



EPO2: What are People with Autism Like?

Here's what you'll find in this guide:

- 'What are People with Autism Like?' Episode Notes
- Further Exploration: Suggested Resources
- Deeper Thinking Activity

People with autism may act a little different from other people. They may want to spend their time alone, or might not pay attention to others around them. The defining features of autism include:

- A marked impairment in the use of multiple non-vocal behaviors such as eye-to-eye contact, facial expression, body postures, and gestures to regulate social interaction.
- Failure to understand social cues, understand metaphors/symbolism, difficulty with empathy and perspective taking.
- Inappropriate affect. For example hugging strangers, or laughing during a sad moment.
- Failure to develop peer relationships appropriate to developmental level.
- A lack of spontaneous seeking to share enjoyment, interests, or achievements with other people (e.g., by a lack of showing, bringing, or pointing out objects of interest).
- Lack of social or emotional reciprocity.
- Delay in, or total lack of, the development of spoken language (not accompanied by an attempt to compensate through alternative modes of communication such as gestures).
- In individuals with adequate speech, marked impairment in the ability to initiate or sustain a conversation with others.
- Estimated that up to 50% of children with autism do not speak but can learn to communicate using other forms of communication (i.e., augmentative communication devices)
- Stereotyped and repetitive use of language or idiosyncratic language (i.e., echolalia/delayed echolalia)
- Lack of varied, spontaneous make-believe play or social imitative play appropriate to developmental level.
- Encompassing preoccupation with one or more stereotyped patterns of interest that is abnormal either in intensity or focus.
- Apparent inflexible adherence to specific, nonfunctional routines or rituals.



Further Exploration

- Stereotyped and repetitive motor mannerisms (e.g., hand or finger flapping or twisting, or complex whole-body movements).
- Persistent preoccupation with parts of objects.
- Sensitivity to noise, lights, textures, touch, foods

Challenging or maladaptive behavior is behavior that interferes with an individual's activities of daily living, and the inability to adjust to and partake in particular settings. Challenging behavior may occur because it is the only way a child has learned and knows how to get his/her needs met. For individuals with autism who cannot always communicate what they want, the easiest most direct route to reinforcement may be through challenging behaviors (e.g., aggression, self-injury, property destruction)

Ways to address challenging behavior include proactive measures such as:

- Encouraging and reinforcing appropriate behavior.
- Requiring communication as frequently as possible.
- Providing a variety of activities.
- Providing choices (that can be honored).
- Providing an appropriate amount of breaks.
- Providing an appropriate amount of tangible reinforcers (e.g., toys) and attention.
- Give clear and understandable instructions.

For Parents and Educators

Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew

<http://bit.ly/autism-10>

Bestseller by Ellen Notbohm covers communication issues, social processing skills, and the critical roles adult perspectives play in guiding the child with autism to a meaningful, self-sufficient, productive life.

Superflex, A superhero Social Thinking Curriculum

<http://bit.ly/superflex-curriculum>

Fun and motivating way to teach students with social and communication difficulties.

The Sensory Processing Disorder Answer Book

<http://bit.ly/spd-answer-book>

Author Tara Delaney provides practical answers to the top 250 questions parents ask about sensory processing disorder.

Experience Autism

<http://bit.ly/misunderstood-minds>

Although the website is for ADHD, the Experience First Hand activities are fantastic and really embody the autism experience.

Blogs Featuring Autistic Writers

Ollibean

<http://ollibean.com/>

Geek Club Books Penfriend Project

<http://bit.ly/penfriend-posts>

The Art of Autism

<http://the-art-of-autism.com/>



For Children and Teens

Non-Speaking Autistic Speaking

<http://bit.ly/nonspeakingau>

Just Stimming

<https://juststimming.wordpress.com/>

Stories and Resources for Children

My Friend Has Autism

<http://bit.ly/autism-friend>

A sweet children's book about a boy who has a friend with autism.

Noah and Logan Series

<http://www.benjaminskellogg.com/>

Benjamin Keller is on the autism spectrum and he writes children's books to help others understand.

Love for Logan

<http://bit.ly/love-for-logan>

Children's author Lori DeMonia, shares the impact of sensory processing disorder in a children's book inspired by her own family's experiences.

#SeeAmazing by Sesame Street

<http://autism.sesamestreet.org/>

Sesame Street videos and resources to celebrate the uniqueness of each and every child.

For Tweens and Teens

The Asperkid's Secret Book of Social Rules

<http://bit.ly/asperkids-rules>

Jennifer Cook O'Toole's popular handbook of not-so-obvious social guidelines for teens and tweens with Aspergers Syndrome.

Welcome to the Autistic Community

<http://bit.ly/asan-welcome>

Two versions—one for adolescents and one for adults—of a handbook by the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN) addressing the most common questions people may have about their diagnosis.

I Am AspienGirl®

<http://bit.ly/aspiengirl>

Tania Marshall writes about the unique characteristics, traits and gifts of females with autism.



Find Bluebee TeeVee, Autism Information Station on YouTube.
com/BluebeeTeeVee



Deeper Thinking Activity

Episode 2: "What are people with autism like?" was created to give the audience a better understanding of what it might feel like to have autism. However, sometimes you have to put yourself in the other person's shoes in order to experience life through their eyes. The following activities are meant to give students a hands on experience of what it feels like to have autism.

Receptive Language Activity – Tell the students that they will be drawing a picture. They will be given a blank sheet of paper and a pencil. Instruct the students to listen very carefully to your step-by-step directions and do not begin drawing until you tell them to. Then, tell the students in a foreign language or gibberish to draw a circle, draw a star to the left of the circle, and write their name under the circle. They should raise their hands when they are done. You can also write the instructions out in the same foreign language or gibberish. Once the students gives up, show them what their drawing should look like. Ask them why they could not complete the activity and how it felt to not understand the instructions.

Fine Motor Activity- Give the students a pair of gardening or construction gloves which will make picking up small things difficult. Then ask them to pick up small beads, while wearing the gloves, and sort them. You can also have the students string the beads on to a shoe string. When they are done, explain that this is the way it feels for someone who is learning to improve their fine motor skills. Many children with autism have difficulty in this domain.

Visual Activity – Have the students wear a pair of dark sunglasses with petroleum jelly smeared over the lenses. Ask them to read a sentence from a book, read instructions off the board, or write a sentence. Then explain that this activity is meant to simulate what it feels like for someone with autism who cannot see the world in the same way their neurotypical friends do.

Sensory Activity – Have the students sit at their desks while wearing headphones playing loud noise (white noise, people talking, traffic), or play a recording of loud noise for the whole class. Then ask them to do a worksheet within a small amount of time while listening to the noise and also while you read instructions out loud for a completely separate activity. Once time is up, ask how many students were able to easily complete the activity with all the noise. Explain that someone with autism might experience this kind of sensory overload and may not have the ability to communicate that they need a break. The following video is also a good way to experience sensory overload:

<http://bit.ly/experience-spd>