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Autism Agenda



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Autism can be your child's ally, not enemy, in making friends:

5 tips on turning peers to pals

Five tips for helping a child with autism make friends.

Post published by Robbie Woliver on June 26, 2010 in Alphabet Kids



Childhood friendship is a busy highway with lots of maneuvering and plenty of traffic, but for children with autism it is often an isolated one-way street. If a child with autism has difficulty relating to his peers, then find ways to have his peers relate to him.

Here are five tips on how to help develop friendships for your child with autism.

- 1) If it is feasible, and you have the choice or opportunity, place your child in a mainstreamed program in elementary school. You, your therapists and medical doctors, will have the best sense of how your child will do in a mainstream or inclusion classroom. Discuss the possibilities with the school's special ed department, and if you think your child has the slightest chance of succeeding in such an environment, provide him with the opportunity. Children with autism often mirror the behavior of those around them, and mirroring the behavior of the "typical" relationships he sees in his mainstreamed class are as important as the academic lessons to be learned.
- 2) Make sure the children in your child's potential friendship pool are familiar with what autism is. It is always most effective when the autistic child's parent or sibling come to the class and explain why little Emily is the way she is. These young peers of your child are more interested in Emily than you think, and their innate curiosity will allow them to quickly absorb the needs that Emily has. Turn your daughter's issues into plusses for the other children, like her obsession with anime characters might become an enjoyable class project. Draw the typical students into your daughter's world. Take their questions, which will no doubt include "Can you catch autism?" You'll be amazed by what they'll want to know. Show the children that your child is only as different as the typical kids are from each other. It's OK for them to be amused at some of the odd things your child does, as long as it is appreciative amusement and not hurtful. If your child is functioning at a high enough level to be in a typical classroom, the odds are that she will end up performing actions for her classmates that she knows will get a positive reaction. And as isolated as she might be at times, she will begin to model her behavior after theirs.

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AUTISM AND MAKING FRIENDS

3) Invite your child's classmates to your home. If your child won't always relate to his or her classmates, the typical students will still try to relate and bond with your child, and that is good for all the kids involved. If you're having a home playdate, don't be so anxious about them playing together for the entire time. Even typical children, at young ages, enjoy parallel play, and are off on their own. Each time the children get together, the connection gets stronger, and the other child will return to school and talk about her experience at your child's house, and the toys she played with or the videos she watched or the cookies she ate, and it will make the experience more important to the typical child--they did something special that the other kids haven't yet done. Don't be surprised if your child becomes the classroom celebrity, and you start getting a rush of invitations, especially if you have a sensory room, a closet full of videos your child is obsessed with, unique autism-friendly toys or special equipment like a trampoline or swing, that help stimulate your child and will appeal to his classmates. When the classmate returns to school and says, "You won't believe all the cool things at Billy's house," you will have a line of kids wanting to be Billy's friend. Have the unique therapeutic or obsessive things your child needs in his daily life, whether it's his dinosaur collection, his favorite soft shirt or even his therapist or para, become something special to his classmates. The children will become invested in your child's wellbeing. There should always be supervision of playdates so that your child can be directed--and redirected--throughout. Playdates should not be long. Short and sweet is the key here, especially at the start of this friendship journey. Have fun activities planned and treats served. There's nothing like bribing a child into a friendship at the start--everyone is guilty of it. If it's good enough to do with your typical children, and even yourself, it's good enough to do to help your autistic child. When your child's classmate goes home and says, "Billy's mom gave me the best cupcakes," you know you have a foundation to expand that into "I want to see Billy again, because it's fun to be with him."



4) Don't underestimate the empathy of your child's peers. Many of your child's classmates will be much more nurturing than you imagined, and you will find that several will stand out as protectors of your child. Once the other children realize that your child has special needs, they will help in their own way to provide assistance. If there is a fundraiser or walk for autism, engage the class. They will love to be involved, it will teach them great lessons, it will provide them further insight into autism and it will bond them closer with your child, who they will be excited about supporting.

5) Therapy and early intervention for your child are key. While your child is observing, learning and navigating the world of social interaction, her therapist will help her with the specifics. If Patty from school has shown that she wants to play with your child, the therapist will help guide your child and script through the specifics surrounding Patty and your child's potential interaction. These are lessons you can learn and employ as well.

Getting an autism spectrum diagnosis no longer means your child will live a life of isolation. Many children on the spectrum want friends, but just don't know how to make or keep them. These tips will help.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/alphabet-kids/201006/autism-can-be-your-childs-ally-not-enemy-in-making-friends-5-tips-turning>



Happy St Patrick's Day

SUMMER CAMPS

2015 Summer Camps and Programs for Kids with Autism and Special Needs



The following camps target kids with special needs. Go to their websites for more detailed information. You can also contact your local Parks and Recreation Department or OSU's KidSpirit Camps (<http://kidspirit.oregonstate.edu/summercamp>) for information about camps available to the general population. Overnight camps fill up quickly. However, you can still get on waiting lists.

Camp & Location	Description	Website	Ages/Population	Session Dates/Times	Registration Deadline
Social Communication Clinic Summer Camp Corvallis, OR	Day camp (also provides year-round services for preschool - adult)	http://socialcommunicationclinic.com/ Contact Julie Balderston at julie@socialcommunicationclinic.com for information	Ages 5-17 Students with high-functioning ASD or other social/self-regulation challenges and their siblings	Youth camp (Grades K-6/7): June 22 – 26 Teen Camp (Grades 6/7-12) July 6 – 10	ONGOING Possible insurance coverage, DD services funding
Speech Camp Philomath, OR	Day camp (also provides year-round services)	http://www.speechcamp.com/	All ages Oral-motor, speech, language, and communication disorders	Contact camp for details	UNKNOWN Scholarships Possible insurance coverage
Mighty Oaks Children's Therapy Center Albany, OR	Day camp (also provides year-round services)	http://mightyoakschildren.org/	All ages Speech, language, social skills, physical and occupational therapy	Camp only open to families who utilize therapy services	UNKNOWN Scholarships Possible insurance coverage
Camp Odakoda (formerly Camp Quest) Falls City, OR	Overnight	http://www.asdoregon.org/	Ages 10 – 15 Ages 15 – 17 High-functioning ASD or similar disorder	August 11 – 15	May 1 (or until full) Financial assistance available
Camp Attitude Foster, OR	Overnight	http://www.campattitude.com/	All ages/entire family A "unique Christian camping experience"	Various week-long sessions, June 21 to August 21	ONGOING Scholarships available
Kind Tree Camp/Retreat Florence, OR	Overnight, (provides other events year-round)	http://www.kindtree.org/retreat	All ages/entire family People with autism, parents, caregivers	August 20 – 23	Begins March 15 Financial assistance
Easter Seals Upward Bound Camp Lyons, OR	Overnight	http://www.easterseals.com/oregon/	Ages 7 – 25 All types of disabilities	July 12-17 (ages 7-25) July 19-23 (25 and up)	June 1 Limited financial assistance
Autistic Children's Activity Program Portland, OR	Day camp	http://www.acapportland.org/programs/	Ages 7 and up Autism spectrum disorders of all severities	Sessions of various lengths through June 29 – Aug 14 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM	May 22 Scholarships available
Camp Yakety-Yak Lake Oswego, OR	Day camp	http://www.campyaketyyak.org/	Ages 6 – 11 High-functioning ASD, social cognitive or self-regulation challenges	July 6 – 17 August 3 – 14 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM	ONGOING Discounts and partial scholarships
Mt. Hood Kiwanis Mt. Hood, OR	Overnight	http://www.mhkc.org/index.php	Ages 10 and up All types of disabilities	Various camp sessions See schedule on website	FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE Financial assistance



AUTISM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Revitalizing Dogs for the Deaf's Autism Assistance Dog Program

In 2008, after recognizing a considerable need for affordable and well-trained Assistance Dogs to serve families with children on the autism spectrum, Dogs for the Deaf started an Autism Assistance Dogs pilot program.

We were inspired by, and attended a training at, the first school in the world to provide this service. They had had proven success with a program that carefully bred dogs for autism assistance. We tried to adapt it to our model of using rescue dogs.

In doing so, we found that it was more difficult than expected. As a result, we put our Autism Assistance Dog program on hold in the last year so that we could review it and bring it back stronger and more successful than ever in the future.

We've learned that dogs that work in the Autism Assistance Dog field must be of a very specific, consistent temperament, one that is rarely found in dogs rescued from shelters. The dogs we rescue are between the ages of 18 months to three years old. It is impossible for us to know the history of these dogs or what unpredictable behaviors may trigger them in unexpected ways.

Here is a list of behaviors that a child with autism may show:

- Non responsive to verbal cues; acts as if deaf, although

hearing tests are in normal range

- Uneven gross/fine motor skills
- Noticeable physical over-activity or extreme under-activity
- No real fear of danger
- Apparent over-sensitivity or under-sensitivity to pain
- Obsessive attachment to objects
- Spinning objects
- Sustained odd play
- Unresponsive to normal teaching methods
- Difficulty in mixing with others
- Little or no eye contact
- Tantrums
- Preference to being alone; aloof manner
- Laughing (and/or crying) for no apparent reason
- Not wanting to cuddle or be cuddled
- Showing distress for reasons not apparent to others
- Repeating words or phrases in place of normal, responsive language
- Difficulty in expressing needs, using gestures or pointing instead of words
- Insistence on sameness; resistance to change

The evolution of programs geared toward successfully integrating children with autism into routine daily activities includes Autism Assistance Dogs. Autism Assistance Dogs are trained to enhance the safety of children on the autism

spectrum. The dog can have a calming effect on the child, increasing the child's willingness and ability to communicate. They can help to improve the child's social skills and reduce behaviors common to children on the autism spectrum. Autism Assistance Dogs can also be a stabilizing force—keeping the child out of traffic, bodies of water and other dangerous situations.

About 1 in 68 children has been identified with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) according to 2014 estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDMM) Network. Because the rise in autism rates is staggering, Dogs for the Deaf is devoted to revitalizing our Autism Assistance Dog program. We will continue to explore how we can execute such a program to the same standards of excellence as our Hearing Dog Program. Our goal is to have it back up and running within two to three years.

While rescuing dogs will always be our first "go to" source for the dogs we train and place, our experience has proven, and the groundwork we've done suggests, we may need to expand our resources to include dogs that are especially bred to work with children on the autism spectrum. If you have questions or input, please contact Dogs for the Deaf Training Director John Drach at (800) 990-3647, ext. 308. 🐾



Social Skill Builder Full

By Social Skill Builder, Inc.

Open iTunes to buy and download apps.

Description

Social Skill Builder offers both a Lite and Full version of our social skill App.



Our FULL version offers 19 modules, with various sequences of videos and questions for the user to view and react to by answering multiple choice questions. These video scenarios are of real interactions in preschool, elementary school, middle & high school and

community settings. Within these settings children and young adults demonstrate common social interactions with their peers and other adults.

All of Social Skill Builder app modules use interactive video to teach key social thinking, language and behavior critical to everyday social situations.



StoryMaker™ for Social Stories App

By Handhold Adaptive, LLC

StoryMaker™ is the premier app for creating and presenting Social Stories™. Now includes exclusive content from Carol Gray, creator of the Social Stories methodology, and is based on classroom research funded by the U.S. Department of Education's IES SBIR program.*

CREATE SOCIAL STORIES with PICTURES and TEXT: Create as many stories as you'd like. Use up to three pictures per page, or use none. The text you use stretches automatically to fit the screen, whether you've typed four words or forty, on an iPhone, iPod Touch or iPad. Use our stock library of images, add your own from the camera, import from an external source, or search and download from the Web.

You can add photos, audio, etc.

There are also similar apps available for android systems.

Please check out the LBL ESD website at www.lblesd.k12.or.us.

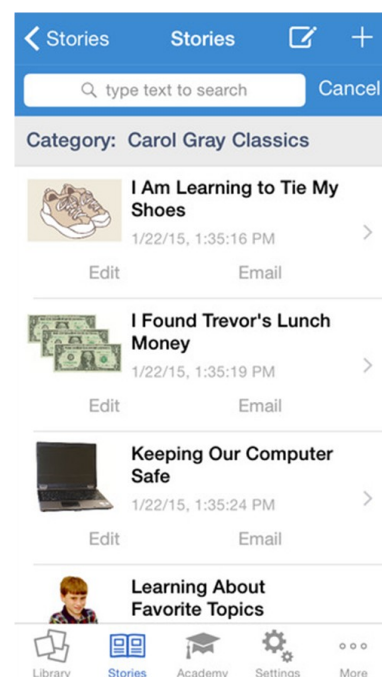
Select "parents". Then "Cascade Regional Program", "Autism", "Parent Resources".

You will find a lot of resources for both parents and teachers.

Fitting in and Having Fun Videos are available on You Tube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?NR=1&feature=endscreen&v=3RjRZ9jMfs0>

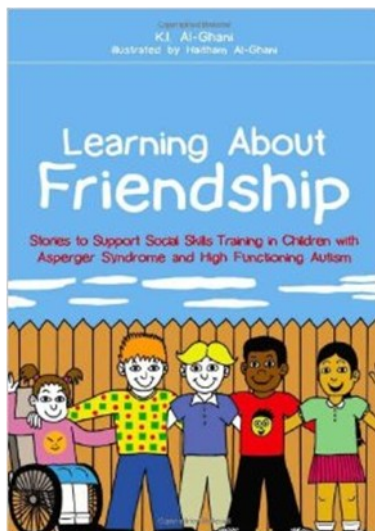
All Apps are suggested and not required.



BOOK SUGGESTIONS

Learning About Friendship

by K.I. Al-Ghani



This collection of ten fully-illustrated stories explores friendship issues encountered by children with ASD, ages four to eight. The book addresses key problem areas such as sharing, taking turns, being a tattletale, obsessions, winning and losing, jealousy, personal space, tact, and defining friendship. The lively and entertaining stories depersonalize issues, allowing children to see situations from the perspective of others and enabling them to recognize themselves in the characters. This opens the door to discussion, which in turn leads to useful insight and strategies they can practice and implement in the future. Each story has a separate introduction which explains to adults the main strategies within it. This book is a valuable resource for all parents and teachers of children with ASD, along with their

friends and families, and anybody else looking to help children on the spectrum to understand, make and maintain friendships.

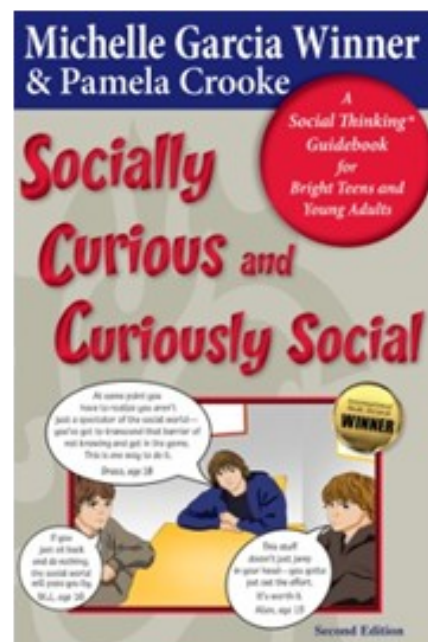


Socially Curious and Curiously Social

by Michelle Garcia Winner and Pamela Crooke

The anime-illustrated guidebook is written in the language of teens, as a “get real” discussion about what really goes on inside the minds of people when we share space together. Adults also use the book to use with students and to learn about and help discuss and unravel the social-emotional world of the students we're working with.

Many practical strategies help the reader figure out what impression they are making on others, how this affects their own emotions and what they could work on to make living in the increasingly complex social world more personally rewarding. From discussing the “ins and outs” of what it means to be a “Social Thinker” and use related social skills, to figuring out texting, dating, the many different levels of friendship and the many and varied emotions we experience as we relate to others, the authors describe the real world of being with other people. This includes knowing how to sometimes just “fake it” better! The authors are not trying to get every reader to find a group to hang out with; instead, they are providing information to help each person find his or her place and be appreciated by others at whatever level he or she feels comfortable with.





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MAKING FRIENDS VISUALS

<p>friends</p>	<p>please</p>	<p>thank you</p>	<p>read</p>
<p>movie</p>	<p>TV Show</p>	<p>Can I play?</p>	<p>How are you?</p>
<p>video game</p>	<p>What game do you want to play?</p>	<p>I'm fine</p>	<p>hello</p>
<p>draw</p>	<p>What do you want to watch?</p>	<p>goodbye</p>	<p>I want</p>