

Confidence, A Necessity in Daily Life

Confidence: a feeling of self-assurance arising from one's appreciation of one's own abilities or qualities.

When we are unsure of ourselves, we might stop, pause or may not proceed. We might think negative thoughts (I might fail, I don't know what to expect, I am not capable). We might feel we will not do something perfect.

By practicing, with thinking positive thoughts, with at least trying and with encouragement we find that we can do it and begin to build our confidence.

So, let's take the needed steps to help our sons, daughters, clients, students and residents how to build their confidence, gain an appreciation of their own abilities so they will try new activities, develop new skills and enjoy feelings of success.

Those on the autism spectrum have challenges with new and novel. They get stuck. They can be anxious of the unexpected.

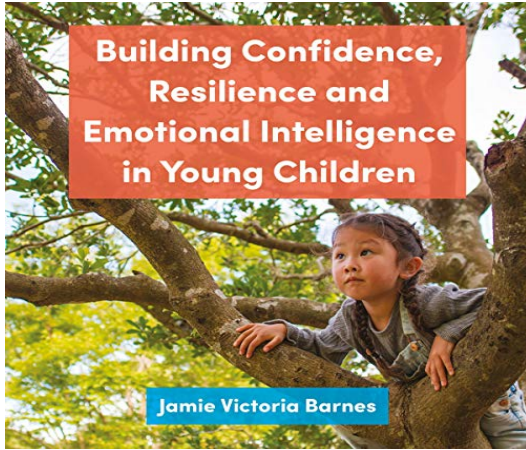
So, it is up to us to find ways to support their anxiety, help them move through new and novel and help them deal with the unexpected. We need to help them build confidence.

Tips: First and Foremost, provide a safe and caring environment

- 1) When they are young, follow their lead to let them know you support them.
- 2) Model confidence for them. Acknowledge when you yourself accomplishes something.

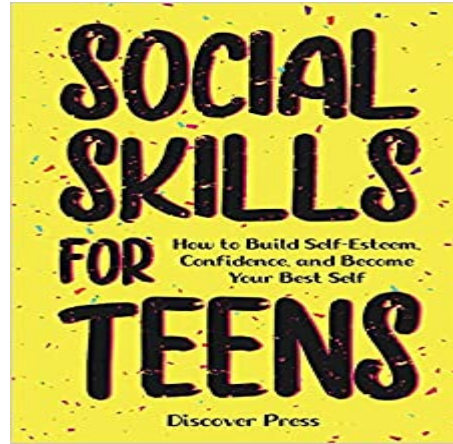
- 3) Take them on different routes to travel to their favorite stores, activities and events. Walk with them different routes and drive them different ways.
- 4) Engage them in all self-help tasks so they become self-assured that they can take care of themselves. Start small. Do not expect perfection. Celebrate their attempts.
- 5) Identify, celebrate and develop their own special interests and show them how those interests will lead to friendship circles and job possibilities.
- 6) Expose them to a wide variety of activities (music events, dance, musical instruments, films, art shows, sports and exercise options, travel) They may only stay a few minutes at first, but repetitive exposure will help them get through new and novel.
- 7) Teach them the art of possibility thinking. You might teach positive affirmations for them to say, read or write. "I can do it, I will be okay, it's okay to try, I am developing confidence, I am smart, I believe in myself, It is okay not to do if perfect, It is okay to make mistakes."
- 8) Make sure you provide classroom jobs if you are a teacher.
- 9) Make sure you assign home jobs if you're a care provider.
- 10) Identify small and manageable tasks for them to accomplish.
- 11) Those who can read, have them read biographies about those who have challenges but have accomplished things even with their challenges.

12) You might create a "Wall of Fame" in your son or daughter's room. Small and large accomplishments can be put on the bulletin board with little awards pinned to them.



**Building Confidence,
Resilience and
Emotional Intelligence
in Young Children**

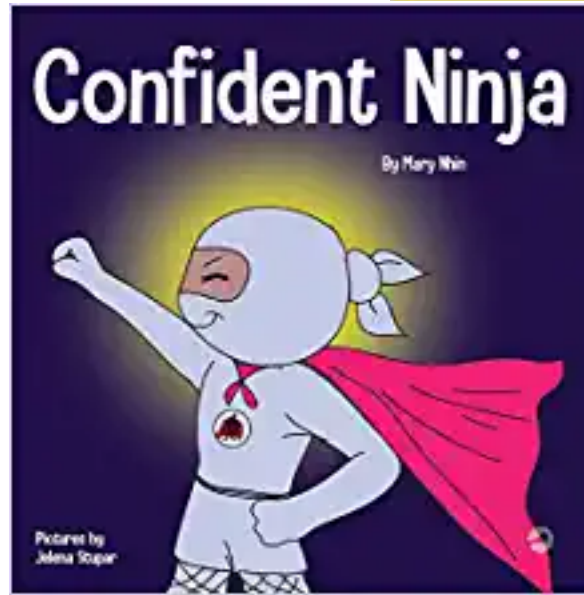
Jamie Victoria Barnes



**SOCIAL
SKILLS
FOR
TEENS**

How to Build Self-Esteem,
Confidence, and Become
Your Best Self

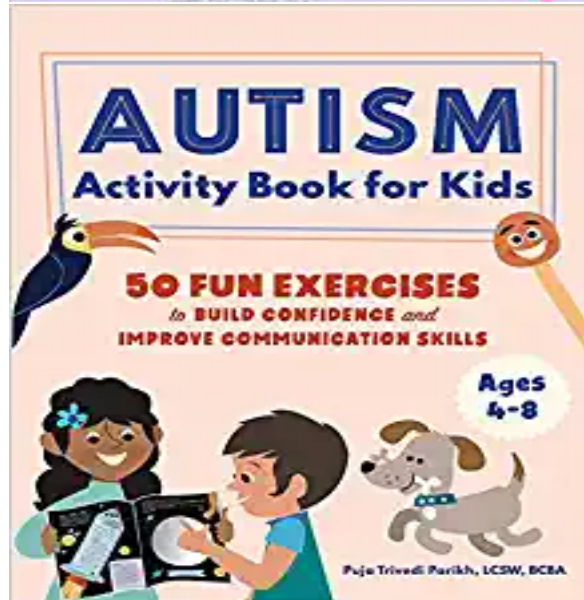
Discover Press



Confident Ninja

By Mary Nin

Pictures by
Jenna Stager



AUTISM
Activity Book for Kids

50 FUN EXERCISES
to BUILD CONFIDENCE and
IMPROVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Ages
4-8

Puja Trivedi Parikh, LCSW, BCBA

FAMILY, WHO ARE THEY TO EACH OTHER?

This morning I was writing down all the things my brother means to me and wondered how brothers and sisters on the autism spectrum or similar social differences, learn about their sisters or brothers. How do they work on their relationship? Do they know who each other is? Do they know how each other might feel? Do they know each other's interests, fears, dreams, or hopes?

Maybe 2023 will be a year for parents to help siblings with special needs learn about their brothers and sisters.

- 1) Perhaps you could help them make a **photo scrapbook** all about their brother or sister.
- 2) You might start with a **baby picture** and help them know the day and year their sibling was born. This primes them for birthday celebrations and perhaps making a birthday card each year. This could help them understand age of their sib.
- 3) You might find pictures of their brother or sister engaging in **activities** that they **really enjoy** and tell them about those activities that they like.
- 4) Maybe their brother or sister is part of a **sport team**. Maybe you might show them pictures of that sport and talk about that sport and tell them how brothers and sisters go to games their brother or sister play.
- 5) Maybe you saved some of their sib's **toys, books or art projects** or work from school. You might show them those things.
- 6) If their sibling no longer lives with them, perhaps you could **get a photo** of their home or apartment they live in and some pictures of the town or city they work and play in.
- 7) If their sib is married perhaps, you could put **wedding pictures** in the scrapbook and talk about the person they married. If they have children then talking about cousins, can occur.
- 8) If their brother or sister lives away, teaching them to **facetime, text or email them** once a month would be a great activity to teach. This shows them that family stay **connected**. This could open **conversation** teaching. This could open **question** practice and sharing daily life activities.
- 9) Using pictures of their **siblings engaging in new and novel activities** could help the brother or sister on the autism spectrum, see that it is okay to try something new. Neurotypical sibs can model activities for their sibling on the spectrum.
- 10) When parents encourage brothers and sisters to **share and help** around the house together they are helping the youngster on the spectrum to connect to others in their community or work with others in school or the community.
- 11) It is also important for the typical sibling to understand who their brother or sister is. Helping them to understand autism is a beginning. Perhaps they might read about autism and or see a film about autism.
- 12) [My Brother is Different: Understanding siblings with Special Needs and Autism: Lutchie, Esther: 9798817266733: Amazon.com: Books](#)
- 13) [My Brother with Autism: A Story book to celebrate differences: Nadia, S.: 9781724100498: Amazon.com: Books](#)
- 14) [What About Me?: A Book By and For An Autism Sibling: Farmer, Brennan, Farmer, Mandy, Neff, Emily: 9780692872727: Amazon.com: Books](#)
- 15) [The Girl Who Thought in Pictures: The Story of Dr. Temple Grandin \(Amazing Scientists\): Finley Mosca, Julia, Rieley, Daniel: 9173164219296: Amazon.com: Books](#)

- 16) [Temple Grandin \(DVD\) - Walmart.com](#),
- 17) [Loving Lampposts DVDs and Blu-rays \(thriftbooks.com\)](#)
- 18) Try discussing their sib's anxieties and sensitivities as well as sensory issues, communication challenges and social understanding with them. Talk to them about joining a sib group. Here is a sibling tool kit you could also refer to: [A Sibling's Guide to Autism | Autism Speaks](#) and several other books to consider.

Autism Books for Siblings Autism Books for Kids

from The Sensory Spectrum



HUMP DAY FOR PARENTS & PROFESSIONALS

The term hump-day arrived in the early 1950's. It was a term used mostly in the workplace for each Wednesday in the week. It was a term that instilled a feeling of satisfaction for workers that they had made it through to mid-week and would now coast their way to the weekend, feeling a sense of accomplishment and relief.

I have had a standing date, with my brother, each hump-day, for 20 years, to check in on how we are feeling, what good is occurring in our life this week and what challenges are we moving through.

It might be a wise idea for parents of individuals with special needs to have a hump-day check in. It might be with each other. It could be with a family member or a friend. It is probably a good idea for teachers and therapists to have a hump-day check in with their co-workers, too. The check in could be by phone, these days a zoom or facetime, a coffee meet up or a walk-in nature.

That hump-day check-in might look like this:

- 1) Each talk about what accomplishments, successes, fun they have had engaging with, teaching, or inspiring the individual with special needs they support.
- 2) Each listen to each other and celebrates those successes.
- 3) Then each allows the other to lay out what was hard, frustrating or anxiety provoking. No judgement here at all from either party.
- 4) The listener acknowledges those feelings. Then asks, would you like to hear my thoughts or any resources I might share with you?
- 5) Then together you support and brainstorm. Then identify the fun ahead for the week.

What about a hump-day check in with your individual with special needs? What could that look like?

- 1) Perhaps you find a quiet spot in the house.
- 2) Perhaps you take them to a favorite spot for a treat.
- 3) Perhaps you prepare a special food for them and open the chat during the enjoyment of that treat.
- 4) Maybe you put on some quiet music.
- 5) Maybe each of you take some deep breaths and let out a few sighs.
- 6) Then you, the parent, share what has been working for you all week. What fun, accomplishments and experiences have you had.
- 7) Then you, the parent, ask your individual to tell you what they have had fun doing this week, so far? What things have they accomplished or tried? You acknowledge those and cheer for them. Good job you say. Good trying you acknowledge. I am proud of you, you repeat.
- 8) Then you, the parent, share something that has been hard for you and how you got through it.
- 9) You, the parent, then ask them to tell you something that made them unhappy, or scared, or confused, or frustrated. Ask them what they did? Tell them how proud you are of them for getting through it. Then offer some additional ideas for next time.
- 10) You might bring the check in to a conclusion by identifying what fun and enjoyable things the rest of the week and weekend will bring.

IS YOUR INDIVIDUAL MAKING MEMORIES?

The dictionary tells us, making memories is the power or process of recalling what has been previously learned or experienced. So, how are we helping those with learning differences to make a memory or to understand when someone says, what do you recall about that person, place, or thing?

This was a question that occurred to me yesterday. So here are some of my thoughts on how to help your individual know he or she is creating and recalling activities they have engaged in.

- 1) Put that **iPhone** to good use. Have them take pictures of people, places, and activities they have engaged in. Have them download the picture, print it out and put it into a scrap book. They could date the page. They could write something about the picture under it. A day or two later, sit with them. Have them go back and talk about what they remember, what they recall about the activity. Tell them they did well **remembering**.
- 2) Have them pick out a **book** they would like you to read to them or that they want to read. Have them read it out loud some times or to themselves sometimes. Have them stop at the end of a page or chapter and tell you what they remember about what they just read; who the characters were, what they were doing, how they were feeling? Be sure to tell them, that they remembered a **whole lot**.
- 3) For some, writing is difficult but buying them a special memory **journal** could work for some. Otherwise, they could type on their computer in an electric journal. At the end of the morning, afternoon or only at night, have them journal three pages of what they remember occurred during the day. Be sure to tell them that they had **great recall**.
- 4) We all have **stories** about our past. How many of those memories have you **shared** with your individual? Perhaps you could pull out an old photo album and share your memories with them. Tell them you would like to share some memories with them.
- 5) Pull out the old **record albums** and **share** your memories about your favorite types of music and musicians. Be sure to tell them that these are fun, joyful, and exciting **memories** to you.
- 6) How about sharing **old films** with your individual and telling them what you remember about the film, before they watch it. Talk about **scenes** that you seem to always remember or **words** said by an actor that made a memory for you.
- 7) Ask yourself how do you **remember things**? I often write lists to remember. You could show them how to **create** lists to remember. You could show them all the phone numbers in your phone and tell them how you use to remember them by

heart but now you keep a list. How about all your passwords? How do you remember those? Can you share how you remember those?

- 8) You could talk about **good memories or sad memories** with them?
- 9) You could talk to them about what you remember about elementary school, junior high and then high school. Show them your **year books**.
- 10) You could show them your **t-shirts**. Did you buy some of them at concerts or sport events? Tell them what you remember about the event. Why did you buy that specific shirt. To remember what?





THE BEST
MEMORIES
ARE MADE
WITH FAMILY



Okay, Go Ahead, Distract Me from My Stress

Children with learning differences, parents of children with additional needs, teachers who support both and therapists who join those teams, **all feel stress** either every now and then, weekly, daily or most of their day. There are thousands of books on the subject. There are oodles of articles, tons of research and Facebook showcases millions of posing's. So, why aren't each of us hitting the **pause** button and distracting ourselves from our own stress?

“Just do it, as a recent LinkedIn positing said, stop mumbling, fumbling, and stumbling, stop dashing, crashing and thrashing and Just do it”

PAUSE and try these with or without your child, teen or adult. BUT TRY.

- Download **Insight Timer**, a free app and just set it to breathe deeply for **5 minutes** or listen to calming music or a guided meditation or a course or words to get to sleep. Increase by five minutes each week until you get to 20 minutes.
- Walk inside your home, or around the front or back yard or in just in your neighborhood and take just one picture, **each day**, of something beautiful you see.
- Buy one of those coloring books on line that offer mandalas or designs, objects to color. Then grab a cup of tea or coffee, a glass of wine or water and some colored pencils or crayons and color **ONE** picture in the book, outside perhaps.
- Check out Wisdom Healing Qigong or Medical Healthy Qigong and take a class. Qigong is a slow-moving, healing and stress reducing activity. There are plenty on zoom.
- Eat a whole popsicle, sitting down, not looking at the phone, TV or computer. **SLOWLY** before it melts 😊 or make that perfect cup of coffee and see how many **sips** it takes to finish.
- Everyone finds a book to **read** or just **look** at for two or three nights/afternoons or mornings a week. Turn all TV, phones, radios, computers, IPADS OFF. Make a favorite snack and set a timer for 20 minutes of reading or scanning through books and magazines while enjoying your snack.
- Establish a **nap period** and schedule on weekends. Set the **kitchen timer**. Everyone stays in their own room and must be quiet for 20 minutes. No phones, TV, computers.

Problem Solving Life

So, what is so important about the skill of problem solving and why should we help those who learn differently develop these skills?

Is it not true, that we all have to make decisions in our lives? Is it not also true that we all have to make choices daily? Well, so do our children with different learning abilities.

The art of problem solving is about being able to observe what is going on around us. It is about being able to identify things that may need to be changed or improved. It is about seeing factors that may be influencing these things. It is about coming up with strategies that can influence those factors. It is about making a choice of which to apply and then observing outcomes.

It is said that being able to problem solve helps us become independent and to become a good problem solver helps us develop are confidence and thus we may lead happier lives.

Some believe if our children learn to solve problem solve early, they too will be happier and more confident.

Problem solving involves a variety of cognitive processes, like interpreting information, planning, reading, focusing attention, assessing, calculating, retrieving, and relating one concept to another. In addition, other factors can influence our problem-solving ability, such as our motivation and our mood.

Many of our children with autism and other learning differences are not being asked to problem solve. They may not be given opportunities to identify problems, come up with solutions or try them out. Then on top of that they may be compromised because they have challenges focusing attention, making choices, seeing solutions and event lack motivation or their moods could be affected by sensory overload.

So, parents and teachers need to start early and prepare them to problem-solve, if indeed they want to nurture their independence. We must help them be motivated to problem solve. We must find ways to help them address attention challenges and learn to make choices. We need to help them develop strategies to deal with their sensory overloading. We need to expand their assessments skills. We must show them through modeling and prompting how to find solutions. We must stop all the doing and thinking for them and involve them in taking care of themselves.

Some say these are the steps we need to teach:

Identify the problem

Understand the problem

Form a strategy to address the problem

Organize information all about the problem.

Find resources to help the problem.

Apply resources.

Observe, note progress and evaluate.

Others say this is the way to have them think about problem solving:

Is there a problem?

What is it?

How important is it?

Why is it happening?

What should I do about it?

Do it, try.

Then evaluate, did the plan work?

If so, great, celebrate.

If not, try another plan.

Some say these seven steps are the way to frame your teaching of social problem solving. Ask,

1) What is happening?

(2) What are three behaviors I could emit?

(3) What will be the outcome of each behavior?

(4) Which is better?

(5) Pick one.

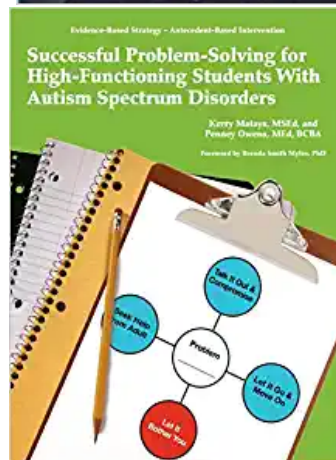
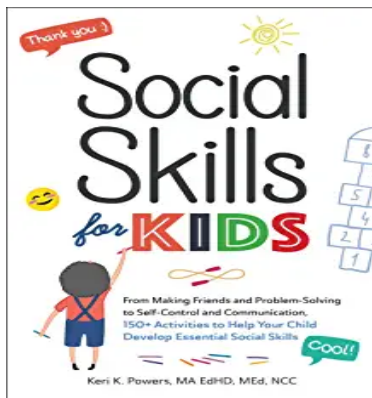
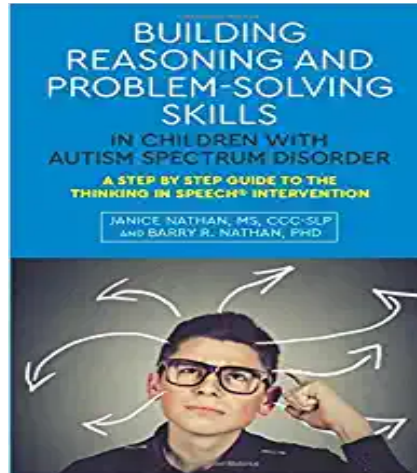
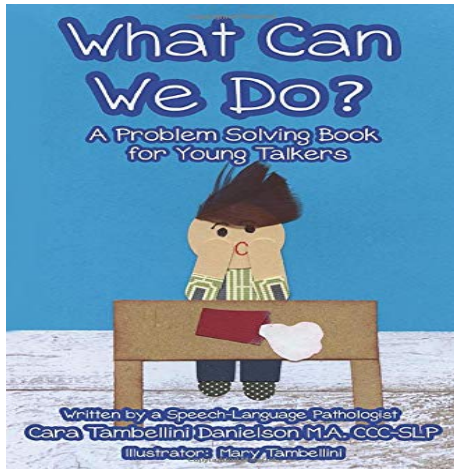
(6) Emit the behavior.

(7) How did It feel? How was the outcome?

Whatever process you follow, just get going. Ask your son or daughter to find their own clothing to wear, unscrew the toothpaste cap and fill the cup with water to gargle, turn on the bathtub water and check for hot and cold, help find things in a grocery store, tell you which way to walk or drive to the store, turn the lights out when leaving a room, change a light bulb, make meal choices, ask for help, plan a party, make an appointment, chose a movie to watch, use all appliances in the home, fill the gas tank, vacuum, change their bedding, operate the washer and dryer, etc. etc.

Teachers do not always provide all the tools and equipment to do a project, create a need to ask for an item to complete the project. Give jobs to your students to accomplish with each other. Let them choose where to sit, which locker to use for their personal belongs and different recess activities. Send them to the office when supplies are needed and teach them to request them. Have them organize the room to learn where items they may need are located. Have them view films and stop the film and ask them how situations could be resolved. Read to them about characters that get into problems and ask them how those characters might resolve their challenges.

An old saying, I find myself saying repeatedly to some is, **let us fire ourselves as nannies and butlers and hire us back as coaches and mentors.** A coach helps in developing someone's true potential. A mentor is a guide and advisor. Let us assume those roles. Let us help our children and students learn to problem solve.



WE CAN HELP MOMS

Autism Parenting Magazine published an article recently stating, that there is indeed a higher rate of **depression** symptoms occurring in moms of children **with autism**. So, I immediately, thought how can we be more helpful? Who of us needs to be more helpful? Why are we not all realizing how to be helping enough? We absolutely can help. Let us begin now. Here are some suggestions.

1) As a **partner** we can make sure we first keep our **eyes open for symptoms of depression**: Sadness, fatigue, irritability, difficulty concentrating, changes in sleep and eating and a loss of enthusiasm and interest in things that bring pleasure.

2) As a **partner** we can make sure **we tell our significant other** we love them, they are doing their best, our son or daughter is lucky to have them, they are not alone, we will get through this, we will find solutions. As a partner we can suggest finding a family specialist to guide and mentor through the tough times.

3) **As a professional** we can make sure moms and dads are connected to like tribe members. There are special needs parent networks that offer information, research, ideas, resources, workshops, and most of all parent-to-parent connections. These networks help parents not feel alone.

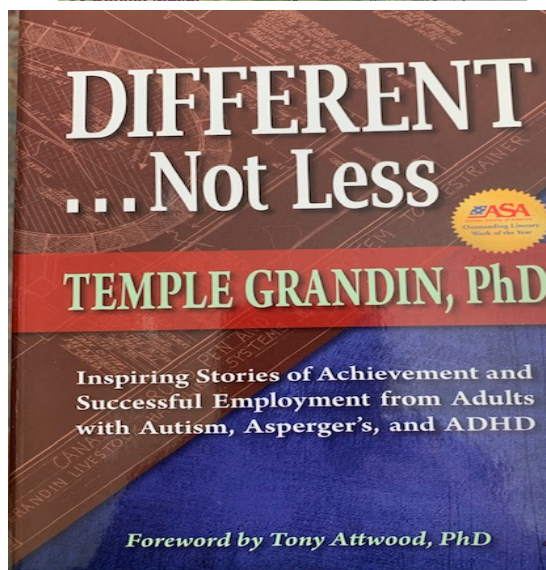
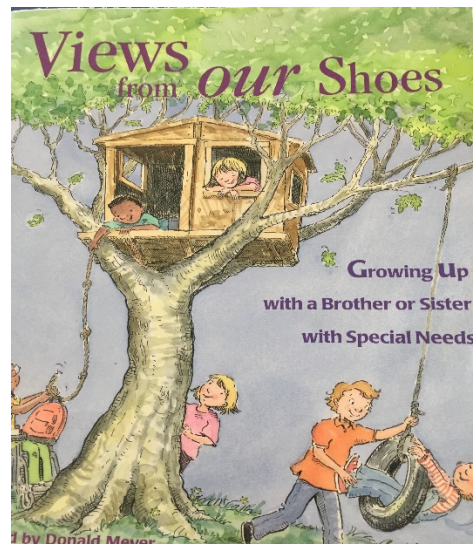
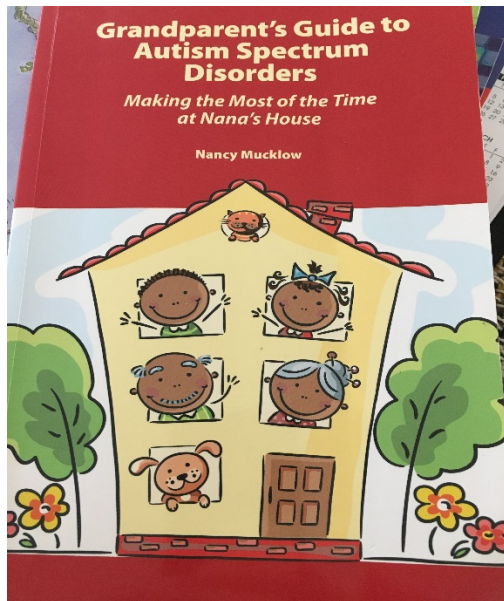
4) As a **teacher** we can improve our **communication** with moms. We can pause and realize that these moms are worried, may feel guilty, isolated, and exhausted and we can help decrease their anxiety by giving them feedback on the growth their student is making in school. A simple text or email or note in a back pack helps a great deal. Be careful teacher not to only communicate what is not working. Ask them how things are going on at home. Ask them what they need.

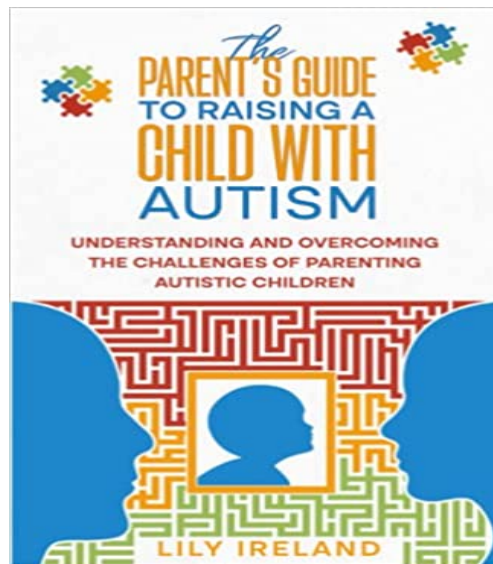
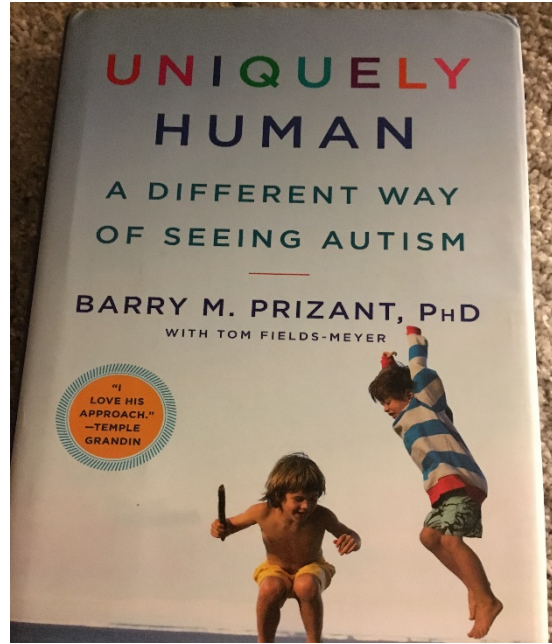
5) As a **friend** we can imagine what it might be like and offer to just listen. We can find ways to help make life a little easier for the parents. We could cook some food, offer to do some shopping, surprise the family with some fresh fruits and veggies, wash their car or take siblings for a few hours. **As a friend** we can make sure we tell them that they are doing a great job. We could suggest they see a counselor to help them through the journey. We might give them a massage certificate.

7) As a **grandparent** we first need to find out all about autism and especially the characteristics, strengths, and challenges of their individual grandchild on the spectrum of autism. We then need to offer to help. Maybe we can send over a housekeeper to help with laundry and cleaning. We could have meals delivered. We could offer to take a sibling out for a day. If there is financial concern, we could offer to support a special tool, therapy, or seminar for the family. Most of all we could just listen, offer hugs, and let them know we are proud of all they are doing.

8) As the child's speech or occupational **therapist**, we can make sure we point on the positives. We can make sure we listen. We can make sure we are asking, what are concerns, suggest ideas and resources. We involve them in sessions and teach them how to support and expand.

9) **As a neighbor**, we try to inform ourselves about autism. Helping to understand what a family might be going through makes us more aware. As we get to know the family, we can offer support. We might better understand if a child is screaming, throwing a tantrum, eloping, or engaging in different kinds of behaviors than a neurotypical child.





Wellness for Sibs

Yikes, is your other child having to spend more time with the family and of course their sibling with autism or another learning difference. Do they have less time for themselves? Do they have less time with their friends? Do they have fewer outlets, less independence and maybe a feeling of, I AM STUCK!

- Sometimes special needs siblings feel confused. They can unintentionally get overlooked or be expected to always be on their best behavior, and may be given higher expectations.
- One way to make them feel included is to give the sibling a job that involves doing something positive with/for their sibling. Then **thank** them.
- Siblings can act out from **stress**. Be sure to interact with them, **acknowledge** their feelings, listen without judgement. I can see that you're upset. How can we work together?
- It's very important to take the time to **acknowledge** stressors, and needs. **Validate** their feelings. Aim for at least one, one-on-one, undivided attention daily.
- Go for a **walk** with them. Watch a **movie** of their interest, with them only.
- **Praise** this sibling often. Even the small things count! Make sure to be specific with your praise when they are doing things right.
- They may feel like they need to be more responsible and not take **care** of themselves.
- There is a fine line between helping and them assuming parenting responsibilities. **Be careful.**
- As a parent, try to have **equal expectations** and if one has chores the other should too.
- If one must follow rules, the other should **too**.
- Make sure the sibling has a **private space** in the home and some private time to connect to friends, use their phone or watch favorite videos without sibling interruption.
- Design some family activities that include the sibling's **interest!**
- **Encourage** sibling to connect to their friends via zoom, facetime, text, email and share music and play games.

Some Resources

- *Views from our Shoes-Growing up with a Brother or Sister with Special Needs*; Donald Joseph Meyer
- *What about Me? A Book For and By An Autism Sibling*; Brennan Farmer
- *A is for Autism, F is for Friend-A Kid's Book on Making Friends with a Child who has Autism*; Joanna L. Keating-Velasco
- *My Sister has Autism*; Stephanie & Sherry Ham
- *The Friendship Puzzle*; Julie L. Coe
- *Autism, the Invisible Cord A Siblings Diary*; Barbara S. Cain
- *The Ride Together: A Brother and Sister's Memoir of Autism in the Family*; Paul Karasik and Judy Karasik
- *Siblings of Children with Autism: A Guide for Families*; Sandra L. Harris
- *Sometimes My Brother: Helping Kids Understand Autism Through a Sibling's Eyes*; Angie Healy

<https://siblingsofautism.org/>

<https://paautism.org/resource/supporting-siblings/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Llg1jilbZ_c&list=PLqLDROCTP9_r6jNO1p5JTkW27iQjNLDNT&index=14&t=940s Seaver Autism Center Siblings and COVID

WELLNES TIP: How Full is Your Bucket?

As the days of sheltering-in continue, I am reminded of the story about our full and empty buckets, told many years ago, in a book by Tom Rath and Donald Clifton, www.bucketbook.com

Each of us has an invisible bucket. It can be emptied or filled, depending on what others do or say to us. When full, we feel amazing. When, empty, we feel miserable. It appears that each of us also has an invisible dipper. We can use this dipper to fill others' buckets or empty buckets. When we say or do things that increase positive emotions for others, we fill ours too. But, by saying or doing things that decrease positive emotions, we diminish ourselves and empty buckets.

A full bucket gives each of us a positive outlook and energy. An empty bucket saps our energy and dampens our outlook.

So, today and every day, during sheltering in or not, we can fill one another's buckets or we can dip from them. It's an important choice which influences our health, happiness and success.

It is said we need at least five positives to one negative to maintain positive emotions.

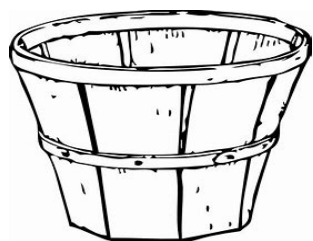
Full Bucket: We are healthier, we engage more, we grow individually, we broaden our thinking, transform life and encourage new actions.

Tip: Avoid dipping into others' buckets, fill them and yours fills.

Stopping making negative comments about, life and people and think about ways to fill other's buckets

Focus on what is right about yourself, your family, your life and others and praise, thank, help, listen, notice and smile more.

Help others be all they can be. Encourage others, Mentor others. This keeps your bucket full.



Empty



Full

Wellness tip: Put Grandparents in Your Corner

One year ago, I facilitated a workshop for grandparents of kiddos with autism. These grandparents were so open to acquiring understanding and to hear ways they could help support their grandchild as well as their son or daughter. So, if these ideas resonate, send them to grandma and grandpa and reach out for support.

Grandparents were excited with all the ideas such as;

- 1) Hire a housekeeper to clean the house their son or daughter could have more time with their child with autism
- 2) Offer to watch their grandchild to provide a date night
- 3) Share their own hobbies with their grandchild and find out their grandchild's favorite interest and see how to support them
- 4) Send them a card with a picture
- 5) Send them an email
- 6) Call them on the phone
- 7) ETC.

BUT NOW Sheltering has reduced contact, so baby sitting and housekeeping is not possible

So, what is?

- 1) **Send a meal to the family. Send a favorite dessert. Send some yummy beverages.**
- 2) **Facetime your grandchild so you keep connected.**
- 3) **Send a package that can be opened (a favorite game or book) by your grandchild**
- 4) **Get in your car and do a drive by birthday, holiday parade, throwing out confetti, and balloons, with a big sign on your door, saying miss you, TGIF, happy birthday, happy Memorial Day.**
- 5) **Send emails, send cards with pictures of things your grandchild likes**
- 6) **If your grandchild collects things, find out, send something for their collection**
- 7) **If you are able offer to grocery shop**
- 8) **Send someone to do their lawns**

ASK THEM HOW YOU CAN HELP MAKE THE DAY GO A LITTLE EASIER.

What is a Neighbor? Who are your Neighbors?

Parents, teachers have you ever taught your individual about neighbors? I think that Mr. Rogers was the only one I knew who made statements about neighbors and showed children how to connect to neighbors. It was believed that he called everyone a neighbor and his show was designed to help those who watched to develop positive social skills with each other.

You could always hear **Fred Rogers** Singing: *Won't You Be My Neighbor*.

"It is a beautiful day in this neighborhood, A beautiful day for a neighbor. Would you be mine? Could you be mine?... It is a neighborly day in this beauty wood, A neighborly day for a beauty. Would you be mine? Could you be mine?... I have always wanted to have a neighbor just like you. I have always wanted to live in a neighborhood with you. So, let us make the most of this beautiful day. Since we are together, we might as well say: Would you be mine? Could you be mine? Won't you be my neighbor? Won't you please, Won't you please? Please be my neighbor?"

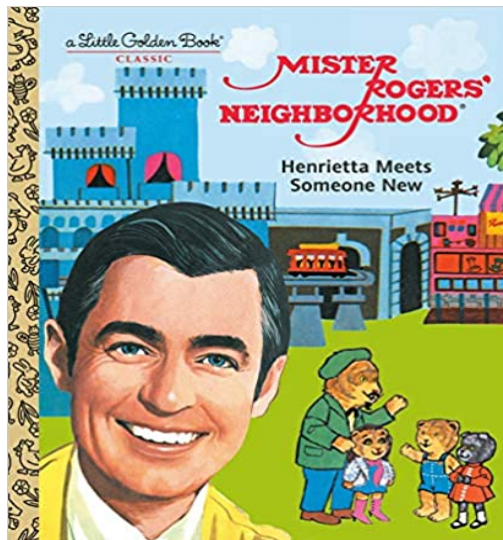
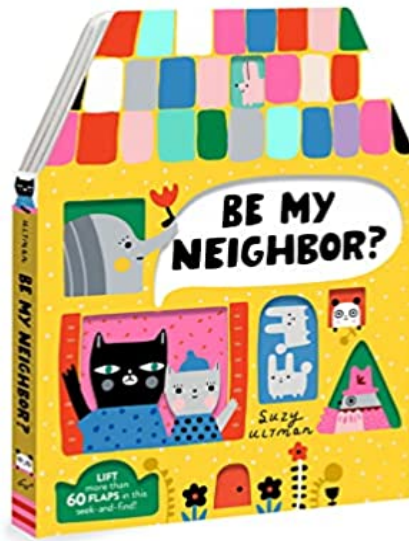
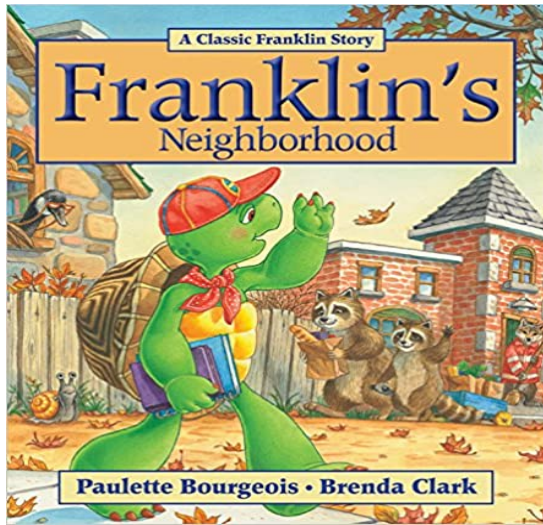
So, how do we teach our individuals with special needs to be a good neighbor? I hope some of these suggestions help you on this neighborly journey.

- 1) You might go on Amazon and find Mr. Rogers **books** on being a good neighbor or other authors and stories about being a neighbor. **Read** them to your individual. **Ask questions** about the book. See if they can tell you who their neighbors are.
- 2) Look up the **definition** of neighbor: A person living near or next door to another person. Neighborhood: The area surrounding your home.
- 3) You could create a **social story** [Home - Carol Gray - Social Stories \(carolgraysocialstories.com\)](http://Home-Carol-Gray-Social-Stories-carolgraysocialstories.com) for your individual to read or be read to. The story would introduce them to the concept of neighbor and neighborhood. You might take pictures of your neighborhood. Take pictures of houses. Take pictures of neighbors walking their dogs. You could take pictures of children playing in their front lawns. You could take pictures of neighbors washing their cars. If you already know some of your neighbors then invite them

over and take pictures of all of you with them, eating or playing. Use these photos to talk about what a neighbor is or what a neighborhood is.

- 4) Mr. Rogers was said to have taught **kindness lessons** to the children who watched. He taught that we were here to **help** everyone and the planet. He modeled **caring** on his show. He modeled **acceptance** of everyone. Perhaps you can read books to your individual about making friends, helping, and caring about others.
- 5) You might help **them map** out your cul-de-sac or street. Put address on the homes. Put names of people in the homes. Talk about who lives in each home. Which people does your individual know? Which ones do you know? Which ones have you invited over for something?
- 6) Then you could plan a **party** and invite some neighbors. Your individual could help make the invitations, plan the food and games.
- 7) Maybe your individual likes walking dogs. Maybe your individual likes to work in a garden or can mow a lawn. Maybe your individual likes to make cookies and **share** them with others. These are things your individual might **offer** a neighbor to do for them.
- 8) Maybe your son or daughter loves to wash cars. They could **offer** to wash a neighbor's car.
- 9) If you are close to a few neighbors, perhaps your individual could find out when their birthday is and make a card, do a chore, or bring some flowers to them on their special day. They could do something very **caring**.

They could learn to be a good neighbor. Their neighbors could learn to be good neighbors and wouldn't it be a neighborly way to be?



“Please Secure Your life-mask First”

Families with Loved-Ones with Special Needs

WISDOM of the GEESE for Families with children with additional needs:

- One day a teacher and her students watched a flock of geese flying by, honking. The children would look up and the teacher would give them bits of wisdom. Here are a few of the lessons their teacher taught them.
- Birds fly in a V formation. Each bird in the V formation creates uplift to keep them flying. Together the flock creates 71% more uplift by staying together which keeps them flying longer **(live and work collaboratively)**
- When one bird gets tired, they fall back in the V formation to take advantage of the lift from others **(accept help from others who have similar challenges, for they will help you as well)**
- When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates its lead. **(Take turns sharing responsibilities)**
- Geese are always honking because they are thanking the leader for flying so fast and strong. **(It is important for us to encourage and celebrate others for helping)**
- When a goose gets sick or wounded two others drop off, one on each side and take the sick or wounded to the ground to protect. They stay until the goose is well, **(Stand by each other in difficult times as well as when you are strong.)**



Siblings Matter

By Karen Kaplan www.karenkaplanasd.com

What can be done to help siblings of brothers and sisters on the autism spectrum?

Parents could reach out for help from professionals (teachers, medical, therapeutic community, family, friends).

Siblings need to understand the challenges of their brother or sister. Do this early, do it often and do it in age-appropriate language (simple at first to more details later) Siblings need to be assured that the challenges are NOT contagious like a cold or flu. They need to know that there are many, many children born with challenges in their communities and in the world

They need to know that their brother or sister will also have some abilities and must be encouraged in these areas. Siblings will need to know how to play with their brother/sister. Some children with challenges may not show an interest in playing. This is hard on the sibling. Help them learn to play with their sibling.

Parents need to be careful not to treat brothers and sisters as caretakers, but as children. Parents should not give them responsibilities beyond their maturity. Parents need to encourage children to ask questions and involve them in discussions and most of all value their feelings and opinions.

Adult Siblings will benefit from seeing a plan made by the parents about the future of their sibling. This could be written out and updated periodically with the following:

- 1) Who is my brother's/sister's friends, family members and neighbors that can help?
- 2) Who are the doctors and educators who can help me?
- 3) Who are the doctors and educators who can help me?
- 4) What are the interests of my brother or sister with a disability?
- 5) What financial planning has been done (How will I take care of my sister/brother)?
- 6) What are the laws around taking care of my sibling in my own community?
- 7) What is the medical history (medications, treatments) I need to know?

- Sometimes special needs siblings may feel confused. They can unintentionally get overlooked or be expected to always be on their best behavior, and may be given higher expectations.
- One way to make them feel included is to give the sibling a job that involves doing something positive with/for their sibling. Then thank them.
- Siblings can act out from stress. Be sure to interact with them, acknowledge their feelings, listen without judgement. I can see that you are upset. How can we work together?
- It is very important to take the time to acknowledge stressors, and needs. Validate their feelings. Aim for at least one, one-on-one, undivided attention daily.
- Go for a walk with them. Watch a movie of their interest, with them only.
- Praise the sibling often. Even the small things count! Make sure to be specific with your praise when they are doing things right.
- They may feel like they need to be more responsible and not take care of themselves.
- Fine line between helping and them assuming parenting responsibilities. Be careful.
- As a parent, try to have equal expectations and if one has chores the other should too.

- If one must follow rules, the other should too.
- Make sure the sibling has a private space in the home and some private time to connect to friends, use their phone or watch favorite videos without sibling interruption.
- Design some family activities that include the sibling's interest.
- Encourage sibling to connect to their friends via zoom, facetime, text, email and share music and play games.

Some Resources:

- Views from our Shoes-Growing up with a brother or Sister with Special Needs; Donald Joseph Meyer
- What about Me? A Book for and By an Autism Sibling; Brennan Farmer
- A is for Autism, F is for Friend-A Kid's Book on Making Friends with a Child who has Autism; Joanna L. Keating-Velasco
- My Sister has Autism; Stephanie & Sherry Ham
- The Friendship Puzzle; Julie L. Coe
- Autism, the Invisible Cord A Siblings Diary; Barbara S. Cain
- The Ride Together: A Brother and Sister's Memoir of Autism in the Family; Paul Karasik and Judy Karasik
- Siblings of Children with Autism: A Guide for Families; Sandra L. Harris
- Sometimes My Brother: Helping Kids Understand Autism Through a Sibling's Eyes; Angie Healy

Sibling's anxieties, fears and doubts can be addressed through group work. In some communities a group meet up is formed for siblings to come together. The meeting is an opportunity for sibs to come together to receive peer support and education within a fun recreational manner. Games, discussions, arts & crafts, and speakers are activities used to connect participants. Sometimes lunch or snacks are served & they learn about special needs.

A group could be run by a social worker, teacher, nurse, psychologist, or an adult sibling of a person with special needs Groups are not considered therapy but often have a therapeutic effect. Leaders of the try to group keep an eye on the individuals in the group and see if any might need additional supports.

Each community determines what day, or time or space to be used. Some groups can be as short as 1.5 hours or as long as 4 hours. Groups can be weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Most are bi-monthly. Groups are usually developed according to ages (5 to 7, 8 to 12, 13 to 18, 19 to 25 other)

Some Possible Sib shop Discussions:

- 1) How did you learn about your sib's disability? How was it explained to you?
- 2) Is your life different from other kids? How?
- 3) What are the good parts of having a brother/sister who has special needs?
- 4) What are the not so good parts?
- 5) What do you think will happen when you and your brother/sister grow up?
- 6) Are friends and classmates ever a problem? What do you do?
- 7) What do you think parents should do for brothers/sisters of kids with special needs?
- 8) Is being a brother or sister of a special needs person different than being a brother or sister of a typical child?
- 9) Discussions would also include special topics: (ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER, AUTISM, SENSORY PROCESSING, SEIZURES,). Understanding the disability helps bring acceptance.

More Resources:

[Special Needs Siblings - A Sibling Kind of Love](#)

[Sibling Leadership Network | Siblings of people with disabilities](#)

[Sibling Support - Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center \(umassmed.edu\)](#)

[Siblings Guide to Autism.pdf \(autismspeaks.org\)](#)



Wish all Pediatricians Knew

By Karen Kaplan www.karenkaplanasd.com

I am not sure why all pediatricians do not give out a resource list for parents when parents hear the words, your **son or daughter is on the autism spectrum**. Perhaps they, do, but for those who do not, just know, these parents just want to know how to connect to resources and supports to know there is hope. Please share this list with all the pediatricians you know.

Autism Society of America: [Autism Society Creating connections for the Autism community to live fully.](#)

University of California Center for ASD and NDD: [Welcome to the UCSF Center for ASD and NDDs | The UCSF Center for ASD and NDDs](#)

MIND Institute: [Autism Resources | UC Davis MIND Institute](#)

May Institute [Autism Schools and Services, Brain Injury and Neurobehavioral Disorders, and Developmental Disabilities - May Institute](#)

Stanford Autism Center: [Stanford Autism Center | Stanford Autism Center | Stanford Medicine](#)

Autism Took Kits [Autism Speaks Tool Kits | Autism Speaks](#)

National Institute Mental Health [Autism Spectrum Disorder - National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\) \(nih.gov\)](#)

Autism Research Institute: [Autism Screening & Assessments - Autism Research Institute](#)

National Autistic Society: [National Autistic Society \(autism.org.uk\)](#)

International Autism Association: [International Society for Autism Research \(INSAR\) \(autism-insar.org\)](#)

Speech Therapy & Autism [Autism \(Autism Spectrum Disorder\) \(asha.org\)](#)

Assistive Communication Devices: [Augmentative and Alternative Communication \(AAC\) \(asha.org\)](#)

Occupational Therapy Autism: [Occupational Therapy \(OT\) | Autism Speaks](#)

Seizures & Autism: [Autism and Seizures: Whats the Connection?- Autism Research Institute](#)

Special Education: Every child has a right to a free and appropriate education. [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#)

IEP Individual education plan: [Amazon.com: The IEP Checklist: Your Guide to Creating Meaningful and Compliant IEPs: 9781681254722: Rosas Ph.D., Dr. Clarissa E., Winterman Ed.D., Dr. Kathleen G., Bradley Ed.D., Dr. Leo, Concannon Esq., John, Campbell Ed.D., Dr. Lisa M, Clarke Ed.D., Dr. Laura, Jones Ph.D., Dr. Melissa M, Doyle Ph.D. BCBA-D, Kathryn, Kroeger Ed.D., Stephen, Rotuno-Johnson Ph.D., Rosemary: Books](#)

[Autism Parent Magazine](#) [Autism Parenting Magazine - everything you need to support your family](#)

[Exceptional Needs Magazine: Home | Exceptional Needs Special Needs \(exceptionalneedstoday.com\)](#)

Early Intervention Models

Denver Early Start [Early Start Denver Model | ESDM Training Program | Autism Intervention](#)

Pivotal Response Training: [Stanford PRT Research and Training Program | Stanford Autism Center | Stanford Medicine](#)

DIRFloortime: [Home of DIRFloortime® \(Floortime\) - What is DIR®? \(icdl.com\)](#)

TEACCH Model: [Home | TEACCH® Autism Program](#)

Understanding ABA [Applied Behavior Analysis Guide.pdf \(autismspeaks.org\)](#)