



Special points of interest:

5 Ways to Help make Friends
Pgs. 1-2

Friendship Code
Pgs. 3-4

Autism Resource Fair
Pg. 5

Summer Camps
Pg. 6

Also In this issue:

Social Emotional **9**
Book suggestions **7-8**

Visuals **10**

Autism Consultant **10**
Contact
Information

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Autism Agenda



Linn Benton Lincoln ESD-Cascade Regional Autism Program

5 WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD WITH AUTISM MAKE FRIENDS

The role of parents in social skills

March 17, 2015 / By [Thomas Frazier II, PhD](#)

Making new friends can be challenging for any child. There's always a bit of anxiety in approaching people, introducing yourself and building a new relationship.

Now imagine trying to make friends when you have a tough time [reading social cues](#): figures of speech, body language, hand gestures and facial expressions. This is the challenge for children with autism.

It's also a source of anxiety for parents. But in autism education programs, we focus on teaching social skills that don't come naturally. And parents can help their kids practice at home.

Here are a few ways, with advice from behavior experts Jocelyn Eskenazi and Holly Hennessey. The tips here apply mostly to high-functioning children with autism; we often take different approaches for nonverbal children, for example.

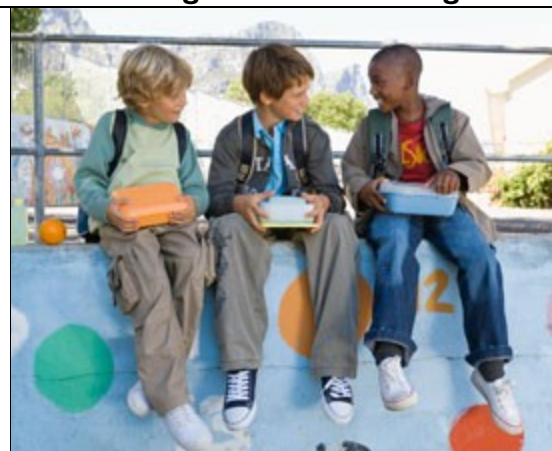
I. Help them understand what a friend is

Sounds basic, right? But starting with the basics is critical for developing social skills. We have seen children who think of bullies as friends, for example, so this distinction matters.

Use simple language. For example, ask, "Do you like to spend time with somebody who calls you names?" And "Do you like to spend time with someone who is nice to you?"

Be literal, because your child will be, too. Avoid saying abstract things like, "Friends are people who care for the real you and accept you for who you are." Instead, say, "Friends treat you nicely, ask you what you like or want to do, and say things to make you feel better when you are having a tough time."

Continued on page 2.



5 WAYS TO HELP MAKE FRIENDS CONTINUED...

2. Use scripts and visuals

Speaking of basics, children with autism often benefit from a script or visuals that model a conversation.

Take the “introduction,” for example. At [Cleveland Clinic Children’s Center for Autism](#), we use a pyramid visual that illustrates how a conversation starts small and branches out. At the top are simple things: asking a person’s name and grade. The next level goes a little deeper: favorite hobbies or school subjects, and so on. That’s the kind of learning tool that you can use at home, too.

The same goes for scripts. You won’t believe how helpful writing out a script for a conversation can be, whether it’s in person, by phone or by text message. A script — complete with “thank-you” and age-appropriate phrases such as “cool” — goes a long way toward practice.

3. Offer real-world practice

Parents often fear the public setting. Perhaps you’ve experienced [one too many meltdowns](#). I understand that, but getting your child out into social settings is crucial for practicing social skills.

You can minimize behavior risks by involving your child in planning. If you’re planning a trip to the zoo with the family, have your child help pick snacks to take and develop a schedule, for example.

The idea applies to planning a hang-out session with a friend, too. Have your child think about activities he or she wants to do *and* this new friend may want to do. Then plan a schedule together that incorporates both. Doing this teaches the social compromise involved in all friendships.

4. Build off your child’s interests

Have you ever made a friend based on a common interest: music, sports or a hobby? That works for children with autism, as well.

If your child really loves chess, find a chess club. If your child loves art, sign up for an art class. These offer built-in interests and conversation points — and a fun setting for social interaction.

Just be sure the setting includes kids of the same age. When [practicing social skills](#), it’s important for your child to be surrounded by age-appropriate behavior.

5. Think about long-term success

None of this happens overnight, so be patient.

Sometimes we build a five-year plan for children, for example. If a child is 8 years old now, at what level should their social skills be at age 13? And then what individual skills — the introduction, conversational skills, behavioral skills — can we work on along the way?

As much as possible, that involves you helping your child practice at home. Most autism education programs offer [sessions for parents and others](#) to facilitate that process. When you have the opportunity, participate.

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/2015/03/5-ways-to-help-your-child-with-autism-make-friends/>



The Untold Friendship Code Revealed

By: Stephen Borgman

Friendship requires a certain degree of social skills for people with Aspergers.

I have a dilemma. I'm an NT (neurotypical), not an Aspie. I imagine that if I were an NT born onto a planet populated by Aspergians, I would be considered very different.

Aspergians would say that I have shallow conversations and have some behaviors considered very non-sensical to the citizens of that planet.

So I offer this information as a counselor who has researched some ideas to help you, an Aspergers reader, crack the friendship code among NT's. But I also think some of these principles may apply to relationships between Aspies as well.

Two of my coaches in this area of friendship are Michelle Garcia Winner and Dr. Pamela Crooke, authors of the book [Socially Curious, Curiously Social: A Social Thinking Guidebook for Bright Teens & Young Adults](#). Sometime last year, at a seminar I attended, they taught me the concept of **the Friendship Pyramid**. I found it an extremely helpful way to explain the concepts of friendship to some of my clients on the autism spectrum. Ms. Garcia Winner and Dr. Crooke developed this concept while actively working with groups of Aspies at their Social Thinking clinic. Those participants found it very helpful for thinking about friendships.

Here Are The Levels of Friendship

Level 1: Friendly Greetings

This is the most basic level of greeting. As an Aspie, you may not be comfortable with this level of friendship, because it seems like small talk. Think of it as ants passing by each other on the trail: they touch antennas briefly and go on their way.

Just smiling and saying hello communicates that you notice the other person and are being friendly to them.

During the day, say hi to as many people as you're comfortable greeting. If you feel overwhelmed by doing that much, make a goal to say hello one or two times, or at least to smile non-verbally and acknowledge someone who says hello to you.



Level 2: Acquaintance

These are people you may have had little discussion with because of a) being in the same class, or b) working on the same project. Or, if you work at a job, it may be a co-worker you work next to or on a project with. These are people you go beyond saying hi to and carry on a small conversation for short periods of time. You don't plan to be with these people: they are merely acquaintances who happen to start talking to you because you may be in line, sitting next to each other, etc, and you respond to their comments or questions, thus showing that you are interested in what they have to say.

If you think that there are some acquaintances you would like to know better, you might look them up on Facebook, and even send them a "friend" request. If someone regularly seems to be in the same classroom or other places as you, and they seem to say hi, or smile at you, you may want to join that person at a group project, or sit next to them in class.

Continued on page 4

Level 3: Possible Friendship

Possible friendship happens when you start to seek people to talk to them, but you meet up with them in the same general place that you met them. For example, in the course of going to band at school, you say hi to different band members. After learning to start a conversation and talking casually with Joe, who sits next to you in band practice, you learn that you both share a common interest in [Pokémon](#). You may find out where this person “hangs out” before school starts and then meet up with them. A friendly greeting, and acquaintance, turns into possible friendship when you happen to see the person, ask to meet for lunch, or during a break, or after school.

Here are some suggestions from Ms. Garcia Winner and Dr. Crooke:

- a) Connect with the person using Facebook
- b) Seek the person out to work with on a classroom project.
- c) Call or text the person about homework problems.
- d) Go up to the person when he or she is standing with another person, even if you don’t know the other person

On this level of possible friendship, there is less effort because of the shared setting.

Level 4: Evolving Friendship

When a friendship goes from Possible to Evolving, it involves more effort on your part. You will have to develop the conversation skills to take you through the first three levels. And then you will need to make the effort to arrange to hang out during times outside of school or work time. Some Aspies are very uncomfortable with using the phone, but they have found that they are much more comfortable texting or using Facebook to start a text oriented conversation versus a verbal conversation. You can use some of the same suggestions from Level 3 to connect with evolving friends. Keep in mind the [characteristics of a good friend](#), and notice whether the people you are becoming friends with meet that criteria.

Remember that just because you don’t share exactly the same mutual interests you can’t still be friends. For example, let’s say that your friend enjoys one type of video game, and you enjoy another. You both enjoy gaming, just not the same game. But you can work to be interested in your friend’s game, and maybe your friend will show the same interest in yours. Think about things your evolving friend likes to do, and suggest that you both do that sometime outside of school (like hanging out at your house playing video games, or going to see a movie)

Level 5: Bonded Friendship

Bonded friends develop over the course of time. They have gone through the previous four levels and have gotten pretty comfortable with each other. They look out for each other, and go out of their way to make sure things are okay for that person. At this level of friendship, one of the expectations (even though it’s not spoken out loud), is that you make plans to hang out together outside of “expected” structured times, like school.

This friendship level is very similar to Level 4, but a bit more frequent and intense. Again, here are some examples from Ms. Garcia Winner and Dr. Crooke:

- a) Consistently seek out the person to hang out together, meeting him or her in the same place during lunch or break
- b) Post nice stuff on the person’s Facebook wall, etc.
- c) Arrange to talk or get together after school, or just hang out.
- d) Talk more personally about your life and your emotions with this person (what makes you frustrated, happy, and so one).

At the very top of the friendship pyramid is a Very Close Friend.

Another interesting friend, not shown on the pyramid, is the On Again, and Off Again Friend. This is a type of friend that you may have gone from level 3 through 5 with, maybe even become a very close friend with, but it may not last forever. Maybe a person moves away, or develops different interests, or meets other friends and spends more time with them. It’s very key to understand that this is very normal of many friendships. If you can think flexibly about friends in this way, it will be easier for you to tolerate one of your friends spending less time with you from time to time. Remember that some of your friendships may ‘fade out’ at different times. Then later, you may be back at the acquaintance phase and end up working up the ladder again. It’s normal.

<http://www.myaspergers.net/parenting-aspergers-children-and-teens/children-with-aspergers/social-skills-for-aspergers/>

FIRST ANNUAL AUTISM RESOURCE EVENT



Linn Benton Lincoln ESD and Cascade Regional Program Autism Staff
Invite you to our First Annual Autism Resource Event



“Knowledge Builds Hope”

April 8, 2016

4:00-7:00PM

Linn Benton Lincoln ESD
905 4th Ave SE
Albany, OR 97321

This event will offer you an opportunity to see community resources that are available to support individuals with autism.

We will have a variety of organizations that offer social skills, physical therapy options, dental hygienists, support groups, Developmental Disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation, and more.

If you have any questions please contact: Michelle Neilson 541-812-2678 or michelle.neilson@lblead.k12.or.us

2016 SUMMER CAMPS

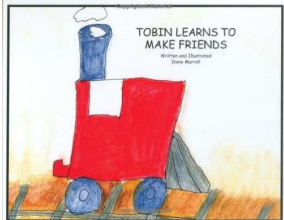
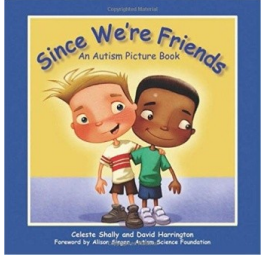
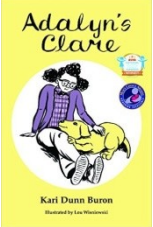
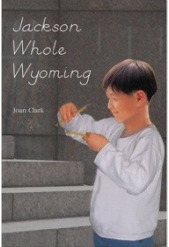
2016 Summer Camps and Programs for Kids with Autism and Special Needs

The following camps target kids with special needs. Go to their websites or contact organizations directly 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. Also check out the Bricks for Kids program (<http://www.bricks4kidz.com/oregon-corvallis-albany/>), which has classes and camps revolving around Legos, engineering, and other topics of interest to many kids with ASD. Stages Theatre Camp is available to all kids grades 1-12 www.CorvallisTheaters.com. Majestic Summer Theatre Day Camp is doing The Jungle Book, www.majestic.org.

Camp & Location	Description	Website/Contact Info	Ages/Population	Session Dates/Times	Registration Deadline
Social Communication Clinic Teen Camp Corvallis, OR	Day camp (also provides year-round services for preschool - adult)	http://socialcommunication-clinic.com/ Contact Julie Balderston at julie@socialcommunication-clinic.com	Ages 11 – 17 Students with high-functioning ASD or other social/self-regulation challenges	June 27 – July 1 Times vary depending on camper-planned activities	ONGOING Possible Insurance coverage, DD services funding
Olympics Camp for Learning Well Corvallis, OR	Day camp (also provides year-round tutoring services)	http://yesicanlearningstrategies.com/ Contact Shirley Irwin at yesican@shirleyirwin.com	Grades 3 – 5 Students of all kinds with learning struggles	August 1 – 12 10:00 AM - 12:30 PM	ONGOING \$20 discount if registered before 6/1
Creativity Camp, Corvallis, OR	Day camp	Contact Jake Dorr at http://jake@socialcommunication-clinic.com	Ages 6 – 12 Students with social-cognitive struggles who like acting, art, and technology	July 11 – 14 9:00 AM – 11:30 AM	ONGOING
Camp Odakoda Falls City, OR	Overnight	http://www.asdoregon.org/	Ages 10 – 15 Ages 15 – 17 High-functioning ASD or similar disorder	August 16-20	ONGOING, but fill up by end of March. Financial assistance
Camp Attitude Foster, OR	Overnight	http://www.campattitude.com/	All ages/entire family. A “unique Christian camping experience.”	Various week-long sessions, June 19 to August 12	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 26 – 28	August 8 Financial assistance
Easter Seals Upward Bound Lyons, OR	Overnight	http://www.easterseals.com/oregon/	Ages 7 – 25 All types of disabilities	July 10-14 (ages 7-24) July 17-21 (25 & up)	April 1 Financial assistance
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 11 – 22 August 8 – 19 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 Served Financial assistance

BOOK RESOURCES

There are lots of resources and curriculum that teach students about friendship and specific skills to make friends. Parents and teachers can supplement this direct instruction by providing students with literature like the titles on this list. The following books feature characters with autism or ASD-like characteristics who experience daily struggles and triumphs, including making friends. Students can read these books on their own or with the guidance of an adult. By depicting friendships between people with and without ASD, all titles allow both typically-developing youth and children with ASD to better understand those who think differently and to navigate the complexities of friendship.

	<p><i>Tobin Learns to Make Friends</i> by Diane Murrell</p> <p>Tobin the train learns social rules, such as “take turns” and “don’t interrupt,” so that he can make friends. (Preschool – Grade 2)</p>
	<p><i>Since We're Friends: An Autism Picture Book</i> by Celeste Shally</p> <p>This story of a friendship between two boys - one who has autism and one who does not - provides practical examples of how to make such a friendship work. (Preschool – Grade 2)</p>
	<p><i>Adalyn's Clare</i> by Kari Dunn Buro</p> <p>Adalyn learns to make friends with the help of a therapy dog named Clare. (Grades 3-6)</p>
	<p><i>Jackson Whole Wyoming</i> by Joan Clark</p> <p>A neurotypical boy initially has mixed feelings about befriending Jackson, a classmate who has Asperger Syndrome. (Grades 3-6). Sequel: <i>Ann Drew Jackson</i>.</p>



BOOK & SOCIAL SKILLS RESOURCES CONTINUED...

	<p><i>Anything But Typical</i> by Nora Raleigh Baskin 6th grader Jason, who communicates his thoughts better in writing, makes a friend online and worries about meeting her in person. (Grades 4-8)</p>
	<p><i>Emma-Jean Lazarus Fell Out of a Tree</i> by Lauren Tarshis Emma-Jean helps a classmate and has adventures in middle school. (Grades 5-8). Sequel: <i>Emma-Jean Lazarus Fell in Love</i>.</p>
	<p><i>Running On Dreams</i> by Herb Heiman Middle-schooler Justin, who has autism, is paired with popular track star, Brad. The two struggle to understand one another and become friends. (Grades 5- 8)</p>
	<p><i>My Strange and Terrible Malady</i> by Catherine Bristow A book about adolescent confusion, the importance of mentoring, and the power of friendship and acceptance, written from the perspective of a newly diagnosed teen. (Grades 8 and up)</p>
	<p><i>The Half-Life of Planets</i> by Emily Franklin and Brendan Halpin Told from the perspective of both an astronomy geek named Liana and a music-obsessed Aspie named Hank, this story shows how the two teens navigate adolescence and their relationship. (Grades 9 and up)</p>



Social Skills

Advancing Social Learning and Emotional Growth

TD Social Skills has videos and resources available for you to use with your child. TD Social Skills is committed to creating tools to help children and teens develop more positive and fulfilling relationships. Some of the resources they have available are: Social Skills video modeling series for all ages and Visual Supports for Empowerment "The File Factor".

Please see their website: <https://www.youtube.com/user/TDSocialSkills>

Jill Kuzma's SLP Social & Emotional Skill Sharing Site

Ideas for Educators Supporting Social/Emotional Language Skills

[Home](#) [Welcome to Jill's Social/Emotional Skills Sharing Site!](#) [About Jill](#)

[PINTEREST Boards](#) [Great Websites and Resources](#) [Perspective Taking Skills](#)

[Conversation Skills](#) [Emotion Awareness and Management](#)

[Friendship & Interaction Skills](#) [Teaching Ideas for Executive Function Skills](#)

[Receptive Language](#) [Expressive Language Ideas](#)

[YouTube Video Links for Social Skills](#) [Cooperative Group Game Ideas](#)

[IEP/Treatment Plan Objective Ideas](#) [Jill's Presentations](#) [References](#)

YouTube Video Links for Social Skills

Hello everyone! Here are some YouTube video links that may supplement your social skills instruction. NOTE: For some longer video pieces, I may have previewed only portions of the video, so be sure to preview the entire video clip before showing it to students! – Jill :) This is just a sample of what is available on her website. Please see her website for additional resources. <https://jillkuzma.wordpress.com/youtube-video-links-for-social-skills/>

Social Skills Video Sample pack from EveryDay Speech – check out these FREE social skill videos to sample the 80+ videos available as a package <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLVZh-3ewCElPxiUynwfYoAt5vsG-t-gY>

Why You Shouldn't Tease Other Kids – 1 min, 57 seconds- This video mentions the word, Asperger – so you might want to make sure that kids watching this understand what that means
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQS8cjvjrE&feature=related>

The Importance of Friendship – 1 min, 32 seconds – This video mentions the word, Asperger – so you might want to make sure that kids watching this understand what that means.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6o-SdN3IIPc&feature=related>

Getting Rid of Frustration for Asperger's Kids – 3 min, 22 seconds. This video mentions the word, Asperger – so you might want to make sure that kids watching this understand what that means.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vXOQijPuzdM&feature=related>

Short animated video on Bullying (1 min 23 seconds)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3QbdMcR7VKA&feature=related>

Spongebob: The Bully – full episode (about 5 min)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ox_dawRzfw&feature=related

Video about Bullying (2 min 19 sec)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-EVXiatwbwM&feature=related>



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VISUALS

Playing with friends

