

Friends Like YOU Friends Like ME

Discover Similarities.
Appreciate Individuality.





What is Autism?

You probably have heard of autism. You may have a friend, neighbor, or a brother or sister who has autism.

A person with autism looks the same as any other person. Autism is a developmental disorder that certain children are born with. It affects the ways they communicate, behave, and interact with others.

Autism affects every person in a different way.





different is O.K.



Not everyone likes or is good at everything.
Some kids like soccer, others like martial
arts. Some are good at dancing, others are
better at painting. People like different TV
shows and movies.



a person ^{with} autism may...





more than words

People with autism may be puzzled by common expressions. Most likely when someone says, "Look out!," they're not asking you to see what's outside the window.

If people with autism don't understand your words they may get confused or frustrated.

Be a friend by using exact wording or by explaining the meaning of something that was said.



Some kids with autism may express themselves in a different way. When something is frustrating, painful, or unexpected, they may not be able to tell or show you. Once you get to know how a person reacts in certain situations, you'll understand him or her better.



let's connect



If a person who has autism is not looking at you, it doesn't necessarily mean that he or she isn't listening. It may seem like he or she is ignoring you. But, most times it's because he or she is focused on something else or just doesn't know how to answer you.



Be a friend by being calm and patient. Use a person's name and try to get his or her attention before you speak. He or she will soon sense your friendliness and develop more and more connections.

picture this



Sometimes it's helpful to show people how to do something instead of just telling them. You can ask them to look at you as you're doing it.

You can also use pictures to help show the steps of an activity. When speaking, use short sentences to explain. You can say, "Look how I am doing this" or "Try doing this." If you think a person needs some help, ask first. Be a friend by giving the person extra time to understand and to figure it out for themselves.



peculiar feelings


Some kids with autism may be very sensitive to certain textures, temperatures, or sounds. A tickle might feel like a burn or a tap might feel like a punch.

Other kids may have less sensitivity. They may not feel hot or cold the same way you do or they might not be able to recognize the difference between being rough or gentle.





Sensing something different



Certain noises, crowds, being touched, or bright or flashing lights, might upset some kids with autism. So they may cover their ears or eyes, make sounds, or run away. Many kids with autism flap their hands, rock back and forth, or make repeated noises to help them calm down.

Some kids with autism may be sensitive to sounds that we don't hear, unless we try real hard. Other kids with autism may enjoy loud noises and prefer to raise the volume.

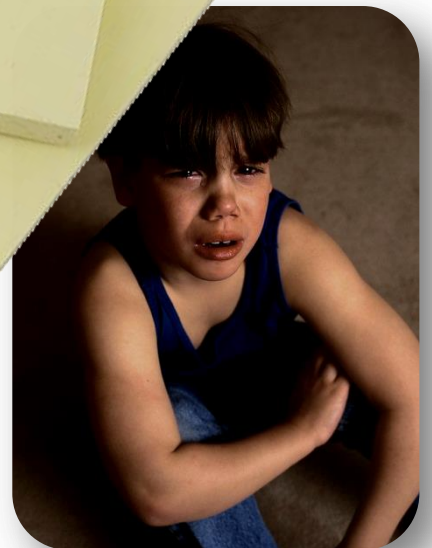
Be a friend by adjusting how loudly you speak, the volume of music, or the brightness of the lights. Sometimes it is calming to get away from a crowd of people.



out of order



Some kids with autism have trouble when their routine changes. Be a friend by reminding of the schedule and let him or her know when something has changed. You may have to give some help when there are unexpected changes like an special event, a cancelled program, or a fire drill.



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Keep ^{on} trying

Kids with autism
may get frustrated
when they can't
do something.
Sometimes they may
choose to change
an activity in a way
that is more
comfortable or
enjoyable for them.



How does it
feel when something is
difficult for you to do?

How does it feel to be
laughed at or ignored when
you're having trouble or
learning something new?

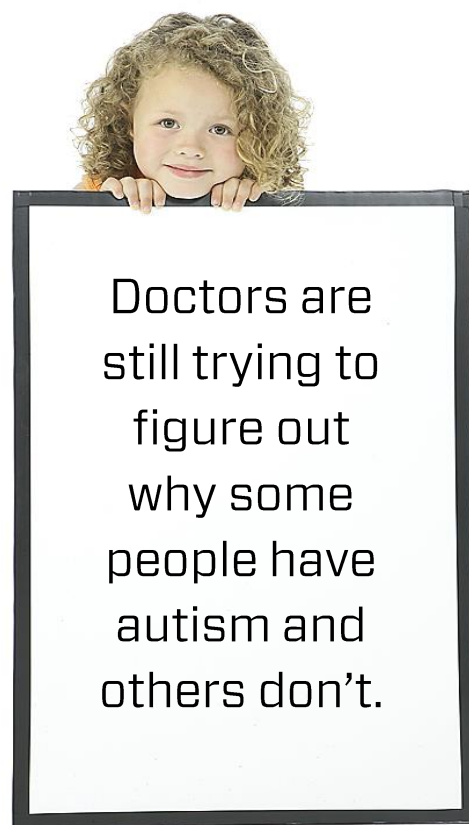
All of us practice so we can
get better at the things we
like to do.

Be a friend by helping
people with autism try
new things. Be patient and
encourage them to keep trying
as best they can.





Can I catch ? AUTISM





Autism may affect how kids talk, act and learn... but it's not who they are

Most times people with autism don't have any physical differences, but they might act, talk, or interact differently. Many kids with autism don't understand how to be social.

Just because someone doesn't seem to "fit in" with your group of friends, you shouldn't avoid, tease, or judge. Take the time to learn about and look past a person's differences. See differences as part of a person's individuality. What a great way to show others that you accept and respect a person's differences !





common interests

Are you good at math or science, art or music, reading or writing, sports or dance? Are you more creative or more logical?



Many kids with autism like to play word or math games, video and computer games, and different kinds of puzzles.

Find out things your friend with autism likes or is good at. Share some of those activities together.



A person with autism may be afraid to try something new, but you can encourage him or her to give it a try! Show how it's done, then let him or her try on his or her own. It may take your friend a bit longer, so just be patient.





Can we be friends?



Kids with autism may want to spend time doing different things than you do. They may seem like they don't want to hang out with you or are ignoring you so they can be by themselves.

Often they just don't know what to do or how to join in.

Children with autism may seem like they don't want to play. Some kids with autism play by themselves.



making friends

For many kids with autism, making new friends can be hard to do. They may not know how to act around others. Sometimes, they may not know how to show that they want to join in. Try to include a person with autism in an activity that you and your friends do. For instance, if a person likes video games, look for a game that you and your friends can enjoy together.

If a person with autism is doing something enjoyable, ask if you can join in. He or she may have trouble socializing or sharing at first, but you can help work it out.
Just be patient.



What should I do?

Don't ignore a person who has autism even if you think he or she may not be paying attention. Saying "hi" when you see or pass by will mean a lot.



Use your friend's name and try to get his or her attention before you talk. Slow down a little and give your friend time to think about what you are saying. Sometimes a person with autism may need a little extra time to think of what to say or do.

If your friend has behaviors, gestures, or movements that seem different, don't stare. As long as the behaviors aren't harmful or causing any damage, just ignore them. We all have habits that others overlook.



Don't join this team !



When you join in with others who laugh at or make fun of a person with autism, you're letting others think that it's alright.

Don't be part of the laughing, rumors, tricks, humiliation, or ignoring of kids with autism or anyone who is different.

Think about what it would be like if you were the person getting picked on. Support your friend with autism and let others know that no one deserves to be treated badly.





What will my friends think?



It can be hard being nice to others when we can't figure out why they act differently. We're all unique and special. Some of your friends may tease you when you are trying to be friends with a person who has autism. It may be hard, but do the right thing and be strong. Set an example for others. Paying attention to the ways we're the same is a great way to help bring friends together.

Kids with autism may not be able to tell you or show you when their feelings are hurt. Even if your friends are just kidding around, people with autism often can't notice the ways a person's voice or facial expressions show that they're joking. If your friends are being unkind, tell them to stop. We should never purposefully hurt each other. Take the lead and always respect and appreciate each person the way he or she is.

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Friends Like YOU
Friends Like ME



Kids with autism have feelings.
They just express them differently.

We show feelings of happiness, sadness, anxiety, or fear without using words. We look at people's facial expressions and body language to figure it out. Many kids with autism don't understand these gestures. You can help them by explaining your feelings so they understand.

Some kids with autism may express themselves in a different way. When something is frustrating, painful, or unexpected, they may not be able to tell or show you. Once you get to know how a person reacts in certain situations, you will understand his or her unique expressions.



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You may not always know how to respond.

There may be times that a person with autism doesn't know how to act in certain situations. For example, he or she may take something without asking, or scream if he or she can't keep it. When people with autism can't express what they want, they may get frustrated or upset. They may grab what they want, yell, cry, or get angry trying to make others understand.

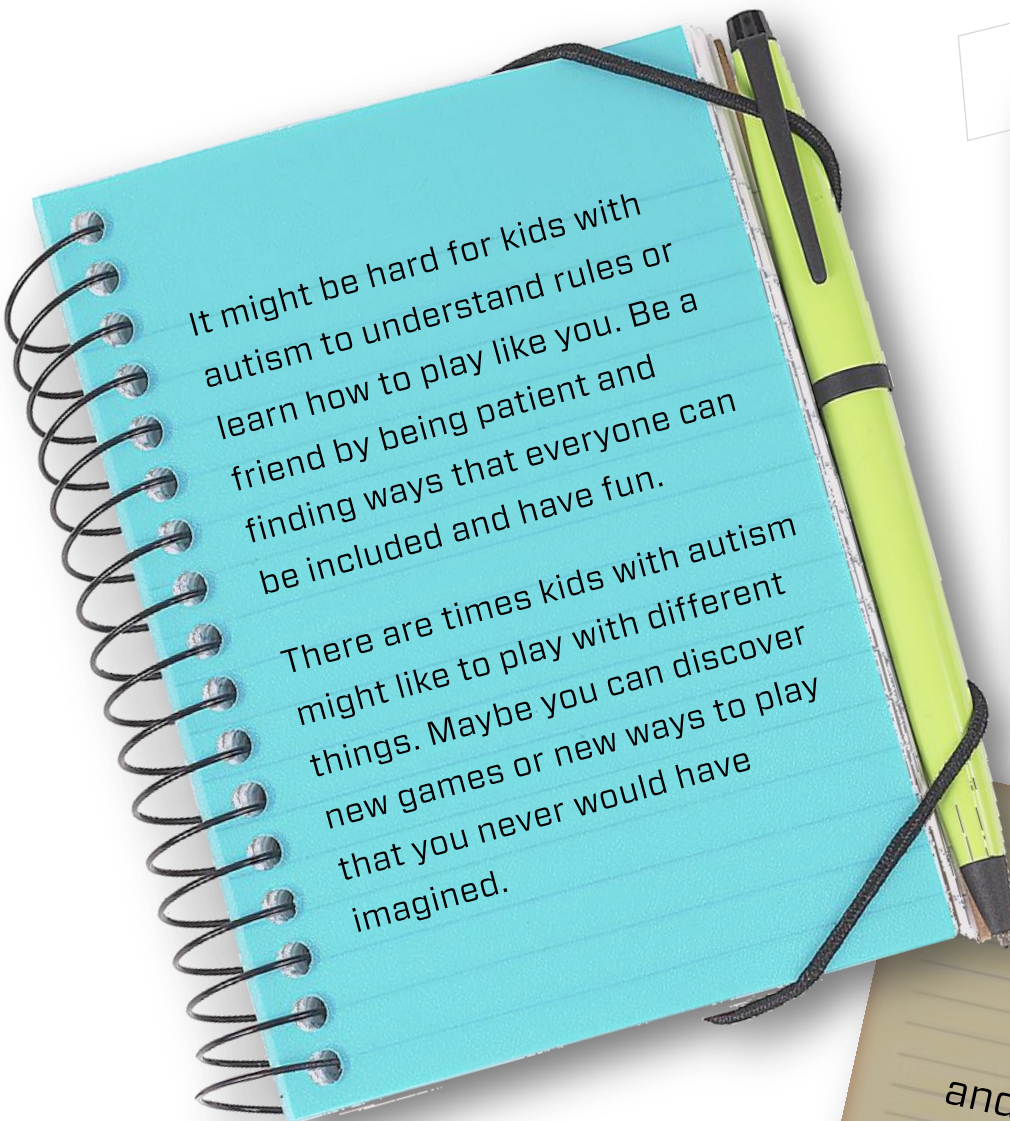
Be a friend by simply and nicely explaining the situation and the right thing to do. You can also try to refocus his or her attention to another activity or offer something else that may be interesting.

If you can't calm your friend, find a responsible adult to help you.



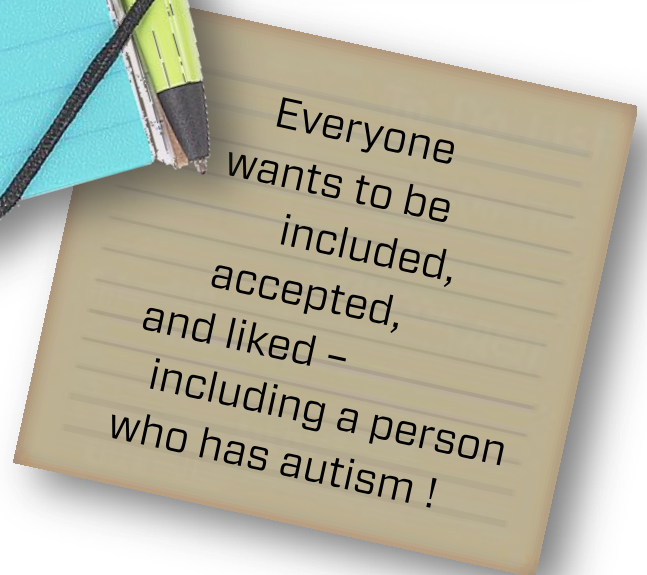


getting it together



It might be hard for kids with autism to understand rules or learn how to play like you. Be a friend by being patient and finding ways that everyone can be included and have fun.

There are times kids with autism might like to play with different things. Maybe you can discover new games or new ways to play that you never would have imagined.



Everyone
wants to be
included,
accepted,
and liked -
including a person
who has autism !



Take it easy

You can calm a friend with autism who is jittery by offering him or her an alternate activity. Remember that not everyone likes to do the same things.

A person with autism may need to talk to him or herself to help get through a difficult activity or situation. Be a friend by providing a quiet place or removing unnecessary distractions.



If you know something may be difficult or stressful for your friend, don't force him or her to do it. Respect friends by understanding their choices.



little
things

mean

a lot



Compliment your friend when he or she completes something – no matter how small you may think it is.

You can give a cheer or ask for a high-five.

If he or she makes a mistake, don't laugh or make fun. Be supportive by offering encouragement.



Taking some time



If you know a person who has autism, get to know him or her. At first, you may be afraid. But once you spend time with each other, your fear will go away.

After a while, you'll forget thoughts about autism and the fear, too. You'll see all the ways you are the same and begin to enjoy each other's company.





Make some new friends



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www.childrens-specialized.org/KohlsAutismAwareness

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