplified based on the age and comprehension level of the students. Listed below are some basic components which you may wish to use when planning your lesson.

⇒ Introduction

Raise awareness about diversity; respect similarities and differences of others

⇒ General Autism Information

Provide accurate information about autism and autistic characteristics. Use media and print resources or hands-on activities to illustrate the main features.

⇒ Student Specific Information

Describe or illustrate how autism affects the student with autism in his/her everyday life. Keep the tone positive and include special skills or interests in relation to the student with autism. You may want to describe events in school that may be particularly stressful for the student.

⇒ Suggestions

Provide peers with specific ideas about how they can best get to know the student with autism and how they can help the student with autism throughout the day.

⇒ Discussion

Allow time for open discussion or questions.



## Follow-up

You may see a change in peer attitude. Be sure to recognize their efforts of the student to support the child with autism. When you see peers using the strategies which were discussed provide encouragement and state that you are open to other questions that may arise.

After completing the activity, contact the parent(s) and share the outcomes of the lesson. Ongoing communication with parents is very important and helps build trust and respect. Communicating regularly with parents about their child's progress and involving parents in the educational process helps teachers and parents form a strong working partnership.

"The support from home is wonderful. We reinforce what they do and vice versa. We have done lots of follow up work at the school. We try to support the parents in any way that we can through communication and case conferences and being available to them." [Teacher]

"...I think that it's really important that I keep their interest upper most in my mind and that we all cooperate in what we do. I really strive for that. I really want to have a good relationship with the parents and I think it's important that we work together." [Teacher]



## Helpful Skills to Teach Peers

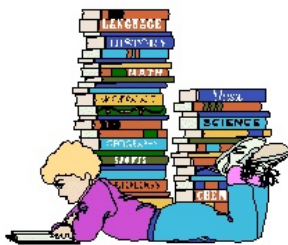
Teach peers to:

- ⇒ welcome/greet students with autism,
- ⇒ share toys and activities with the child with autism,
- ⇒ offer assistance to a child with autism if he/she is struggling,
- ⇒ ask the child with autism for assistance with activities and tasks,
- ⇒ give compliments to the child with autism,
- ⇒ model appropriate responses and actions for the child with autism,
- ⇒ ask the child with autism questions about activities he/she is performing,
- ⇒ explain activities using simple words and clear phrases, and
- ⇒ be consistent.

"Just talking to the students.....they are really very accepting."  
[Teacher]

Refer to:

Maurice, C., Green, G., & Foxx, R. (2001). **Making a Difference: Behavioral Intervention for Autism**. Austin, Texas: Pro Ed.



Educating Children about Autism in an Inclusive Classroom

# **Lesson Plan #1: Grades 4-6 Introduction to Autism**

## **Objectives:**

Students in the class will learn about autism.  
Students will generate questions and discuss issues they have regarding autism.

## **Materials:**

Video  
Question Sheet  
Chalkboard or dry erase board  
Chalk or marker

\*Introduce autism using **correct terms** and **plain language**.

## **Activity 1:** Brainstorming Session

Have students develop a brainstorming web about autism. You may need to encourage students to participate as they may feel awkward at first.

## **Activity 2:** Video Clip on Autism (Autism Society Ontario, 2003)

Have students watch **Meet My Brother**. This is 9 minute video about a boy with autism as told by his 10 year old sister. This video shows day to day home and school events as well as some suggestions regarding how to be a friend.

## **Activity 3:** Question Sheet/Discussion

Have students in the class fill out the question sheet. The students will write down any questions they may have about autism or the child with

autism who is in their class.

After all the students have finished writing questions, the teacher and parent(s) will lead a class discussion using the questions as a guide. By gathering student knowledge, you will be able to present accurate information and clarify incorrect information.

Use autism fact sheet entitled **Just For Kids** to help discuss autism. Go to <http://www.njcosac.org/PDF/Fact%20Sheet%20for%20Kids.pdf> to print the fact sheet or see Appendix J.

**\* Extra resource:**

Autism Society of America. **Growing Up Together**. (2004).

[http://www.autism-society.org/site/DocServer/Growing\\_Up\\_Brochure\\_May\\_2004.pdf?docID=1561&AddInterest=1041](http://www.autism-society.org/site/DocServer/Growing_Up_Brochure_May_2004.pdf?docID=1561&AddInterest=1041)

**\*Lesson Plan Adaptation for Grade 1-3**

As the teacher you may find that the brainstorming session and the question sheet are too advanced for the younger students. You may need to adjust the class discussion and activities to meet their comprehension level. [You may decide to use one of the recommended story books to provide students with information.]

**Activity:** Video Clip on Autism (Autism Society Ontario, 2003)

Have students watch **Meet My Brother**. This is 9 minute video about a boy with autism. Allow time for discussion and questions.





## Autism Question Sheet

In pairs take a moment to think about any questions you may have about autism. You may wish to write them down. Discuss these questions with your partner. Select one question to share with the class and discuss.

1. \_\_\_\_\_?
2. \_\_\_\_\_?
3. \_\_\_\_\_?
4. \_\_\_\_\_?
5. \_\_\_\_\_?
6. \_\_\_\_\_?
7. \_\_\_\_\_?
8. \_\_\_\_\_?
9. \_\_\_\_\_?
10. \_\_\_\_\_?

## **Lesson Plan #2: Grades K-6 Student Brochure Presentation**

### **Objectives:**

School will work in partnership with the parent(s) to create graphic/written information about the child with autism.

Students in the class will learn more about what having autism means.

Students will share their individual qualities with the class and also learn about qualities of their classmates.

### **Materials:**

Brochure Template

Crayons/Pencil crayons

\*This activity tends to be more time consuming than others.

\*Using simple language to help explain autism is very important. The brochure should describe the child with autism and list suggestions for peers regarding how to interact and help the student with autism. The parent(s) will walk the class through the information in the brochure and provide time for peers to ask questions.

\*See Appendix D for sample brochures.

\*Word Perfect can be used to design the brochure. Go to format page, set all page margins to 0.5, then select layout to divide the page into 3 columns. These steps may vary depending on the program.

### **Activity 1:** Parent(s) Presentation

The parent(s) or student will present the brochure and initiate a discussion about autism. The discussion should focus on the similarities and uniqueness of the child with autism in relation to other children.

The format of the presentation as well as the time frame will vary depending on the parent(s) and the class.

**Additional Activity:** Student Brochure

As the teacher, it important to discuss the benefits of developing a personal brochure. Personal brochures help increase self-awareness and reflection and allow students to be creative. The brochure activity helps students get to know about similarities and differences.

Have all students develop a brochure about themselves. Possible areas to include in the brochure are: physical description, family, favorite foods, tv shows, and sports that are enjoyable.

When all the students have completed their brochure, students can pass their brochures around the class. A debriefing or class discussion should follow this activity.



## **Lesson Plan #3: Grades K-4 Similarities and Differences**

### **Objectives:**

Students will explore similarities and differences of children.

Students will explore what it means to be unique.

Students will gain an understanding about the actions/responses that some individuals with autism demonstrate.

### **Materials:**

Information sheet

We Are All Alike booklet

Ways we are all unique.

- ⇒ height and weight
- ⇒ hair and eye color
- ⇒ activities we like
- ⇒ how we learn
- ⇒ our voices

\*This may be a useful lesson to use when parents do not feel comfortable with the class talking about autism specifically.

\*Introduce the **student as a child first**.

\* For younger students, the information sheet may be too much for them and as the teacher, you will have to decide whether or not to use the We Are All Alike booklet as it may be too confusing. If the booklet is used, some of the wording will have to be adapted and explained using simple language.

### **Activity 1:** Information Sheet

Have students complete the personal information sheet (see page 23).

You may want to put students in small groups for this activity. After students have finished the sheet, discuss the activity and use it as a means to explore similarities, differences, and uniqueness.

**Activity 2:** We Are Alike Booklet (See Appendix K)

[Kinney, J., & Fischer, D. (2001). *Co Teaching Students with Autism K-5.*]

Use the booklet to help facilitate class discussion. The first half of the booklet explains how everyone is similar. The second half of the booklet focuses on individuals with autism and how they process information, communicate, and express emotions. You may only want to use part of the booklet for your class. If you wish, students can color pictures from the booklet.

Questions to ask class:

- Do you ever get mad or frustrated? What do you do when you are mad or frustrated?
- Are there any noises or foods that bother you?
- What things do you have in common with the student with autism?
- How would you feel if you did not have any friends?
- How could you make the student with autism feel good?
- How are individuals with autism like you?

This activity can lead into a discussion about respect or differing abilities.  
[See Lesson Plan #4]

**Additional Activity**

**Game:** Simon Says

This is a fun activity to use as a means of exploring similarities, differences, and uniqueness.

In this version of Simon says, students will only respond when the command is true for them. For example, Simon says "Everyone with brown

eyes, stand up." All of the students with brown eyes would stand.

Other phrases may include:

Simon says "Everyone who likes hockey, stand on one foot."

Simon says "Everyone who has a pet cat, put your left hand on your head."

After the game have students sit in a circle. Ask each student to name one way in which he/she and another student are similar. Have the students share something they did not already know about each other before the game.

Refer to:

Hopkins, G. (2004). Simon Says "Who Are You?". *Education World*. Retrieved February 17, 2005 from [http://www.education-world.com/a\\_lesson/00-2/lp2061.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/00-2/lp2061.shtml)

Faherty, C. (2000). *Asperger's...What Does It Mean To Me?* Arlington, TX: Future Horizons, Inc.

**\*Extra resource:**

Autism Society of America. *Growing Up Together*. (2004).

[http://www.autism-society.org/site/DocServer/Growing\\_Up\\_Brochure\\_May\\_2004.pdf?docID=1561&AddInterest=1041](http://www.autism-society.org/site/DocServer/Growing_Up_Brochure_May_2004.pdf?docID=1561&AddInterest=1041)


Maguire, A. (2000). *Special People Special Ways*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons, Inc.





## Personal Information Sheet

Please **circle** the sentences which are **true** for you. You can add more sentences in the blank spaces.


 I like to watch movies.


 I have a brother.

 I have a sister.


 I love to eat spaghetti.


 I have a pet.


 I have brown hair.


 I like to play on the computer.


 \_\_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson Plan #4: Grades 2-6 Respect

### Objectives:

Students will discuss their individual qualities and learn about each other.  
Students will practice sharing compliments.  
Students will learn about respect.

### Materials:

White paper  
Drawing/coloring supplies



### Definition:

Respect describes how we treat other people. We should be considerate and kind to other people.

The Golden Rule: Treat others as you would like to be treated.

### Activity

Each student will need **half a piece** of 8½ x 11 paper. On this piece of paper, students will draw a self-portrait. Allow about 10 minutes for drawing time.

Once the portrait is complete **mount it to a full piece** of 8½ x 11 paper.

Have students think about the following:

- ⇒ What I Like About Me
- ⇒ What I Like to Eat
- ⇒ What I Like About School
- ⇒ What I Like to Do



[Students may wish to use some of the information from the Personal Information Sheet for this part of the activity.]

Students should record their responses on a sheet of paper and attach it to the back of their portrait.

Have students share their responses with the class. Encourage the class to listen to one another. Ask the class what they learned about the student(s) who shared. Have students present their comments as compliments to the presenter.

For example, "I wish I had hair like yours!"

"I like pizza too."

When the class has finished sharing their responses and compliments, have them pass their portraits to the person beside them. Students will write a compliment on the white paper surrounding the student's self-portrait. Then have students pass the paper to the next person, and so on.

For students who do not remember what each person said, they can refer to the sheet of responses attached to the back of the self-portrait.

At the end of the activity, the self-portraits will be surrounded by compliments. If you have time, students can share the compliments they received.

Refer to:

Hopkins, G. (2004). Positively Respectful. **Education World**. Retrieved February 17, 2005 from [http://www.education-world.com/a\\_lesson/04/lp329-02.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/04/lp329-02.shtml)



Educating Children about Autism in an Inclusive Classroom

## **Lesson Plan #5: Grades K-9 Developing a Code of Conduct**

### **Objectives:**

Students will learn to treat others with respect.  
Students will learn to treat their peers as equals.  
Student will develop a class code of conduct.

### **Materials:**

Flip chart (paper)  
Marker

\* This activity can be used as a follow-up to Lesson Plan #4.

### **Activity:**

Have students brainstorm individually about ways to improve class conduct. You may need to give an example of when the class was not being caring or supportive to another individual.

After students have brain stormed individually, divide them into small groups. Each group should come up with 2 suggestions for the code of conduct to share with the class.

Examples:

I will be courteous.  
I will treat everyone in class with respect.  
I will help make the classroom a safe place.

Facilitate a class discussion about being caring, supportive, and sensitive to others. After the class discussion have the class narrow down the suggestions to 8 conduct improvements. (This number may vary depending on the class.)

Post the final code of conduct in the classroom for all students to see.

## **Lesson Plan #6: Grades 4-12 Knowledge Breeds Compassion: Research Project**

### **Objectives:**

Students will use research skills.

Students will learn about autism and related spectrum disorders.

### **Materials:**

Research resources including computers

Paper

Pens/pencils

### **Activity:**

You can have students work in pairs for this project. Assign each pair of students one area to research.

Research areas can include:

- ⇒ Description
- ⇒ Causes / Diagnosis
- ⇒ Challenges associated with Autism
  - ⇒ Communication
  - ⇒ Social skills
  - ⇒ Sensitivity to things in environment
- ⇒ Resources / supports available

### **\*Resources for students in grades 4-6:**

- ⇒ Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Kids Quest  
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/kids/kautismpage.htm>

This site is designed for students in grade 4-6. The quest activities can be used to help answer questions, get students thinking about individuals with autism, and generate discussion.

➤ Autism Information Written for Kids Only  
[http://www.delautism.org/kids\\_only.htm](http://www.delautism.org/kids_only.htm)

➤ Kids Health: Autism  
[http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/health\\_problems/brain/autism.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/health_problems/brain/autism.html)

**\*Resources for students in grades 7-12:**

Appendix E: Website List

The web-sites listed will give students a place to start when conducting their research.

Students will present their findings using poster presentations. By using this method, students can explain their findings both orally and visually.

Poster presentations will be evaluated on:

- accuracy of information
- visual display
- oral presentation (for older students), and
- personal reflection on activity.

Upon completion on the poster presentations, the teacher can facilitate a class discussion about what they students learned about autism.

## Guidelines for Developing Poster Presentations

A poster presentation is a visual display highlighting what you have found through your research. In combination with the poster you will also be expected to explain your poster and answer any questions your teacher or classmates may have.

A Poster Presentation should include:

- accurate information,
- diagrams, graphs, or photographs,
- color (paper or lettering), and
- titles or headings to organize information.



Be sure to:

- make the poster neat and attractive,
- explain diagrams and graphs clearly,
- use easy to read font,
- reference information gathered,
- check for spelling, and
- have someone proofread the poster for mistakes.

## **Lesson Plan #7: Grades 7-12 Video Presentation on Autism**

### **Objectives:**

Students will learn about autism and related spectrum disorders by watching the video clip.

Students will discuss accepting and understanding individuals with autism.

### **Materials:**

Video

### **Activity:**

Have students watch *A Chance To Be Me* (Autism Society Ontario, 2003). [Can be obtained from the Department of Education Library via Marlene Breitenbach.] This video is 22 minutes long and discusses the experiences of three students who have been affected differently by autism.

*A Chance To Be Me* will help students understand the difficulties students with autism can face. The video will also illustrate to peers how they can get to know someone with autism.

After watching the video, students may have comments and questions about the video which will help generate class discussion.

### **Possible Discussion Questions:**

- ☞ How you would describe a person with autism?
- ☞ How do you feel when you see someone behaving differently?
- ☞ How can individuals with autism be included in class activities?
- ☞ What are some lessons you learned from the video? How do these lessons apply to other situations in your life?
- ☞ What could be done to help educate the school community about autism?

[Based on questions developed by the Autism Society of Ontario.]

## **Lesson Plan #8: Grades 2-12 Language and Communication**

### **Objectives:**

Students will better understand how some students with autism may feel when communicating.

### **Materials:**

Plate

Fork and Spoon

Cup

10 miscellaneous items

Picture of a table setting

### **Activity:**

Have the miscellaneous items, plate, cup, fork, and spoon scattered on a desk. Have a picture of a table setting at your desk but hidden from the students. Choose a student volunteer to come up and sit at the desk facing the class.

Ask the student if they can hear you clearly. Tell the student that they must pay close attention to what you are saying and listen to the instructions. Then point to the materials on the desk and tell the student to set the table but give the instructions in a different language.

If you do not know another language, ask someone to teach you the place setting terms and memorize them or use made up words.

Repeat the instructions a few times, point to the table, and depending upon the age level, you may want to act impatient. Eventually, take out the

picture of the table setting and show it to the student and class.

Questions to ask the student:

- ⇒ Ask the student why he/she did not follow the instructions?
- ⇒ Did you know you were supposed to do something?
- ⇒ How did you feel when you couldn't understand what to do?
- ⇒ Did it help when the teacher gave visual support (showed you the picture of a place setting)?

Ask the rest of the class if they would have known what to do. Discuss with the class how some students may not always understand what is being said but find it easier to understand pictures and drawings. Depending on the age level, you may want to introduce learning style terminology such as visual, auditory, and hands-on. Take time to discuss the different learning styles.

Refer to:

Understanding Friends, [http://www.teacch.com/teacch\\_e.htm](http://www.teacch.com/teacch_e.htm) (Catherine Faherty)



## **Lesson Plan #9: Grades 6-12 Learning Styles**

### **Objectives:**

Students will identify their learning styles.

Students will learn that all children learn differently.

### **Materials:**

Learning Styles Sheet

### **Activity:**

Have children work in small groups. Group size will depend on class size.

Depending upon grade level and the literacy levels of the students you may want to read out the statements or review difficult terms **before** starting the sheet. Give students the **Learning Styles Audit** by Chris Baker to fill out. Go to <http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/tld/audit/lstyles/audit.htm> to print the learning styles sheet.

After learning styles have been identified, have the students group together according to learning style. Have students discuss how they learn and write down learning strategies which they find helpful.

A class discussion can follow focusing on learning styles and the fact that all people learn differently. The discussion can then move into a discussion about how children with autism learn, what strategies work best, and how peers can help.

### Strategies:

- ☞ use visuals and hands-on materials,
- ☞ model appropriate behaviors,
- ☞ point to things,
- ☞ explain activities, etc., orally and visually,
- ☞ speak clearly and use simple language, and
- ☞ be consistent.

## **Class Project**

### **The Friends Club: Encouraging Social Skills**

#### **Objectives:**

Students in the class will be encouraged to increase social skills.  
Students will be encouraged to interact with the student with autism.  
Students in the class will practice the skills they have learned regarding how to help students with autism.

#### **Materials:**

Paper  
Pencils  
Jar

\* An introductory lesson on similarities and differences and information about autism should be presented to the peers **before** The Friends Club starts.

\*Students should also be taught skills to use when interacting with the student with autism **before** the club starts.

For example,

- methods of redirection,
- understanding refusal, and
- engaging the student with autism in games/activities.

Method of redirection:

- changing the subject , or
- use a visual cue or point to get the attention of the child with autism.

Understanding refusal:

- peer buddies need to understand that refusal is not personal,
- sometimes children with autism prefer to play alone, and
- first try to redirect and if this does not work, leave and try again later.

Engaging the student with autism in games/activities:

- invite the student to play (Let's go, Would you like to play with me?),
- help the student with autism understand the game and model how to play, and
- be excited and enthusiastic about the activity or game.

Teachers will need to provide guidance to peer buddies until they become comfortable with their new skills.

Ask students to volunteer for this club. Explain to the students that the club is fun and will help everyone in the class.



## **Activity:**

Have students write their name on a piece of paper and place it in the jar. [You may want to have the students decorate their own name tags to be used in the name draw. The jar can be decorated as well.]

Before recess or during group projects, etc., one or two names will be drawn from the jar. The name(s) drawn will be the peer buddy for the activity.

For example, during recess the peer buddy will play with the student with autism for 5-10 minutes at the beginning of the break or 5-10 minutes at the end of the break. [Play time can vary depending upon recess time.]

After a name has been drawn, put the name in a different jar until all the

students have had a turn being a peer buddy.

## Notes:

Peers need to be praised and encouraged when interacting with students with autism as sometimes it can be challenging. Be sure that the students understand that they can come to you with any questions or concerns they may have during this process.

Depending upon the class, you may wish to have a reward system in place for the peer buddy such as a sticker or favorite activity. This may help peers become interested in the club. You could also present the peer buddy with a certificate of completion at the end of the year. [See sample certificate page 37]

Discussion groups should be conducted with the peer buddies on a regular basis so the students have a chance to share ideas and concerns. In this setting, students will receive support from each other as well as the teacher.

Refer to:

Wagner, S. (1999). *Inclusive Programming For Elementary Students with Autism*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons, Inc.





*Peer Buddy Certificate of  
Completion*

*Presented to*

---

*Date* \_\_\_\_\_ *Comment* \_\_\_\_\_



Educating Children :

:lusive Classroom

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Powers, M. D. (2000). **Children with Autism: A Parent's Guide**. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.

The New Jersey Center for Outreach and Services for the Autism Community. (n.d.). **Just for Kids! Autism Fact Sheet**. Retrieved June 2, 2005 from <http://www.njcosac.org/PDF/Fact%20Sheet%20for%20Kids.pdf>

Wagner, S. (1999). **Inclusive programming for elementary students with autism**. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons, Inc.

## **Appendix A:**

This explanation is written from the perspective of a 9 year old child with autism. You may wish to use this page to help explain autism to your class. It can be adapted as you see fit.

### **What is Autism?**

Autism is one of the things that make me who I am. It sometimes causes my brain to work differently than other people's brains. Most of the time I see the world the same way as other children do but sometimes I experience things differently.

I like routines because I know what to expect. I feel better when I do the same things over and over. I also understand better when rules are explained using simple words or pictures.

Sometimes I have trouble understanding facial expressions and body language. I do not always know what different expressions mean or how someone else is feeling. This can make it hard to communicate with other people.

There are people all over the world with autism. People who have autism are not all the same. For example, some people with autism talk a lot while other people with autism do not talk at all.

A few points about autism:

Autism makes me unique.

Autism is not a disease. You cannot catch it from me.

Autism does not mean that I am bad or wrong.

Autism allows me to teach you new things.

Refer to:

Faherty, C. (2000). *Asperger's...What Does It Mean To Me?* Arlington, TX: Future Horizons, Inc.



## Appendix B: Definitions

### Adaptation

A process which allows a student with special educational needs to participate in the prescribed curriculum (course) with changes in format, instructional strategies and/or assessment procedures that do not change the learning outcomes of the curriculum. Examples of adaptations might include shortened assignments, large print materials, raised line paper, or photocopied notes.

### Asperger's Syndrome

Asperger's disorder is similar to autism with impairment in social interactions and the presence of restricted interests and activities. However, individuals with Asperger Syndrome have no clinically significant delay in language and have average to above average intelligence. Often remains undiagnosed until 5 years old or older due to normal speech development.  
(Adapted from [www.autismsociety.on.ca](http://www.autismsociety.on.ca))

### Autism

Autism is a developmental disorder present from birth or early in development that affects such behaviors as the ability to communicate ideas and establish relationships with others. There is no medical test for autism, rather it is diagnosed based on a set of behavioral and developmental features. These may include difficulty in understanding and using language, repetitive behaviors and interests, resistance to change, and/or failure to develop play skills and peer relationships.

## Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism varies considerably across children in severity of symptoms and is often described as a spectrum disorder. Pervasive Developmental Disorder is an umbrella term which includes autism and similar disorders that vary in severity or the presence of communication delays. The term Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is also used to describe this broader range of affected individuals who all have unique strengths and needs.

## Continuum of Support

A range of support options within public schools to accommodate students with special educational needs. This may include individualized programs or instructional settings, modified or adapted curriculum materials, changes in teaching/assessment strategies or additional personnel supports.

## DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders)

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders is a standard classification system which is used in a variety of settings and provides clear definitions of all recognized mental disorders. For each disorder included in the DSM, a set of diagnostic criteria indicate what symptoms must be present (and for how long) in order to qualify for a diagnosis as well as those symptoms that must not be present (called exclusion criteria) in order for an individual to qualify for a particular diagnosis. It is important to remember that these criteria are meant to be used as guidelines to be informed by clinical judgment.

Goal A statement of a general outcome that can reasonably be expected to be accomplished within that school year.

Inclusionary Practice Inclusionary practice is the value system which holds that all students are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement and the pursuit of excellence in their education. The practice of inclusion incorporates basic values that promote participation, friendship and belonging.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) This is a written record that documents the individualized program for a student with special educational needs. The IEP outlines specific goals and objectives for the student and identifies support services as well as program adaptations and/or modifications needed.

Modification A process which changes the prescribed curriculum to meet a student's special needs. An example of modified curriculum might be teaching a high school student to complete functional domestic and self care tasks independently or use a picture symbol list to grocery shop.

## Objectives

Objectives are specific statements which describe observable behaviours. They clearly describe the steps between the child's present skill level and the goals to be attained.

## Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS)

This sub-category of Pervasive Developmental Disorders is commonly referred to as atypical autism or "autistic-like". A diagnosis of PDD-NOS may be made when a child does not meet the full criteria for a diagnosis of autism, but there is impairment in social and language development as well as the presence of repetitive behaviors. (Adapted from [www.autismsociety.on.ca](http://www.autismsociety.on.ca))

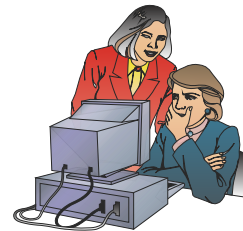
\*Unless otherwise specified the definitions are adapted from:  
National Research Council. (2001). **Educating Children with Autism**. Committee on Educational Interventions for Children with Autism. Catherine Lord and James P. McGee, eds. Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: National Academy Press

## **Appendix C: Contacts on Prince Edward Island**

- Marlene Breitenbach, M.S.Ed., BCBA  
Special Education Autism Coordinator  
Department of Education  
(902) 566-7792
  
- Andrea Noonan, M.S.  
Autism Early Intervention Program Coordinator  
Department of Health  
(902) 368-6146
  
- Disability Support Program  
Charlottetown, PE  
(902) 368-5996
  

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- Eastern School District  
Charlottetown, PE  
(902) 368-6990
  
- Western School Board  
Summerside, PE  
(902) 888-8400
  
- French Language School Board  
Wellington, PE  
(902) 854-2975
  
- Autism Society of PEI  
Avondale, PE  
(902) 651-2661
  
- Association for Community Living  
Charlottetown, PE  
(902) 566-4844



## Appendix D: Brochure Example 1

### All About Me

My name is **Sophia**



I have autism.

I am 6 years old.

I like to ...

♡ tell stories

♡ sing songs

♡ play with Barbie dolls

♡ play dress up

♡ color

♡ play Board Games

♡ read to my friends

### More Tips!

♡ I am a happy girl. I like myself the way I am.

♡ Talk to me slowly and give me time to think of an answer.

♡ If I say "You worm!", tell me it's not nice.

♡ I have trouble understanding jokes. Please tell me what you mean.

### Do you have more questions?

♡ You can ask my teacher or mom and dad to help.

### More About Me

♡ Sometimes I don't want to play with others.

♡ I walk away when I don't understand.

♡ Sometimes I don't look at you when you talk to me, but I am listening.


♡ I can get scared when there are too many people around.

♡ I say, "Shhh! Be quiet!" when there is too much noise.



I can learn lots of things, but sometimes I need help.

**I might:**

<p>♡ get upset if it's very noisy</p>	<p>♡ giggle or tell a story when I don't understand things</p>	<p>♡ get upset if there is too much happening at the same time</p>
<p>♡ have a hard time telling you what I am feeling</p>		<p>♡ have a hard time when I feel rushed</p>
<p>♡ have trouble joining in conversation</p>	<p>♡ have trouble telling you what I want to do</p>	<p>♡ be rude or call names when I am worried</p>

**I can:**

- ♡ read LOTS of books
- ♡ play many computer games
- ♡ do plays with puppets
- ♡ say favorite books and poems by heart

Some things to know about autism:

- ♡ You cannot catch autism from me.
- ♡ Nobody knows what causes autism so we cannot make it go away.
- ♡ People are born with autism and will have it always. People with autism can learn lots of things. Many will grow up to have jobs just like you.
- ♡ Children with autism need friends just like you do.
- ♡ Children with autism need you to be patient and teach them how to be a friend.



## Brochure Example 2

# Something Special About Aaron



### WORD SEARCH

M J I S D T I Z K U M N  
S N Q P J C Q I S C O E  
I R V O S D N E I R F M  
T H W N G D S N A L C N  
U C X G N N E A E T K U  
A E G E J N I M D M Z T  
U R S B K S E P L A K L  
W S J O Y W E P L A K L  
E B G B K Z Z U A E U Y  
B E R H E P L E Z T H L

AARON  
AUTISM  
FRIENDS  
HELPING  
KINDNESS  
SPONGEBOB

- jokes.
- Invite him to play with you.
- Offer to help Aaron if you think he needs it. Also, don't be afraid to ask him to help you. He's a great speller and he would feel really good if he was able to help.
- Say something to him when he does something good. Tell him "good job!" or give him a high five. Aaron like compliments too.
- Try to understand and be patient when his behaviour is different from yours. Remember that sometimes he is thinking differently about things, or sometimes sounds or lights might be bothering him.

Now that you understand a lot about Aaron and autism, you could help others to understand too. Having good friends helps Aaron feel good inside. It makes us all feel good to have friends who understand us.

**A kid's guide  
to understanding  
Aaron and autism**



Aaron is 8 years old and in grade 4. In many ways, he is just like other kids his age, but there is something special about Aaron. He has *high functioning autism* or *asperger's syndrome*. Autism is something about Aaron that makes him think and learn differently.

**Here are some things that Aaron likes:** (Check off the things that you like too.)

- using computers
- Spongebob Squarepants
- swimming at the pool
- building with *LEGO*
- eating strawberries and ice cream

**Here are some things about autism:**

- Autism is not a disease. You can not catch autism.
- People are born with autism and will always have it.

-People with autism can learn many things and many will grow up to have jobs and families just like you.

-People with autism may see, hear and feel things differently than you do. Sounds may be louder, colours or lights may be brighter, and being bumped into by another child might hurt.

-Autism is a different way of thinking and being, but people with autism need friends, just like you.

**Here are some things about**

**Aaron:**

- Aaron is good at many things like reading, math, and computers.
- Loud noise, busy places, and too many things happening at the same time can be upsetting for Aaron.
- Aaron likes to play games with his friends, like *Snakes and Ladders* or *Checkers*.

-Sometimes Aaron becomes frustrated and upset when he does not understand something, or when something happens that he did not expect. Situations that are new to him may cause him to feel anxious or worried inside.

-When Aaron becomes upset, he may cry or talk loudly.

Sometimes, he needs some quiet time away from others to calm himself down.

-A lot of printing or handwriting can be tiring for Aaron, so sometimes he uses a computer.

**Here are some ways to be a good friend to Aaron:** (Check off some ways you could be a friend to him.)

- Talk to Aaron just like you would to your other friends. You could tell him a joke. He especially likes *knock, knock*

## Appendix E: Website List

<a href="http://www.angelfire.com/pa5/as/talkingtokids.html">www.angelfire.com/pa5/as/talkingtokids.html</a>	<b>Autism Information for Kids</b> ⇒ printable info page for kids ⇒ Autism Spectrum Disorder Quest ⇒ information for siblings
<a href="http://www.delautism.org/kids_only.htm">www.delautism.org/kids_only.htm</a>	<b>Autism Information written for kids only!</b> Autism Society of Delaware ⇒ information for kids about autism
<a href="http://library.thinkquest.org/5852/autism.htm">http://library.thinkquest.org/5852/autism.htm</a>	<b>Seeing Disabilities from a Different Perspective</b> ⇒ sister's perspective on brother with autism ⇒ interview with a parent
<a href="http://www.autism.net/cms/index.php?page=708">http://www.autism.net/cms/index.php?page=708</a>	<b>Geneva Centre</b> ⇒ questions and answers for students ⇒ appropriate for high school students
<a href="http://www.wateringcanpress.com/html/autismbook.html">www.wateringcanpress.com/html/autismbook.html</a>	<b>The Autism Acceptance Book</b>

<a href="http://www.asperger.net">www.asperger.net</a>	<b>Autism Asperger Publishing Company</b>
<a href="http://www.autism.net">www.autism.net</a>	<b>Geneva Centre for Autism</b>
<a href="http://www.autismdigest.com">www.autismdigest.com</a>	<b>Autism/Asperger's Digest</b>
<a href="http://www.autism.org">www.autism.org</a>	<b>Center for the Study of Autism</b>
<a href="http://www.teacch.com">www.teacch.com</a>	<b>TEACCH - Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children</b>
<a href="http://www.cairn-site.com">www.cairn-site.com</a>	<b>Canadian Autism Intervention Research Network</b>
<a href="http://www.autismsocietycanada.ca">www.autismsocietycanada.ca</a>	<b>Autism Society of Canada</b>
<a href="http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs/autism.pdf">www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs/autism.pdf</a>	<b>Teaching Students with Autism A Resource Guide for Schools</b>

Last Updated: March 2006

## **Appendix F: Peer/Sibling Book List**

### **K - 4**

- Bishop, B. (2002). *My Friend with Autism: A coloring book for peers and siblings*. Arlington, Texas: Future Horizons, Inc.
- Buron, K. D. (2003). *When My Autism Gets Too Big*. Shawnee Mission, Kansas: Autism Asperger Publishing Co.
- Gorrord, L., & Carver, B. (1998). *My brother is different*. London, UK: The National Autistic Society.
- Lears, L. (1998). *Ian's Walk: A story about autism*. Morton Grove, Illinois: Albert Whitman & Company.
- Murrell, D. (2001). *Tobin Learns to Make Friends*. Arlington, Texas: Future Horizons, Inc.
- Sullivan, C. (2001). *I Love My Brother: A preschooler's view of living with a brother who has autism*. Stratham, NH: PHAT Art 4.
- Simmons, K. L. (1996). *Little Rainman*. Arlington, Texas: Future Horizons, Inc.
- Thompson, M. (1996). *Andy and His Yellow Frisbee*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House, Inc.

### **Grade 5-8**

- Amenta, C. A. (1992). *Russell is extra special: A book about autism for children*. Magination Press.
- Band, E. B., & Hecht, E. (2001). *Autism Through A Sister's Eyes: A young girl's view of her brother's autism*. Arlington, Texas: Future Horizons, Inc.
- Lowell, J., & Tuchel, T. (2005). *My Best Friend Will*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.
- Meyer, D. (1997). *Views from our Shoes: Growing up with a brother or sister with special needs*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House, Inc.
- Schnurr, R. G. (1999). *Asperger's Huh?* Ottawa, ON: Anisor Publishing.

### **Intermediate/High School**

- Meyer, D. (1997). *Views from our Shoes: Growing up with a brother or sister with special needs*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House, Inc.

## **Appendix G: Teacher Book List**

Attwood, T. (1998). *Asperger's syndrome: A guide for parents and professionals*. UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Kluth, P. (2003). *You're going to love this kid!* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Quill, K. A. (2000). *Do-watch-listen-say*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Quill, K. A. (1995). *Teaching children with autism*. USA: Thompson Learning Co.

## Appendix H: Video Resource List

Title	Length	Description
<p><b>A Sense of Belonging: Including Students with Autism in their School Community</b> ©1997 Indiana Resource Center for Autism</p>	20 minutes	This video highlights the efforts of 2 <b>elementary</b> and one <b>middle school</b> in teaching students with autism in included settings.
<p><b>Autism: Being Friends</b> ©1991 Indiana Resource Center for Autism</p>	8 minutes	This autism awareness videotape was produced specifically for <b>use with young children</b> . The program portrays the abilities of the child with autism and describes ways in which peers can help the child to be a part of the everyday world.
<p><b>Developing Friendships: Wonderful People to Get to Know.</b> ©2001 Produced by Kim Davis.</p>	12 minutes	Individuals with autism share a need for companionship and relationship with others. They want friends and relationships but the social aspect of their life is one of their greatest challenges. In this video, individuals discuss the various social difficulties they experience, such as being bullied, missing subtle social cues, and following and maintaining conversations. Strategies for supporting social interactions are highlighted.
<p><b>A Chance To Be Me</b> (2003) Autism Society Ontario</p>	22 minutes	This video is about 3 students who are affected quite differently by autism and demonstrates opportunities to know someone with autism despite the disorder and the social pressures of peers. Targets <b>intermediate and high school</b> audience. Video Discussion Guide is provided.
<p><b>Meet My Brother</b> (2003) Autism Society Ontario</p>	9 minutes	Video depicts a boy with autism as told by his sister. Shows day to day home and school events as well as some suggestions for being a friend <b>Elementary level</b>
<p><b>My Friend Dylan</b> (2004) Autism Society Ontario</p>	10 minutes	In this video, feelings and understanding are the main focus of a group of students who want to get to know their classmate Dylan. <b>Grade 3-6</b>

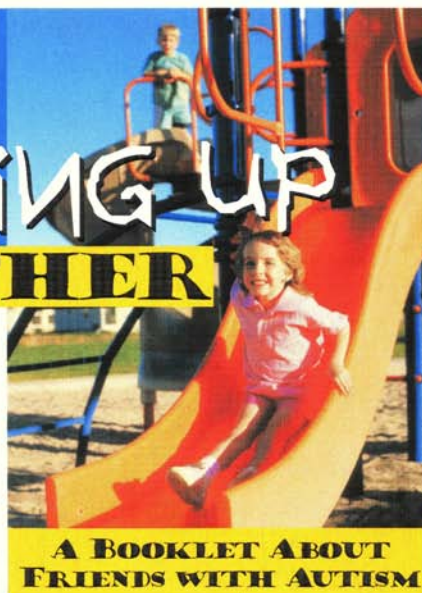
Loan available from the Department of Education, Autism Library, 569-7792

## Appendix I: Growing Up Together Booklet



### Being Different

Do any of the kids in these pictures look different to you? Yes, they are different. Some are girls, some are boys, some are tall, some are short, some are African-American, some have blonde hair, and some are Asian, and some have autism. But they are all the same too—they all have feelings and want to have friends.



**A BOOKLET ABOUT FRIENDS WITH AUTISM**

### What Does it Mean to Have Autism?

It means that children with autism think differently and act differently because their brains work differently. They may have difficulty talking, learning, or playing with you. But, just like you, children with autism are special in many ways, and have families that love them very much. They may also enjoy the same things you do, like swimming, videos, or horseback riding.

### Why Do Children with Autism Act This Way?

Some children with autism do not see, hear, or feel things the same way we do. For instance, the sound of the school bell or the noise of a parade may actually hurt their ears. On the other hand, things that bother most of us, like a bee sting, may not appear as painful to them.

Here, you will read more about kids you may meet who have autism and how you can be their friend.



**Some kids with autism may:**

- Have trouble talking, make strange sounds, or not talk at all
- Flap their hands, spin, or laugh a lot
- Behave or play in unusual ways
- Be very active or be very quiet and like to spend time alone
- Have trouble looking directly at you
- Do or say the same things over and over again



It is hard for some children with autism to understand what we say or what our facial and body expressions mean. However, this does not mean you should stop trying to talk to them. Sometimes, showing them a picture or an object helps them understand things better. For example, if you are talking about baseball, pointing to a baseball card may help your friend know what you mean.

### **Do Kids with Autism Get Frustrated?**

Like all people, kids with autism can get frustrated and angry, but they often cannot tell us why. Instead of words, they may use actions to express their feelings. When they are upset, confused, or bored, they may make noises or spin around. When they are excited or happy, they may flap their hands, jump up and down, or run in circles.

Many children with autism get upset when their surroundings or schedules change because new or different things can be very difficult or scary for them. They may cry, hold their hands over their ears, or run away. Children with autism have a hard time controlling their behavior because they have difficulty understanding or dealing with the world around them.



## What Causes Autism?

No one knows why some people have autism, and there may be many different causes. Scientists are still trying to find out just what those causes are and how to best help people with autism.

Maybe one day you can help scientists find the answers.



## Where Do Kids with Autism Go To School?

Kids with autism can be in many different types of classrooms and schools. They may be a member of your class or may be in a classroom that was set up especially for them. Some children with autism go to different schools. Today, more and more kids with autism attend regular schools and participate in after-school activities with classmates, friends, and neighbors.

You may see some special arrangements used to help a friend with autism participate in your class. He or she may have a special "coach," sit at a special desk or table, or use picture symbols to communicate with you and the teacher. Some kids may even have special computers that "talk" for them. Friendly classmates can be the best help of all to a child with autism.



**Autism is NOT contagious. You cannot "catch" autism from a classmate or friend.**





### How Can I Be a Friend to Someone with Autism?

When you become a friend to a person with autism, you both learn a lot from each other. Here are some ideas that can help you be a friend to a kid with autism:

- Accept your friend's differences
- Protect your friend from things that bother him or her
- Talk in small sentences with simple words and use a lot of gestures
- Use pictures or write down what you want to say to help your friend understand better
- Join your friend in activities that interest him or her
- Be patient—understand that your friend doesn't mean to bother you or others
- Invite your friend to play with you and to join you in group activities
- Sit near your friend whenever you can, and help him or her do things if they want you to
- Help other kids learn about autism by telling them about your special friend

For more information, look for these and other books in your local library;

*Andy and His Yellow Frisbee*,  
by Mary Thompson,  
1996, Woodbine House

*Views from Our Shoes*,  
Edited by Donald Meyer,  
1997, Woodbine House

*Talking to Angels*,  
by Esther Watson,  
1996, Harcourt Brace & Co.

*Captain Tommy*,  
by Abby Ward Messner,  
1996, Potential Unlimited Publishing

*Kristy and the Secret of Susan  
(The Babysitters Club #32)*  
by Ann M. Martin,  
1990, Scholastic, Inc.

Or, you can order them online  
from the following web sites:  
[www.autismbookstore.com](http://www.autismbookstore.com), or  
[www.autism-mi/bookstore.com](http://www.autism-mi/bookstore.com)



**Autism Society of America**  
7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 300  
Bethesda, MD 20814-3015  
**1-800-3-AUTISM**  
<http://www.autism-society.org>

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## JUST FOR KIDS!



### WHAT IS AUTISM?

When a person has autism, it means that something in their brain is different from other peoples' brains. This causes them to act differently than other people.

People with autism sometimes have trouble understanding what other people are saying. They can have a hard time using words to say what they need, and they might end up saying the same word or sentence over and over.

Children with autism might play in a different way than other kids. They may like to stare at something for a long time or maybe twirl a piece of string or spin a toy car around and around. A lot of times they may play by themselves because they don't know how to play with other kids.

Some kids with autism might be happy, but all of a sudden they will become sad or mad and might even have a tantrum. It might be because they can't tell people what they need or want.

### DO CHILDREN WITH AUTISM GO TO SCHOOL?

Yes, children with autism go to school to learn just like you. You might even know someone who has autism! They could be in your class or maybe in a class that is just for them. Their teachers give them lots of practice to help them learn new things. Just like you, they have some things that come easily and other things that are more difficult.

### WHAT ARE PEOPLE WITH AUTISM LIKE WHEN THEY GROW UP?

Lots of people with autism can learn to do all sorts of things when they grow up. They might have a job at a grocery store or as an artist or even working on a computer. Even though autism never goes away, many people with autism learn to make friends, do a job and have a very happy life.

### HOW SHOULD I ACT AROUND SOMEONE WITH AUTISM?

Just remember that people with autism aren't that much different from you. Just like you, they can do some things better than others. Just like you, they have lots of different feelings. They might feel happy, sad, excited, frustrated, proud, lonely, or loving – just like you. It's important to know that even if someone with autism acts different from you or your friends, they still have feelings and they care about other people. You should always try to be a caring person too! So just be yourself when you're with someone who has autism. You may even make a new friend!



**Appendix K: We Are All Alike Booklet**  
Used with permission  
Kinney & Fischer,(2001) CoTeaching Students with Autism

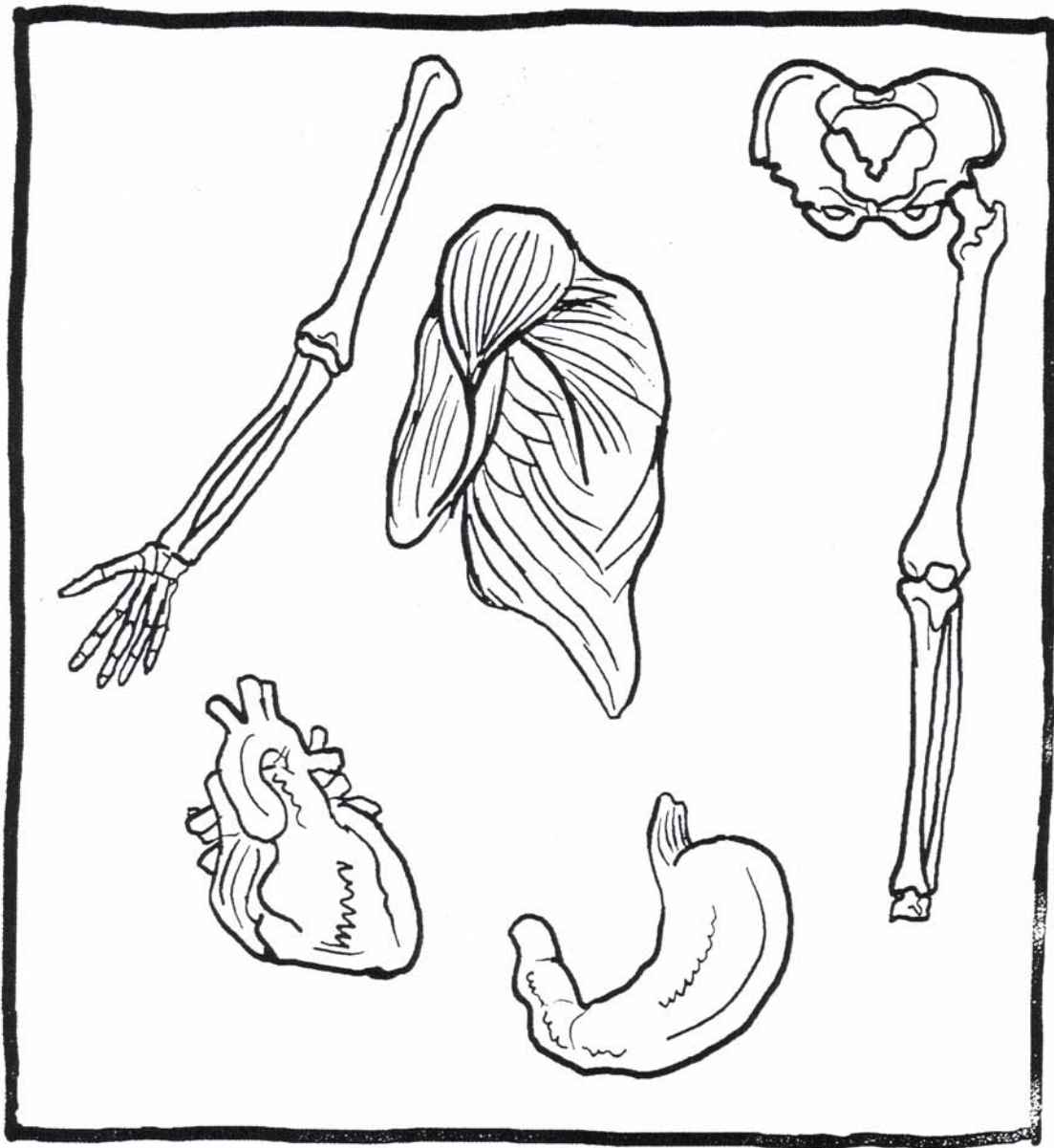


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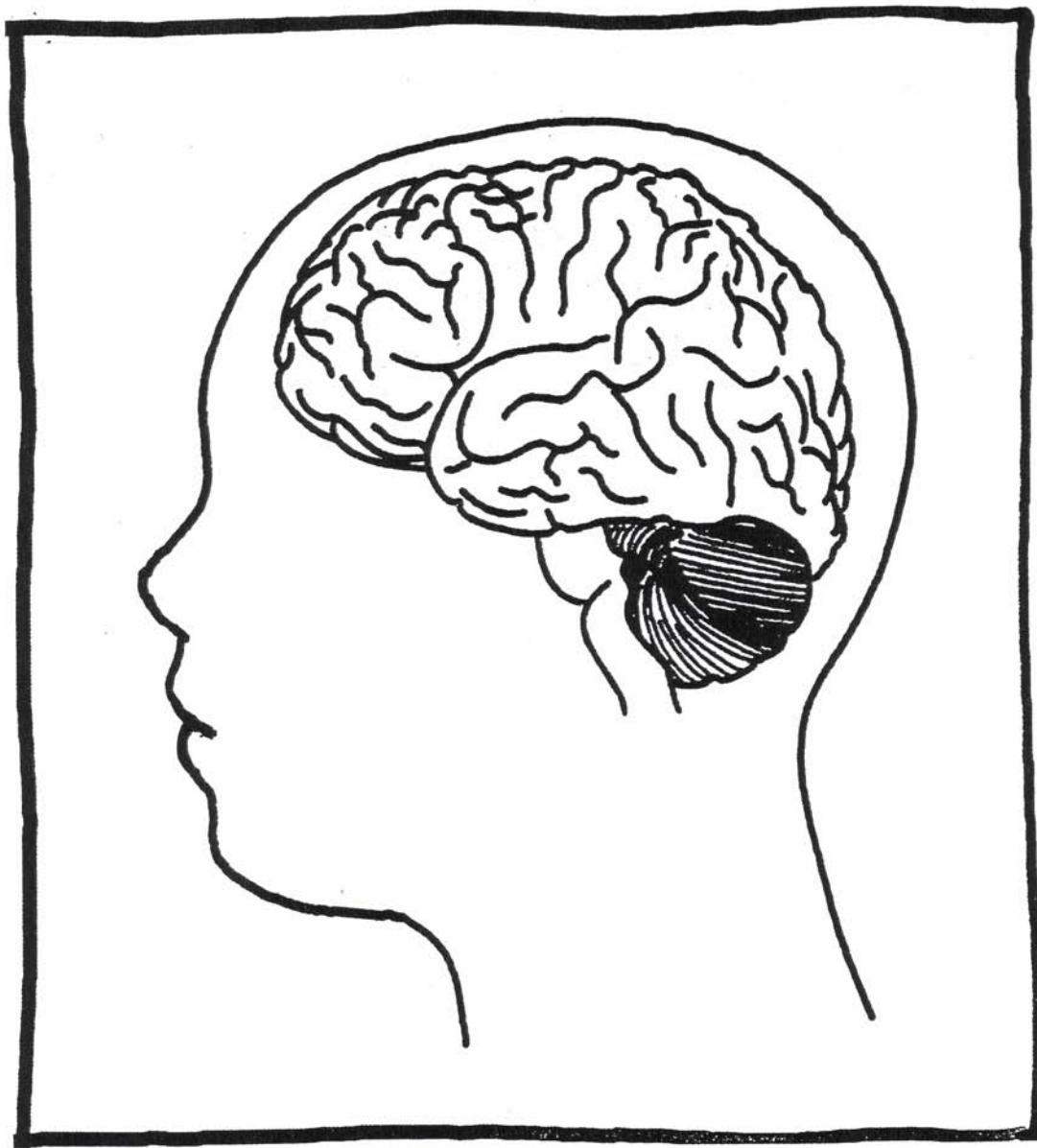


We are all alike in many ways.  
We have two eyes, two ears, a nose,  
a mouth, hair, hands and feet.

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On the inside we have many things that are alike. We all have bones, muscles, a heart and a stomach.

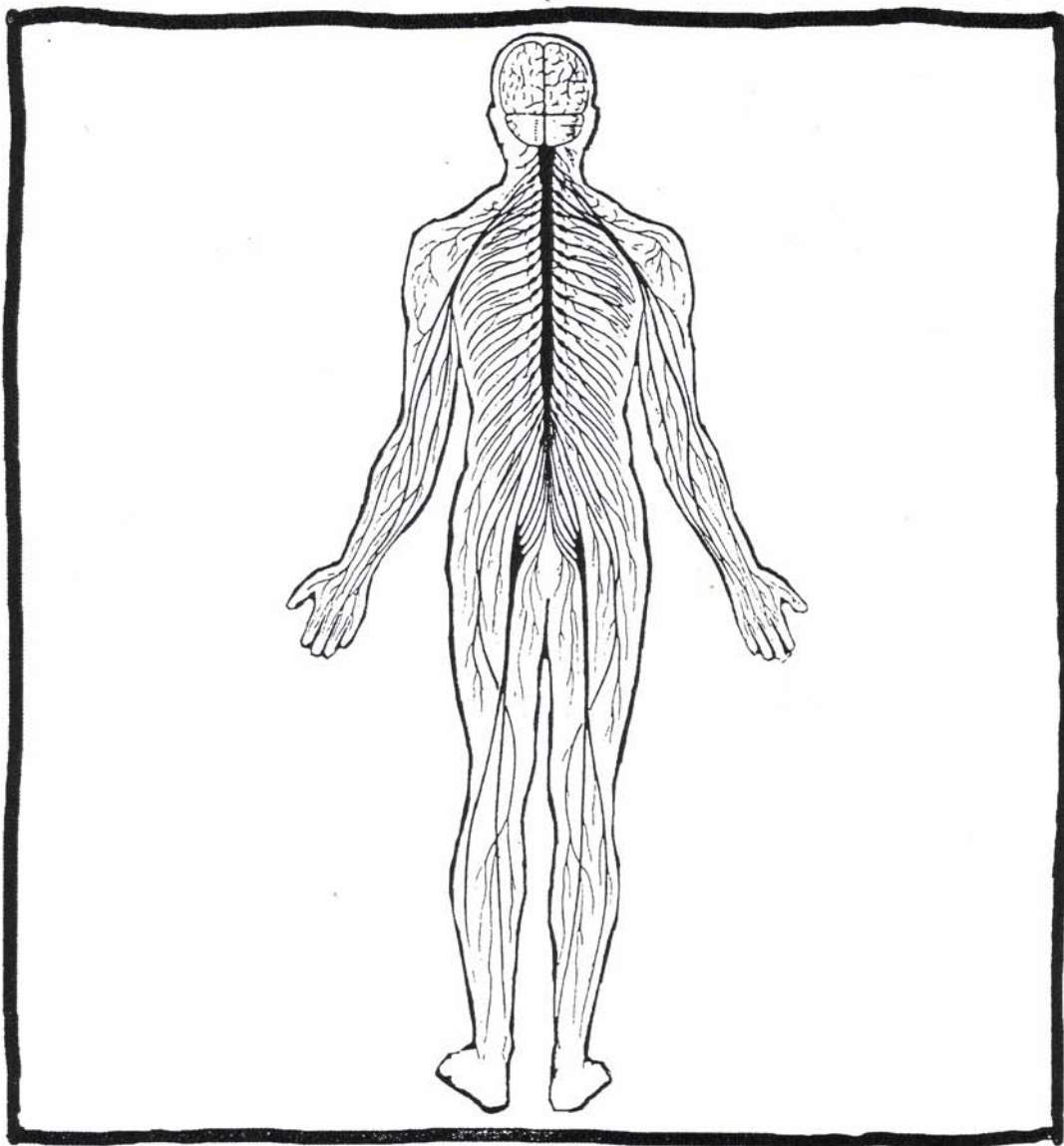


We also have brains inside our heads.  
Our brain is like our body's computer.  
Our brain is our message center.



We use our brain to solve problems.  
Our brain helps us to walk and talk.

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Messages are sent from our brain to all parts of our body. The messages follow paths throughout our body.

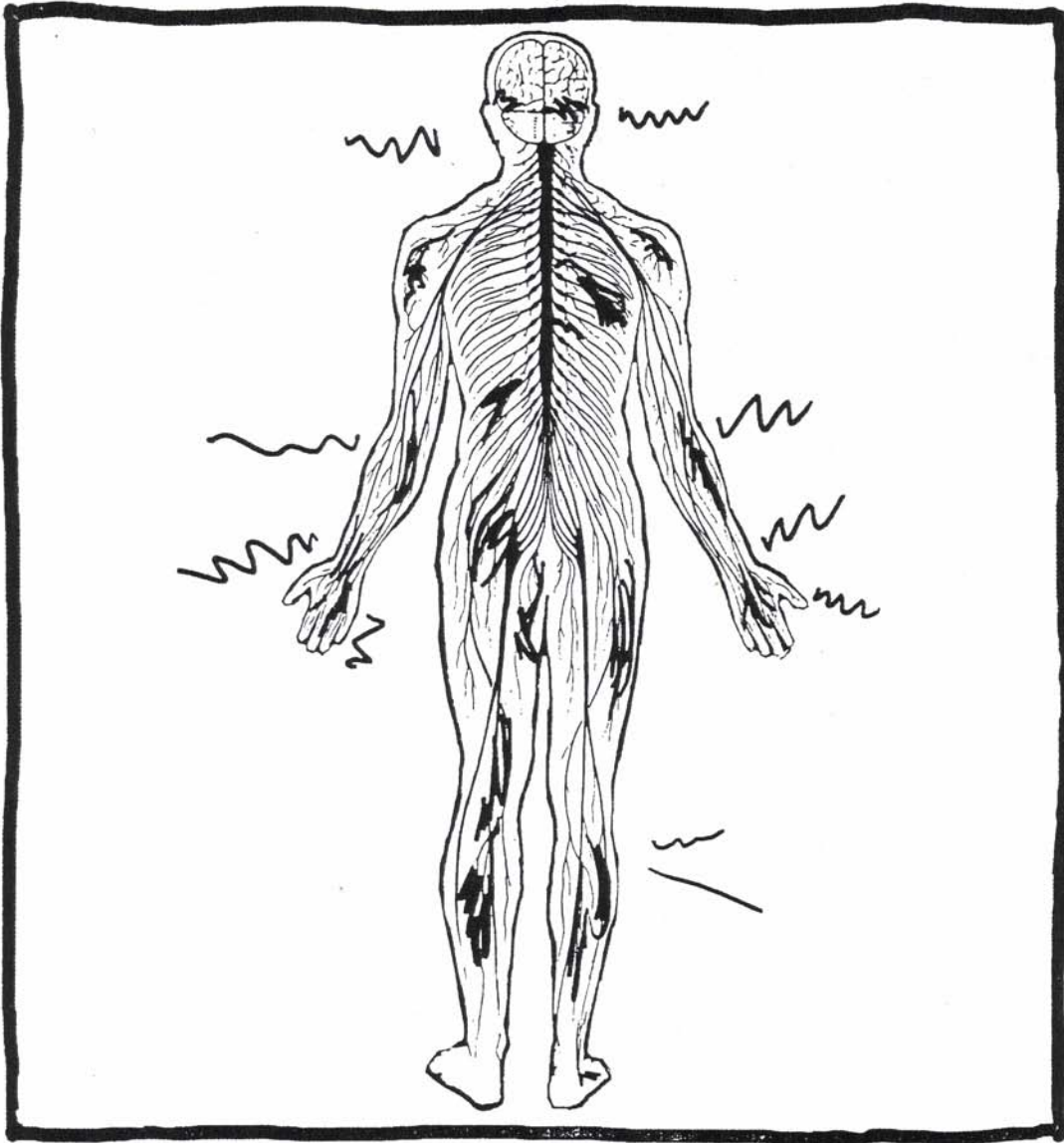
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Children with autism have brains  
like everyone else.

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Sometimes the paths in the brains  
of people with autism get confused.

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Messages get lost as they try  
to go to different parts of the body.

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The person may know the answer  
but can't say it. The message  
doesn't make it out of his mouth.

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The person may get frustrated.  
The person may feel mad.

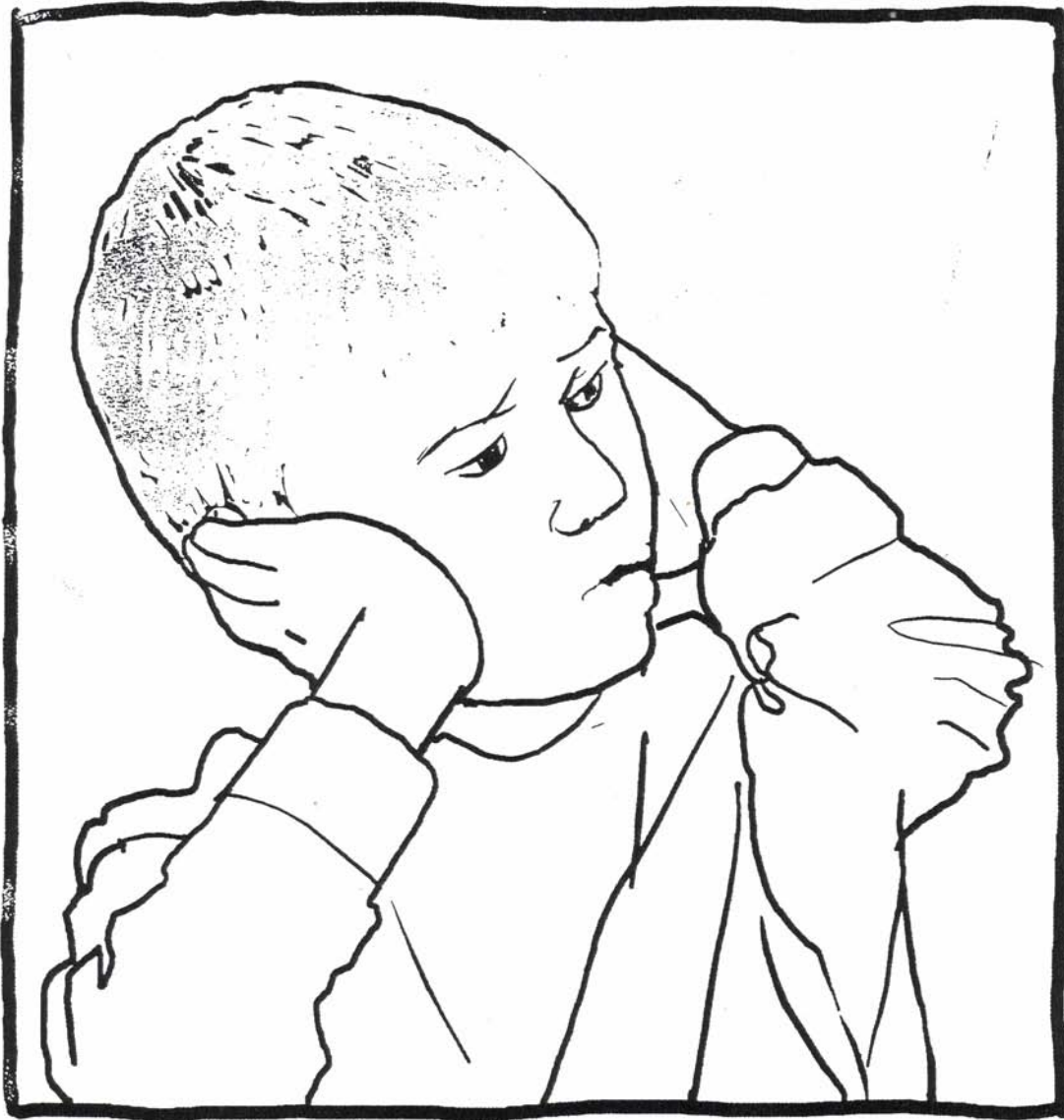


The person may do something wrong.  
She may yell. She may hit herself  
or someone next to her.

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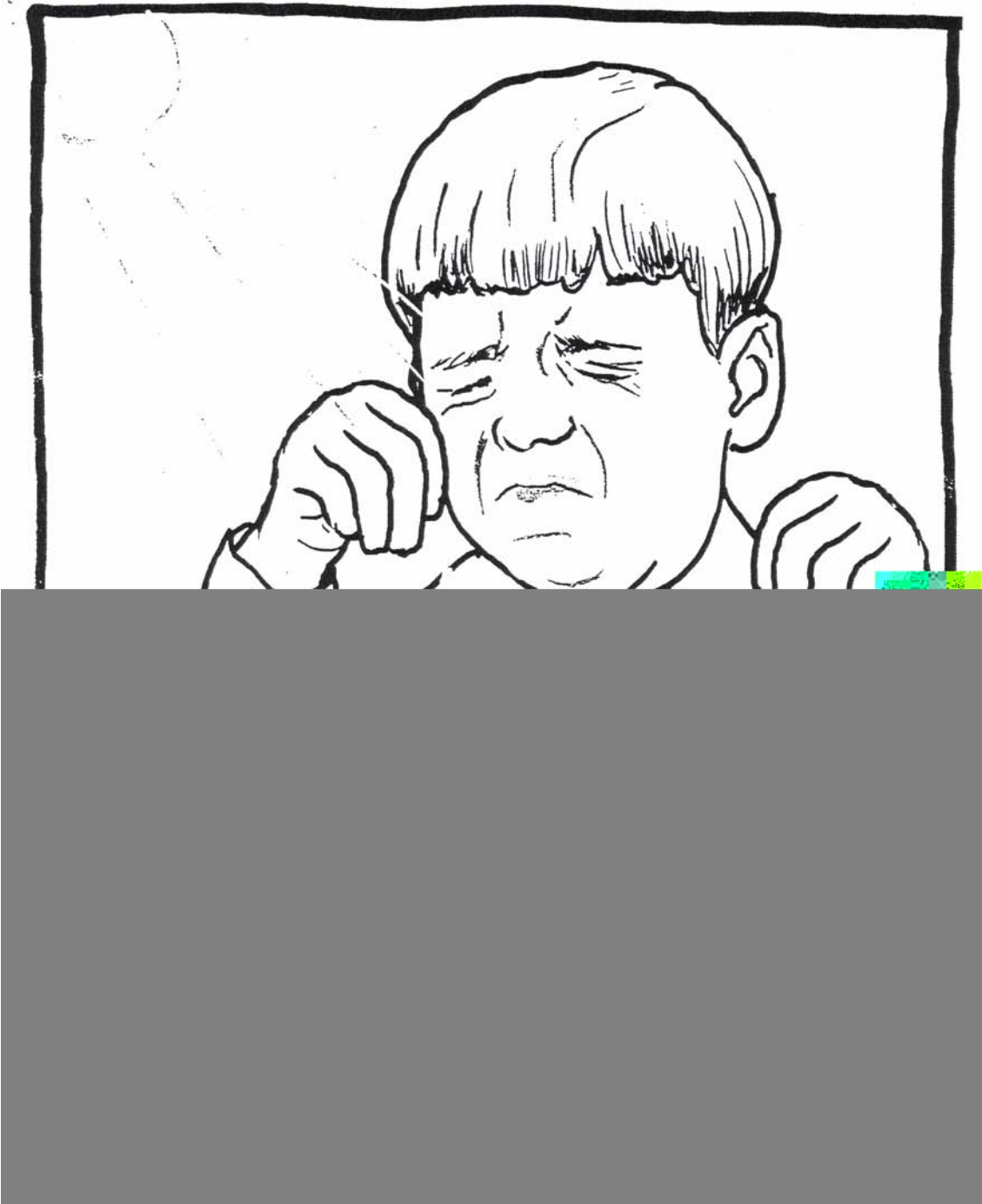


He is confused.  
He doesn't mean to upset or hurt anyone around him.  
Sometimes he can't say or do things like others.  
That makes him frustrated and sad.



Loud sounds or unexpected noises  
may cause confusion or pain.





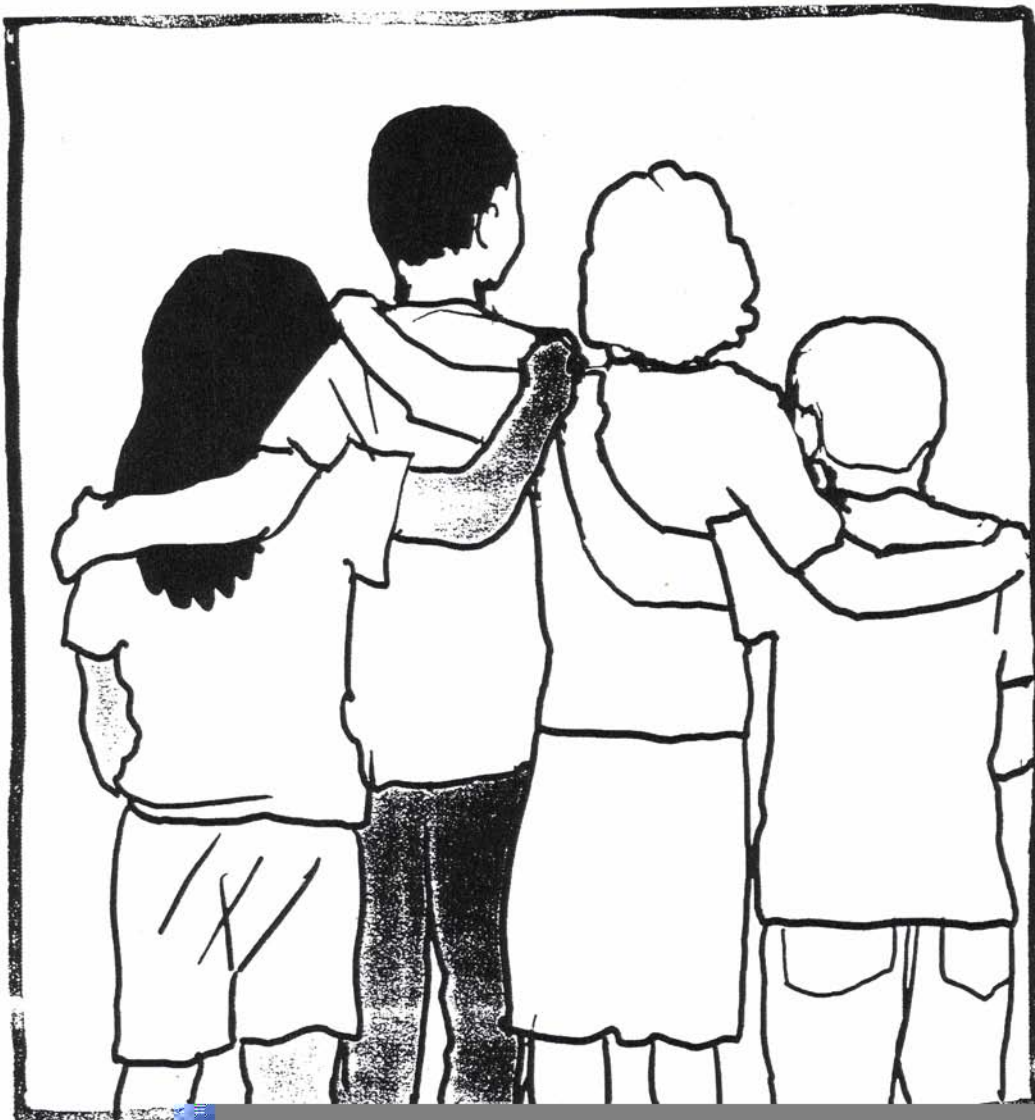
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People with autism need our understanding. They may say or do things differently than the rest of us. But they like to do things like everyone else.



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