

# **A Quick Guide to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) for Parents and Teachers**

Compiled and edited by Ymkje Wideman-van der Laan  
August 2011  
(Updated April 2023)

## Introduction

Written, compiled, and edited August 2011 (Updated April 2023)

As a grandparent and primary caregiver of a 5-year-old boy with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), one of my biggest concerns was getting the best education for my grandson. I wanted him to enjoy the experience and do well at school to build a strong basis for his future success.

One thing I learned when my grandson started attending preschool in 2010 is that a key to improving his education experience was communication with his teacher(s).

Teachers are incredibly influential and their work is very important! They are the key to a child's everyday school life, and so much of the child's success depends on them. Due to cutbacks during that time of economic crisis, they faced enormous challenges as their classroom size increased. On top of that, with then 1 out of 110 children affected with some form of Autism, more and more classes included one or more children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

(Update: In 2022 the CDC determined that approximately 1 in 44 children is affected by autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Boys are four times more likely to be diagnosed with autism than girls.)

In one survey conducted in Britain, many parents said that their child's teacher did not have a good understanding of ASD in general or a good understanding of the individual needs of their child. Not all teachers are up to scratch when it comes to teaching children with ASD, and how could they be? Even with the best will in the world, teachers have a LOT of kids to teach and a LOT of work to do.

So as a grandparent and caregiver of a child with ASD, I felt it was essential to be proactive and make sure that my grandson's teachers had the resources needed to be able to give him the best overall chance at school.

With that in mind, I compiled information, tips, and articles that I found personally helpful, and which I hoped could be helpful to them and other parents as well. I've divided the information into several sections:

**Part 1 – What Is Autism?** – Bite-sized chunks of basic information that I hope will give a quick and easy overview and understanding of ASD.

**Part 2 – Your Child's Right to Public Education** – Helpful information and tips for parents and teachers to help children transition back to school, enter mainstream classrooms, and have a successful school year.

**Part 3 – Sample Letters and Reports** – Some simple "fill in the blanks" letters and reports that parents can fill out about their child with ASD to give to the teacher(s). The "About Me" letter introduces the child to the teacher(s) and the other forms build on this and give an easy-to-follow list of the key areas that teachers may want to know about their student.

**Appendix** – References to other helpful information, and sample "tools" that can help children transition, calm down, and/or improve their behavior.

## Part 1 – What Is Autism?

*Autism* is a disability that affects typical development. It is called a "spectrum disorder" because its impact on development can range from mild to severe. The areas of development most affected are social interaction and communication skills, difficulties with verbal and non-verbal communication, and leisure play. A person with autism may show signs of the following characteristics:

**Remember: Each individual with autism is unique and may act or react differently!**

- Be non-verbal or have very limited verbal abilities.
- Resist change.
- Use gestures to express needs rather than words.
- Exhibit inappropriate laughing or giggling
- Cry for no apparent reason.
- Repeat words/phrases instead of giving a normal response.
- Prefer to be alone.
- Have difficulty mixing with others.
- Have tantrums —display extreme distress for no apparent reason
- Make little or no eye contact.
- Be sensitive to touch, and do not like hugging/cuddling.
- Not respond to normal teaching methods.
- Obsessively attach to objects.
- Show no real fear or sense of danger.
- Be over or under-sensitive to pain.
- Have awkward gross/fine motor skills.
- Not respond to verbal cues (as if deaf).
- Be sensitive to sound, or bright lights
- Exhibit self-stimulating behavior: hand flapping, finger flicking, body rocking
- Not be able to make eye contact
- Become anxious in new situations
- Not understanding the consequences of actions
- May have difficulty remembering facts or details of circumstances

### **Helpful Hints for Interactions with Individuals with ASD**

- Use simple language; speak slowly and clearly
- Use concrete terms and ideas
- Repeat simple questions: allowing time (10-15 seconds) for a response
- Proceed slowly and give praise and encouragement
- Do not attempt to physically stop self-stimulating behavior

*(Taken from the Autism Society of North Carolina website, and other sources)*

## How to Teach Children with High-Functioning ASD to Study Effectively

By Dave Angel, adapted

Finding the best environment for teaching children with high-functioning ASD is very important. Children with high-functioning ASD are often very intelligent, and many are of above-average intelligence. However, they tend to struggle in the educational setting. Finding the right support is essential for learning and must be a top priority for all children with ASD.

Teaching children with ASD to study effectively should be a goal for parents and teachers alike. The surroundings in which a child with ASD must learn should be carefully created. Each child's strengths and weaknesses should be considered and the parents and school personnel must work together.

There are several basic ideas to consider when teaching children with ASD. Children with ASD struggle with social situations, lack communication skills, dislike change, need order and routine, and can be obsessive about a special interest. All of these characteristics must be evaluated and an educational plan (IEP) created that accounts for these characteristics. An optimal educational setting for a child with ASD will:

- Acknowledge his sensory issues, whether they are hypersensitivity, hyposensitivity, or a mixture of both.
- Support his need for social skills training. Peer mentoring or peer buddies often work well. Social skills classes are great options, if available.
- Develop a set routine using written schedules and/or visual aids. Advanced preparation for any changes in routine is a necessity.
- Will work with his strengths and weaknesses, offering additional opportunities and motivation for those subjects in which he does well while creating support and assistance for those subjects in which he needs help.
- Allow for his special interest if possible. This special interest is a huge motivation.
- Accept him for who he is, giving him the support he needs and the praise he deserves.

Proper support is essential when teaching children with ASD. Parents and teachers must work together to develop a setting that is perfectly suited for the child with ASD, to ensure a positive learning experience.

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Teacher training remains pivotal to supporting the success of children with ASD in a mainstream classroom. Federal law requires that teachers make reasonable adjustments to their teaching strategies and classroom environment to accommodate the needs of pupils with disabilities. In particular, teachers should be encouraged to adjust the content and delivery of the curriculum, consider the sensory needs of the pupil, and welcome the input of both parents and special-needs students when planning their educational programs.—*Simon Wallace, Ph.D., Autism Speaks director of scientific development for Europe*

## Part 2 – Your Child’s Right to Public Education

*(From Autism Speaks Website, adapted)*

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), first enacted in 1975, mandates that each state provide all eligible children with a free and appropriate public education that meets their unique, individual needs. (IDEA was most recently revised in 2004 and renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, but most people still refer to it as IDEA.) IDEA specifies that children with various disabilities, including autism, are entitled to early intervention services and special education. If your child has been diagnosed with a form of autism, the diagnosis is generally sufficient to gain access to the rights afforded by IDEA.

The IDEA legislation has established an important role for parents in their children’s education. You, as a parent, are entitled to be treated as an equal partner with the school district in deciding on an education plan for your child and his or her individual needs. This enables you to be a powerful advocate for your child. It also means that you must be an informed, active participant in planning and monitoring your child’s unique program and legal rights. This is a very important role and at times, it can seem overwhelming and confusing.

*You, as a parent, are entitled to be treated as an equal partner with the school district in deciding on an education plan for your child.*

Throughout your child’s educational process, it is important to remember that each child has a unique set of abilities and challenges. Educating both yourself and your child’s educational team at school will be fundamental to your child’s success in the classroom. Since children with ASD can be diagnosed at all different stages of the education process, it is imperative to make sure that the proper accommodations are given to them no matter when they are diagnosed.

Individuals with ASD may show evidence of distinct issues; they may struggle more with social interactions and communication than with their studies and schoolwork. Since each child is different, the parents and educators need to work collaboratively to play on the child’s strengths and enable them to have a positive and successful educational experience.

Once a child is diagnosed, it is crucial to make sure they have the proper support in school. As you work with your school system, it is important to remember that your child’s program should be designed individually, as each child has unique needs, even if the diagnosis is the same as that of another child. Acquiring these services will help your child and will also ensure that his or her teacher can provide the best and most effective education possible.

In the classroom, the student and the teacher will face different challenges. The *Organization for Autism Research* (OAR) offers the following six-step plan to help your child enter a classroom, and throughout their education:

### **Step 1: Educate Yourself**

Different behaviors are a large part of Autism Spectrum Disorder/High Functioning Autism (ASD/HFA). Learning about ASD/HFA and the specific characteristics of your student will help

you effectively manage the behaviors. Here are some helpful hints that can guide everyday school life for students with ASD/HFA.

- **Operate on “ASD time.”** “ASD time” means, “Twice as much time, half as much done.” Students with ASD often need additional time to complete assignments, gather materials, and orient themselves during transitions.
- **Manage the environment.** Any change can increase anxiety in a student with ASD. Strive to provide consistency in the schedule and avoid sudden changes as much as possible.
- **Create a balanced agenda.** Make a visual schedule that includes daily activities for students with ASD. Some parts of the daily schedule or certain classes or activities should be monitored or restructured, as needed.
- **Simplify language.** Keep your language simple and concise, and speak at a slow, deliberate pace. Students with ASD have difficulty “reading between the lines,” understanding abstract concepts like sarcasm, or interpreting facial expressions. Be clear and specific when providing instructions.
- **Manage change of plans.** Make sure the student with ASD understands that sometimes planned activities can be changed, canceled, or rescheduled. Have backup plans and share them with the child with ASD.
- **Be generous with praise.** Find opportunities throughout the day to tell the student with ASD what he or she did right. Compliment attempts as well as successes. Be specific to ensure that the student with ASD knows why you are providing praise.

## **Step 2: Reach Out to the Parents**

The parents of your student with ASD are your first and best source of information about their child; they can provide you with information about their child’s behavior and daily activities. Ideally, this partnership will begin with meetings before the school year. After that, it is critical to establish mutually agreed-upon modes and patterns of communication with the family throughout the school year.

**Author Note:** To start the school year off right, I found that establishing/maintaining a line of open and frequent communication with a child’s teacher(s) and their IEP team is essential to a smooth transition into the new classroom/school year. If the child is just starting school or entering a new school, it can be especially daunting for both the parents and the child with ASD. In either case, the best way to start is to form a connection with someone at the school. Once contact has been established, some things that may help the transition to attending school go smoother for your child are:

- Arranging a visit to the school with your child, and taking pictures of the new school, classroom, and teachers. You could put these into a picture book/social story to read with your child to prepare him for his new surroundings. (**See Appendix #1**)

- Arranging a meeting with the teacher(s), either at the school or through a home visit, so the child and teacher(s) can get acquainted. This will also be beneficial to the teacher(s), and help them understand individual needs better.
- Passing on to your child's teacher(s) and/or IEP team before the start of school any personal information about the child, possibly including an "About Me" page, and copies of specific scheduling/transition/behavior tools that have helped your child at home and/or during the previous school year. **(See Appendix #2)**
- Working out bus transport or drop-off/pick-up arrangements if the bus or regular car pick-up arrangements seem too difficult/confusing for the child.
- Working out the best time for the child to enter school; perhaps entering a few days late, to give the teacher a chance to organize and settle her class, could be a better arrangement for some.
- Increasing the length of time at school gradually, if your child attended school half days the previous year.

### **Step 3: Prepare the Classroom**

Having learned about the individual sensitivities and characteristics of your student with ASD, you now have the information you need to organize your classroom appropriately. You can manipulate the physical aspects of your classroom, making it more comfortable for children with ASD without sacrificing your general plans for the class. **(See Appendix #3 for additional information on the inclusion of ASD students in the classroom.)**

### **Step 4: Educate Peers and Promote Social Goals**

Children with ASD have social deficits that make it difficult for them to establish friendships. However, with appropriate assistance, they can engage with peers and establish mutually enjoyable and lasting relationships. The characteristics of ASD can cause peers to perceive a child with the disorder as odd or different. This can lead to situations that involve teasing or bullying. Children with ASD often cannot discriminate between playful and mean-spirited teasing. Teachers and school staff must be aware that students with ASD are potentially prime targets of bullying or excessive teasing, and must watch for signs.

Many social interactions occur during unstructured times in settings outside the classroom where students with ASD may end up isolated. You may want to create a "circle of friends," a group of responsible peers for the student with autism, who will not abandon him, serve as a model of appropriate social behavior, and protect against teasing or bullying. This tactic can also be encouraged outside of school. **(See Appendix #4 for additional information on teaching Social Skills.)**

### **Step 5: Collaborate on the Educational Program Development.**

Throughout your child's education, it will be essential for both you and your child's various educators to continue learning more about ASD. You will need to collaborate during each school year and stay motivated to make certain that your child is excelling and feels comfortable in the learning environment. It is vital that your child's needs continue to be

assessed and that you work with the team at school to set goals and objectives in your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Your child's IEP will be the road map for their education each year. As the parent, you will aid the school in crafting this plan and will sit in on all important meetings and evaluations. IEPs are formed by many members of the school staff, including teachers, therapists, psychologists, and special education teachers. After your child's IEP is established, this team of educators will meet regularly to discuss your child's progress, successes, and struggles. These meetings will address not only academic concerns but also social and emotional issues as well.

Before the IEP planning meeting, the school professionals will offer guidance and evaluate your child. The official planning meeting will then take place. IEPs generally contain goals for your child (both long- and short-term), and services that will be provided throughout the year. In addition to the goals set for your child, the IEP must also include ways that these goals will be measured and steps that will be taken for your child to accomplish them. The IEP will be designed each year according to your child's progress and needs.

*(By Dave Angel, adapted)* When you have a child with ASD, IEP (Individual Education Plan) negotiations are extremely important. As the parents, you hold a vital position on the IEP team. Your input is not only important but also necessary in the development of a well-rounded IEP for your child.

In the days and weeks before your child's IEP meeting, there are several things you can do to make the experience more pleasant and the outcome more positive. Here is a list of suggestions for IEP preparation:

- Request access to all updated evaluation reports before the IEP meeting to prepare for the meeting.
- Know your child's strengths and weaknesses. If you know your child's abilities and weaknesses, you will be better prepared to request additional services when needed if they are not offered.
- Represent yourself as an equal member of the IEP team. Yes, the other members are education professionals, but you are an expert in your child.
- Make notes, ask questions, and request clarification before and during the IEP meeting. When goals are set, be sure you understand the wording and that your thoughts are taken into consideration.
- Request time to review the IEP before signing. There is no reason to rush through this process. Take the IEP home, read over it, and make changes if necessary. Do not sign until you are sure your child has the best IEP possible.

When you have a child with ASD, the IEP should be treated as the important document and process that it is. The IEP is the backbone of your child's educational assistance. If you have any questions about appropriate goals or specific questions about the IEP process, there are many great resources available. This one, "How Well Does Your IEP Measure Up?" by Diane Twachtman-Cullen and Jennifer Twachtman-Reilly, is just one example. Parents, educators,

advocates, and attorneys can also come to Wrightslaw ([www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)) for accurate, reliable information about special education law, education law, and advocacy for children with disabilities.

### **Step 6: Manage Behavioral Challenges.**

School is a stressful environment. Commonplace academic and social situations may create extreme stress for students with ASD. The stressors may include difficulty in predicting events because of changing schedules, tuning into and understanding the teacher's directions, interacting with peers, and anticipating changes, such as classroom lighting, sounds/noises, odors, and so on.

Tantrums or meltdowns (terms that are often used interchangeably) typically occur in three stages that can be of variable length. Students with ASD rarely indicate that they are under stress. While they may not always know when they are near a stage of crisis, most of their meltdowns do not occur without warning. There is a pattern of behavior, which is sometimes subtle, that suggests an imminent behavioral outburst. Prevention with appropriate academic, environmental, social, and sensory supports and modification to environment and expectations is the most effective method.

Many strategies can be used to help a child avoid tantrums or meltdowns. By using a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), a professionally trained therapist in ABA, education, or psychology can help you determine what triggers the tantrum, change the environment to reduce the stress it is causing, and teach your child to express his or her desires or feelings more appropriately.

## Part 3 – Sample Letters and Reports

I recently attended a fantastic workshop led by Autism Resource Specialist Amy Perry at the Autism Society for North Carolina (ASNC). She talked about and shared very helpful information on how to provide teachers at the onset of a new school year with the needed information about children with ASD in a positive way. Teachers can also use this information to solicit information from parents and caregivers of students with special needs that will be joining their classrooms. The handouts included:

- An “All About Me” sample letter
- Other “All About Me” information
- A “Positive Student Profile” form

Meeting with your child’s teacher(s) before school starts is a wonderful opportunity to get acquainted, but sharing too much verbally could turn into information overload for the teacher, which can easily be forgotten. Presenting a brief “All About Me” letter, along with a concise “Positive Student Profile” for them to keep on hand will be a great help to your child’s teacher(s).

Some of the “All About Me” letter could be filled out with your child, which can be a fun project and exercise in communication if he/she is verbal. For non- or less verbal children, the parents could present information about him/her positively, bringing out the child’s strengths and interests.

The “Positive Student Profile” is a more detailed report on your child that the teacher(s) will be able to refer to for additional information, especially at the onset of the school year while still getting to know your child.

Of course, these forms are just general guidelines and give an idea of what information can be included. These can be adapted and changed as needed. It might be best to keep the information concise and not get too wordy, so it is easy for the teacher(s) to refer to pertinent information at a glance. **(See Appendix 5.)**

## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1

#### Back to School Sample Social Story

Below is a sample of a social story that could help make the transition back to school easier for your child with ASD. It can be adapted to the specific need and situation and can be read to or by your child, depending on his reading ability.

#### **My New School Kindergarten 2020-2021 (Photo with the name of the school)**

#### **Picture of Classroom:**

This is my new classroom. I like my classroom. My new classroom is called the (name) room. I will have new friends in my Kindergarten classroom. I will be a good friend. Good friends are nice to each other. They share and play with each other. I will have lots of fun with my new friends.

#### **Picture of Classroom Rules or Poster(s):**



At school, I will be a 5-Star Listener. My eyes are watching, my ears are listening, my lips are closed, my hands are still, and my feet are quiet when it is time to listen. Listening to my teacher and following the rules are good. I will be a good student.

#### **Picture(s) of teacher(s):**

My new Kindergarten teacher is Ms. (name). Her assistant is Ms. (name). An assistant is the teacher's helper. I will learn many new things from my teachers. I will be a good student and listen carefully when my teachers tell me things.

#### **Picture of Special Ed teacher and Special Ed room:**

This is Ms. (name). Ms. (name) will teach me at (time) in her special room every day.

#### **Picture of Speech Therapist(s) and Speech Room:**

This is my new Speech Room. When I go to the speech room, I will do fun games. This is Ms. (name). She is one of my new speech teachers. This is Mr. (name). He is my other new speech teacher. I can't wait to do fun games with my new teachers.

#### **Picture of Occupational Therapist and OT room:**

This is Ms. (name). She will do exercises with me. She will also use a little brush to brush my arms and back. I love doing exercises, and I especially enjoy bouncing.

## Appendix 2

Many of the “tools” depicted below were made for Preschool/Kindergarten age, but they can be adapted for older children and according to each child’s need. *(Most of the ideas, tips, and tools below were given, made, or inspired by April Henry, Speech Pathologist at North Polk Elementary, Fort Polk, La.)*

### Sample Tool Box



You and/or your child can decorate a plastic storage container with a lid with colorful stickers. This will make the box and content special to your child. The “tools” you make/buy for your child can be stored in this box for easy access. Some boxes come with handles, which make them easier to carry.



### Transition Tools

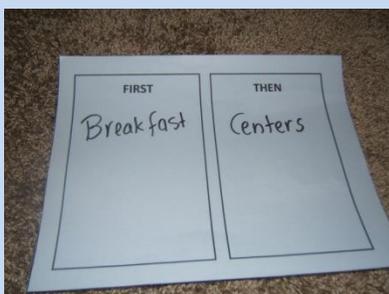


#### (Name)’s Day:

Filling out a simple lined list with your child at the beginning of the day, including the main events he will participate in, can be great preparation for transitioning from one activity to another. This works great for school- or home days, outings, special events, or as needed. For children who cannot read, you can draw up a picture schedule using stick figures, along with the words.

#### Velcro Schedule Stick with Labels:

A simple stick, (wooden ruler with a strip of Velcro) with laminated labels backed with a Velcro dot, is a great transition tool your child can hold and “operate.” It can be used in the classroom to help your child transition from one activity to the next. Keep extra blank labels on hand, so you can add unexpected changes with a dry-erase pen. Your child can add and remove labels himself, and carry his schedule stick with him throughout the day. Depending on your child’s reading ability, the labels can be words or pictures.



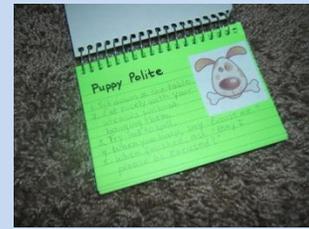
#### First/Then Chart:

A First/Then Chart can come in handy when your child has a hard time transitioning and is on the verge of a meltdown. Verbal instruction may not work then, so holding up the card with one-word cues may do the trick. You can use words or pictures as needed. You can make the chart from a piece of laminated construction or copy paper, and write on it with a



### More Power Cards:

Another fun way to reinforce good behavior is to write short stories using a favorite character or pet and summarizing them in point form. This Puppy Power book is a simple ring-bound pad of 3x5 colored index cards, and the story shown covers table manners.



### Sample Story: Puppy Polite's Mealtime

#### Front of the Index Card:

Puppy Polite likes to eat a lot. Sometimes he wants to eat while playing. Eating while playing can make a mess, and sometimes it is dangerous, as you can choke on your food. Puppy Polite learned that the best way to eat is like this:

1. Sit down at the table.
2. Eat nicely with your utensils, without banging them.
3. Try not to spill your food.
4. When you burp, just say, "Excuse me".
5. When finished eating, ask, "May I please be excused?"

Puppy Polite has good table manners when he follows those rules. Good job, Puppy Polite!

#### Summary on the back of the Index Card:

1. Sit down at the table.
2. Eat nicely with your utensils, without banging them.
3. Try not to spill.
4. When you burp, say, "Excuse me!"
5. When finished, ask, "May I please be excused?"

## OTHER TOOLS

### Key Chain Rules:



The rules on the cards of this Key Chain cover the following problem areas that may need improvement:

**Mistake Rule**—Ask for help when making mistakes

**Food Rule**—Ask for help when foods touch or mix

**Patience Rule**—Have patience when in line or taking turns

**Danger Rule**—Listen when warned of dangers

**"Funny Feeling" Rule**—Use fidgets to distract from funny feelings

Reading simply worded and illustrated rules regularly, before problem behavior occurs, can help prevent meltdowns and /or dangerous situations. It does not work to read the rules just before or during a meltdown or a potentially volatile situation.

Following are some tips on how to use the Key Chain Rules. You can apply these tips to other tools also.

## Tips for Prevention/Intervention/Postvention:

### Prevention Strategy:

- Read the rule when calm.
- Read consistently every day or several times a day before the behavior occurs.
- Don't read to the child in front of an audience if it will embarrass the student.
- Refer to the keychain (or other) rule positively when the child demonstrates acceptable behavior.

### Intervention Strategy:

- Refer to the rule by pointing or tapping on it at the beginning of an escalation phase.
- Talk low, talk slow, don't say much, or say nothing at all!

### Postvention Strategy:

- Reference the rule after the crisis is over. This depersonalizes the situation.
- Ensure the student is in a therapeutic state and calm before referencing the rule, or the behavior may escalate. ([www.igivuwings.com](http://www.igivuwings.com))

## SENSORY TOOLS

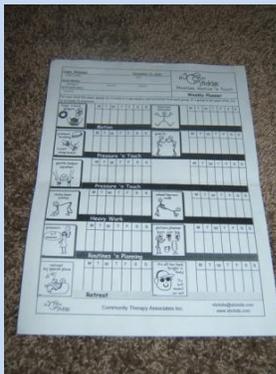
### Calming Tools



### Fidget Tools:

These are great for a child to play with while in line, in a waiting room, or to distract him or her when bothered by something. You can find cheap ones at Dollar stores, or make them yourself by simply filling a balloon with flour, and drawing a silly face on it with a permanent marker. The Silly Balloon in this picture is a favorite because it's so soft and squishy.

### Occupational Therapy



If your child has sensory issues and receives Occupational Therapy (OT), his or her therapist may be able to give you some great ideas of what to do to calm your child and help him to become less sensitive or prone to sensory-related meltdowns. The list on the left includes simple exercises, deep pressure, brushing, etc. Of course, each child is different, so finding out what helps calm them is important.



## SUGGESTED SAMPLE TEXTS

### CHANGE STORY

Sometimes things don't go quite the way they were planned.

This is called **CHANGE**.

Change is not a bad thing.

Change is something **DIFFERENT**.

When something **CHANGES**, I will say, "That's **OK**. I can deal with this change.

I will listen to my parents or my teachers, and they will tell me what will happen...next.

**CHANGES** are a part of life.

### STAR CARD

Sometimes there are changes or surprises in my schedule.

That's OK!

When I see this picture, I know that there is a change or surprise.

No big deal!

### SURPRISE!!

A "surprise" is something that we didn't know would happen,

Surprises are usually happy.

Surprises are not meant to be scary.

If someone yells, "SURPRISE!" or if a loud noise happens, it can be scary.

If I get scared at a surprise or a sudden noise, I can take a deep breath and keep going.

My parents and my teachers will help me not to be scared.

### POWER CARD

Lasagna the fish is very brave.

He swims all alone in his tank and braves the loud noises around him.

He stays calm when he hears a loud sound and just keeps swimming.

Just like me.

I'll keep doing what I need to do when I hear loud noises. I am brave just like Lasagna.

### MISTAKE RULE

Everyone makes mistakes.

**That is OK!**

If I make a mistake when doing my work, I will tell my teacher and she will help me move on.

### FOOD RULE

Sometimes different food will run into one another on the same plate.

**That is OK!**

If one of my foods touches another food, I will tell my teacher and she will fix it.

### **PATIENCE RULE**

Being patient means waiting quietly.

Sometimes things take a long time.

When this happens, people must be patient.

Being patient is nice!

When I have to stand in line or wait for something, I will be patient.

I can:

- Play with my fidget toy.
- Count quietly.
- Wiggle my fingers.

### **DANGER RULE**

DANGER means you can get hurt!

There are many ways people can get hurt. When people are hurt they have to go to the hospital and they are sad.

Getting hurt is bad!

If a grown-up tells me that something is “dangerous,” I will listen and follow the rules so I don’t get hurt.

### **“FUNNY FEELING” RULE**

Sometimes things can feel funny.

That is OK!

If I don’t like the way something feels, I can squeeze my silly balloon until I feel better.

### **Appendix 3**

The following Handy Handouts for teachers of children with ASD in an inclusive setting are available from <http://www.superduperinc.com/Handouts/Handout.aspx>. There are many other terrific free resources available from this site. Registering is easy and free.

1. Super Duper Handy Handouts! Number 93 – The Ins and Outs of Inclusion
2. Super Duper Handy Handouts! Number 134 – Accommodating Children with Autism Within an Inclusive Setting

#### **Appendix 4**

The following Handy Handouts on teaching Social Skills are available from

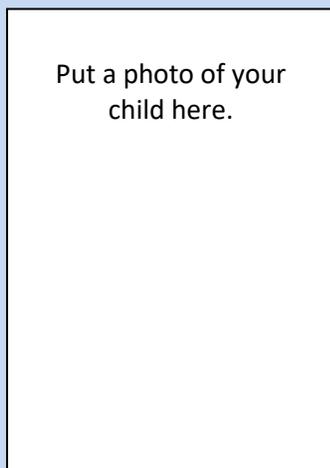
<http://www.superduperinc.com/Handouts/Handout.aspx>:

1. Super Duper Handy Handouts! Number 105 – Parents Help to Encourage Social Success at Home, Too!
2. Super Duper Handy Handouts! Number 144 – Why Is It Hard for Some Children to Learn Social Skills?
3. Super Duper Handy Handouts! Number 239 – Personal Space – A Social Skill
4. Super Duper Handy Handouts! Number 256 – Ten Ways to Teach Good Manners
5. Super Duper Handy Handouts! Number 283 – Hellos and Goodbyes – Teaching Children to Use Greetings
6. Super Duper Handy Handouts! Number 284 – Sharing – An Important Social Skill!
7. Super Duper Handy Handouts! Number 288 – Taking a Look at Eye Contact
8. Super Duper Handy Handouts! Number 299 – Pardon My Interruption...
9. Super Duper Handy Handouts! Number 302 – Scripting: Role-Playing for Social Success

## Appendix 5

The sample forms below were given out during a “back to school” workshop (July 2011) by Amy Perry, an Autism Resource Specialist at the Autism Society of North Carolina (ASNC).

### ALL ABOUT ME (Sample)



Third Grade 2011-2012

My name is Carl, and I am 8 years old.

I have one older brother and one younger sister.

When I grow up, I want to speak Japanese and drive racecars.

My favorite thing in school is going to the library to look at books about bugs.

At home, I like to watch Godzilla movies (in Japanese) and play X-Box.

I do not like clowns.

This summer I took a gymnasium class.

My favorite food is anything with cheese on it.

One interesting thing about me is that I can touch the tip of my nose with my tongue.

**Allergies:** None

**Medications:** (Name/dosage of medication) I take my medication at home before bed. It helps me with attention and sleep problems.

**Academics:** I usually like school. My strongest subject is reading. I do not like to write sentences. Sometimes I like math.

What works: I am very motivated by timed tests and races. I love public praise.

What doesn't work: Please don't give me too much work at once. I might shut down.

**Behavior:** I am eager to please, but sometimes I am easily frustrated when I don't understand your expectations of me. When this happens I might kick my desk or break my pencil. I might yell if someone tries to talk to me.

What works: Letting me bounce a ball in a quiet area or listen to music.

What doesn't work: Telling me to stop, asking me what's wrong.

Tip: If I have a meltdown, show me the ball or headphones (don't talk), I know what they are for and will pick one to calm down with.

**How I work best:** It helps when I know the schedule and any changes in advance, and when I have one task to do at a time. Typing on the computer helps me complete writing assignments much faster. I enjoy working for immediate rewards and small prizes.

#### Important Numbers:

Mom's Cell Phone:

Dad's Cell Phone:

Mom's Email:

Grandma's Phone:

## OTHER ALL ABOUT ME INFORMATION

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

My Birthday is \_\_\_\_\_

The people in my family are \_\_\_\_\_

My nickname is \_\_\_\_\_

My hobbies are \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite television shows are \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite books are \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite cartoon characters are \_\_\_\_\_

I feel bad or sad when \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite season of the year is \_\_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite songs are \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite animals are \_\_\_\_\_

My pets are \_\_\_\_\_

When I grow older I want to be a \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite foods are \_\_\_\_\_

Famous people I like are \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite color/colors are \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite place to go is \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite day is \_\_\_\_\_

I like \_\_\_\_\_

I feel happy when I am \_\_\_\_\_

## Positive Student Profile

Fill out this form to provide a “snapshot” of your child, which should be reflected in his or her IEP.

Put a photo of your child here.

1. Who is \_\_\_\_\_? *(Describe your child, including information such as place in the family, personality, likes, and dislikes.)*
2. What are \_\_\_\_\_'s strengths? *(Highlight all areas in which your child does well, including educational and social environments.)*
3. What are \_\_\_\_\_'s successes? *(List all successes, no matter how small.)*
4. What are \_\_\_\_\_'s greatest challenges? *(List the areas in which your child has the greatest difficulties.)*
5. What supports are needed for \_\_\_\_\_? *(List supports that will help your child achieve his/her potential.)*
6. What are our dreams for \_\_\_\_\_? *(Describe your vision for your child's future, including both short- and long-term goals.)*
7. Other helpful information *(List any pertinent information, including health care needs, that you did not cover elsewhere on the form.)*

# CONTACT INFORMATION

For support and more information on books, workshops,  
and free downloads, please visit...

[www.autism-is.com](http://www.autism-is.com) and [www.facebook.com/Autism.Is](https://www.facebook.com/Autism.Is)

or write to

[autismisbooks@gmail.com](mailto:autismisbooks@gmail.com)