

# Implementing this Program

## Recreation Providers

**With current estimates of autism affecting 1 in 68, recreation staff can expect to interact with people who have autism as part of their regular activities and events. *Make Friends with Autism* has created helpful tools to raise awareness and encourage understanding, inclusion, and appreciation of people with autism and their families in recreation and leisure activities.**

### **Make Friends with Autism – A Documentary**

This film has been produced to illustrate actual interactions between businesses and families with autism. The video, produced and directed by an Emmy award-winning producer, helps reduce fears and misconceptions of business associates relating to autism. Present the video in its full version to help increase staff comfort levels in working with people who may have special needs. Recreation Managers can use the abridged version of the video as part of strategy meetings to demonstrate key approaches to support positive relationships with these consumers. Regional and state organizations can promote and distribute the film throughout their networks to inform and encourage positive customer-service interactions system-wide.

### **FAQs and Terminology**

There's a lot of information about autism on the web. Make Friends with Autism provides a centralized location for businesses, recreation providers, neighbors and friends to access reliable and useful information about autism. You will find answers to frequently asked questions as well as explanations of common terminology related to autism spectrum disorders.

### **Resources and References**

This list provides contact information for many of the major organizations and governmental departments that focus on autism. Many will provide recreation providers with information and supports. Others are there to serve as outreach, advocacy, and/or an informational resource for the community. Identify organizations, work collaboratively, partner in awareness and fundraising campaigns, and pool resources to optimize inclusion opportunities for these individuals and their families.

## Functional Tips and Strategies for Families

Partner with families using the Make Friends with Autism Community Outing Tips. Use these resources to promote successful experiences with your organization. Thoughtful dialogue can lead to positive experiences for all. You will find more appreciative, loyal participants and promoters of your organization or business through this collaboration.

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### Recreation and Leisure Activities – *Let's Have Fun Together*

This presentation contains helpful information about autism spectrum disorders, the impact autism has on the live of family members, staff awareness, accommodations and adaptations, physical fitness and sports related issues, creative play and leisure activities, and approaches for building ongoing, positive relationships. Present this comprehensive presentation as part of your overall disability-awareness or customer service programs to help educate recreation staff. Include the presentation as part of focused workshops, offer it as electronic learning modules, or select relevant components to present during staff meetings.

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### Community Social Stories – *Supportive and Adaptable Visual Aids*

Use these visual aids to assist a person with autism to become more comfortable with common experiences in your center. These useful tools can be printed or placed on your website for easy access by participants. Helping consumers become more familiar and comfortable is a great method of customer service. A blank template is available to customize a social story to meet particular interests and needs of your organization.

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### Autism and Safety in the Community

These documents help families and community members understand safety issues related to autism. Raising the level of awareness and support will help safeguard against unnecessary and avoidable dangers.

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### “That’s What Friends Do” *A Song of Understanding and Companionship*

Here’s an original song that was written to support the Make Friends with Autism initiative by inspiring and encouraging understanding. It has a catchy melody, with stirring lyrics that invite people to look beyond their differences and find the common ties that bind. Download and include the song as an inspirational message at programs, events and meetings.

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[www.childrens-specialized.org/KohlsAutismAwareness](http://www.childrens-specialized.org/KohlsAutismAwareness)

For more information about this program contact: [KohlsAutismAwareness@childrens-specialized.org](mailto:KohlsAutismAwareness@childrens-specialized.org)



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