

# What Does It Mean To Have **AUTISM?**

**A Fresh Outlook That Will Alter Your View**



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# **Finding out your child has autism**

## **Common sentiments among parents....**

### **Delivery Room**

It can be easy, it can be tough. It can be quick, it can be slow. The result is the same. You have a perfect little baby. You hold this precious child in your arms. The world is perfect!

### **Infant**

Getting to know your child is delightful. Your baby is the cutest baby on the planet. You watch your child grow in fascination, a bundle of potential and opportunity where everything is possible.

### **Toddler**

Comparisons! Hmm. Her child is doing that? Why isn't mine? My child should be doing what? Not a problem, he can do other things. Nagging thoughts that you push aside.

### **Something is wrong**

Your child has behaviors that are concerning. You can't ignore them any longer and you seek professional advice. You're sure it's nothing serious but decide it's a good idea to see a specialist.

### **Devastation**

Autism! It can't be. Please tell me it isn't so! Visions of Rain Man run through your head with people rocking and banging their heads on the wall.

### **Shattered dreams**

All your dreams dissipate. Visions like cheering for your child in the mini-league stands crumble. Will your child ever have friends? Get married? Have children? Be independent? Find a job? Will your child ever speak?

### **Fix it**

I will cure my child. I know we can fix this. My child will grow out of it. We'll teach him to be like us. He won't be autistic for long.

### **Decisions**

There are so many different therapies. Which do you choose? ABA, Verbal Behavior, Son Rise, Floor Time etc. What about OT? PT? Speech? Auditory training? It's overwhelming.

### **Take action**

You pick a treatment option. Therapy begins. Progress is great. The time is intensive. You don't really have a life anymore because it now revolves around your child's therapy and needs.

### **Uncertainty**

Progress slows down. Are you doing the right method of teaching? Is your child learning enough? Is your child having therapy for too many hours? Too few hours? Should you be doing something completely different?

### **Resigned**

You have tried so many different things. Your child is doing well but life is not going as you expected. There are days you are very optimistic about your child's future and days that you panic about it. Your life is filled with great joy and great fear. This is a difficult road to travel.

### **Total joy and acceptance**

Not everybody gets to this level. It's our intention that you will. The information in this book will help you. It's an incredible place to be. Total joy and acceptance means that if your child always has autism, you'll be completely at ease with it. You'll have no desire to fix or change it. It doesn't mean that you'll stop educating him, it just means that you'll be happy with every stage he's in. It means that your child will intrinsically know that you love and accept him for who he is and your relationship together will be in perfect harmony.

### **How do I get there?**

Read this book. Surround yourself with people that believe in your child. Follow your instincts. Educate yourself. Reach out to us. We want to help you. We want to help your child.

### **About You**

You are loving and caring. You want your child to live the life of his dreams. You think that autism will compromise your child from being fulfilled. It's not true. Your child can have the exact life he wants. It might not be your idea of a perfect life but it will be his. We all want to be loved and accepted for who we are. People with autism are no different. Their behaviors and mannerisms are different to ours. Do you remember how you presented when you were 4 years old? Your behavior has changed. Your child will grow too. Parents get scared thinking their child with autism will remain the same. Don't be fearful. Your child will mature. Your love and support will help him live the exact life he wants.

## **Our message to people with autism**

**Never change.  
We love you just as you are.  
We will teach you our communication style in  
the best way we know how. We want to learn  
how to communicate in your style too. Please  
teach us. When we achieve this goal, we can  
find the perfect balance of coexisting in this  
world, accepting each other for who we are.**

## My advice to you.....

### Forget The Diagnosis

Autism! Pdd nos! Aspergers syndrome! ADHD! High functioning! Low functioning! Delayed! Hearing these words about your child can be crushing. They can devastate you to your very core. The good news is THEY DON'T HAVE TO! Let me tell you why....

It doesn't matter. That's right. It simply doesn't matter. If you want to really help your child then read on. I'm serious. Don't be like the thousands who wish they had "lived" this concept sooner.

Pretend for a moment you have a newborn. He is simply perfect. By the time he is two years old, his fingers are so long, they look strange. You go to a renowned physician and ask "What's wrong with my child? Why are his fingers so long?". The physician smiles and says "Your child has a condition called spindle fingers. He has a natural gift for playing musical instruments. Many dream of having this talent".

You're absolutely thrilled and can't wait to share the news. You rush home but on the way you stop to buy a toy xylophone, piano, drum set and flute. You set them out on the floor when you get home and you watch proudly as your toddler strums each one of them. You don't care that everyone else thinks it just sounds like noise. You have a budding musician on your hands and he's practicing!

As the months go by you encourage your child to play instruments. He gets a little older and expresses his preference for the piano. You take him to piano lessons, listen to famous piano players and perhaps even go to concerts. You explain to your son that his fingers are long because he is talented at playing the piano. Your son plays the piano beautifully. He is proud of his fingers and his talent. You are proud of your son.

You run into the physician a few years later. You tell him proudly about your child's piano skills. He smiles broadly and says "I made it all up. There is no condition called spindle fingers". "What?" you shriek "that's impossible. My child is an excellent player".

"Of course he is" says the physician "It's called belief. You believed in your child's fingers. You believed in his talent. You encouraged him. It didn't matter how many mistakes he made. You hardly heard them because you knew he was on the path to greatness. Your son felt your belief. He saw it in your eyes. He felt it course through his being. It inspired him. Every time he looked at his long fingers he thought about his talent. He felt proud of himself. He knew he could do it. Your unwavering faith inspired him to be the best he can be".

My advice to you is this. Forget about the boxes and the labels. Ignore the judgments. Your child is fascinating. Your child is a unique and wonderful being who is incredibly special. Give him the tools. Encourage him on his journey. Never lose faith in him. Stand by his side. Teach him as much as you can. Watch in delight as he soars far beyond everyone's expectations. Everyone's except yours and all those who joined your belief along the way!

**- By Jene Aviram**

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## **In Honor Of Parents**

Congratulations! You've been awarded a new title. You're super qualified. I know, you're just a parent. You're not an SLP, an OT, a PT, or an MD, a Psych or a BCBA.

You're the person who got up at 4 am because your child only needed 3 hours of sleep last night.

You smiled as you watched him play out his favorite movie script, word for word.

You felt despair as you did everything in your power to convince him to put down his Game Boy and get ready for school.

You reveled in his endless delight with the soap bubbles when he washed his face.

You thought you were going to tear out your hair as you reminded him 40 times to put on his shirt.

You happily made his regular breakfast and cut his waffles into perfect squares with one dot of syrup in the middle, just the way he likes it.

You rejoiced when you watched him and his brother playing and laughing together.

You felt like you were on the verge of insanity when you listened yet again to the baseball statistics and answered the same question 23 times in a row.

You laughed heartily when he told you the weather was going to be poor and he was excited to see lots of Nimbostratus clouds and very few cirrus clouds.

You felt frustration and admiration when you asked him where his lunch bag was and he replied by naming 30 carnivorous dinosaurs, in size order and explained which period they lived in.

You felt pride when you watched him independently organize his school bag and gather his belongings.

You patiently waited 8 minutes for him to tie his shoelaces even though you grew increasingly anxious about the time passing by.

Your heart sang when he looked up at you as he was done, so proud of himself that he had done it alone.

Your eyes brimmed with tears when just before he stepped on the school bus, he turned back and without a word and without any eye contact, he gave you a big hug, letting you know in his own special way how much he loves and appreciates you for everything that you do.

This is the profile of an **Absolutely Exceptional Parent**. So from now when you sign your name, make sure to include your new title such as, **Jene Aviram, AEP**.

**- By Jene Aviram, AEP :-)**

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## **In Honor Of Educators**

Strolling through the mall on a Saturday morning, Miss Drew sees a Spiderman toy. Knowing how much her 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student will love it, she buys it instantly. Thank you! You have our gratitude!

She walks into the lesson on a Monday morning bright and cheery. "Good morning Joe, lets start with reading today". Joe is having a difficult time expressing his thoughts verbally and responds with a kick in her shins. Miss Amy patiently sits down and helps Joe work through his frustration. Thank you! You have our gratitude!

Steve has been trying to learn the word "toothbrush" for two weeks now. Suddenly he blurts it out. It's hard to tell who is happier. Steve who got the correct answer or Mrs. Mack who is cheering wildly. Thank you! You have our gratitude!

It's 1:45 am and the behaviorist is exhausted. Bleary eyed, she persists at the computer. Her new idea will help countless students manage their anxiety. Thank you! You have our gratitude!

There's a new seminar on helping children with autism to learn and grow. Knowing there will be no reimbursement, Mr. Jones registers because the knowledge he'll gain might help one more child. Thank you! You have our gratitude!

The Occupational Therapist spends hours searching for pictures that Jake will love. She knows these will motivate him to learn to cut with a scissor. Thank you! You have our gratitude!

It's Sunday morning and a beautiful day. While most are relaxing, the speech therapist is dedicated to completing the worksheets that will increase her student's language. Thank you! You have our gratitude!

For two months she has reminded Mark to unpack his bag. Today Mark did it independently. The Paraprofessional's face shines with joy and pride. Thank you! You have our gratitude!

Miss Lisa is out with friends but her mind is on Annie, one of her students who is struggling with transitions. Miss Lisa knows she can help Annie and is determined to find a way. Thank you! You have our gratitude!

Its parent-teacher evening. Tom's mother is nervous because her son's progress is important to her. The teacher makes sure to spend some of the time concentrating on all the positives about Tom. Thank you! You have our gratitude!

Ben can't do the Math worksheets. The Special Educator takes the time to modify how the questions are asked and Ben does it easily. Thank you! You have our gratitude!

The team of educators that work with Julie want her to succeed. They are determined that school is a great experience where she learns the maximum. They consistently get together to discuss and implement new methods to achieve this goal. Thank you! You have our gratitude!

A "SPECIAL" Educator is one who gives their support, not their judgment. How do I know you're one of the special, top notch educators? Simple! You wouldn't be reading this if you weren't! We thank you and acknowledge you for making the world a better place for people with autism.

**- By Jene Aviram**

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## **“Remark-Abilities”**

**We stand in awe of people with autism. Their brains function differently to ours and they are capable of such a diverse range of exceptional abilities. It’s incredible how many talents they have that we could never have the capacity to tap into. Below are some of the remarkable skills that children with autism have demonstrated. They are in no particular order and are all astounding. We encourage you to go to <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-remarkable.htm> and post your story.**

My son can recite the presidents in order, forwards and backwards. He knows their first, middle and last names. He knows all of their vice presidents (if there was one).

Jene, NY

My son has always been obsessed with numbers. He could multiply and divide with exponents at 4. Now he is 12 and is taking Differential equations and Linear Algebra (the class after Calc. 3) at our local Community College. But he still can't tie his own shoes :-)

Rebecca, CA

My son can recite the entire preamble to the Constitution.

Elizabeth, WI

My cousin can draw anything - and I mean anything in the most incredible detail.

Sue, NV

We took my 5 year old grandson to a large aquarium. He remembered the exact layout and where all the animals were placed even though he hadn't been there since he was 2 years old.

Jos, NY

One day we noticed my child could read fluently. She had just turned 3 years old. Nobody ever taught her.

Stacey, WI

My son taught himself to tread water for hours and hours, never getting tired. He taught himself to do this way before he learned to swim.

Laura, NY

One of my students can do puzzles as fast as lightning - with the picture side face down.

Wendy, CT

My son submerges himself under water and holds his breath for ages. He does it until I call his name so he'll come up for air. I feel like I can't breathe just watching him. He is perfectly fine and ready to do it again if I allow it.

Andrew, NY

My 4 year old son remembers every route we drive. He sits in the back of the car and instructs us "Turn left, turn right, take the parkway..."

Adrienne, CA

When my son was in 1st grade, his teacher told us, "I've learned that if your son and I disagree on a science fact, HE is always correct."

Sara, CA

I don't know how he does it but my son can hear my husband's car the moment he turns into our block. We live at the other end of the block!

Lucille, TX

If I dump a cup of cheerios on the table, my daughter can tell me how many there are. Nine times out of ten, she's right. If she isn't, she's never off by more than 2.

Pat, MD

A student in my class can imitate anyone's speech. He imitates their voice and intonations perfectly and it sounds just like them. It's hysterical.

May, VA



<p>My child notices everything. My living room is full of things but even if I move a photo frame to the middle of the ledge, he'll walk right in and immediately adjust it.</p> <p>Reilly, AK</p>
<p>My brother can tell me about every dinosaur that ever existed, what they ate, what they looked like and what period they lived in.</p> <p>Adam, NY</p>
<p>My child is a mechanical wizard. He can take anything apart and put it back together in perfect order. He does it really quickly too. It's amazing.</p> <p>Shelly, OK</p>
<p>My son is 9 and loves road construction. He knows every piece of equipment used, has researched them all on the internet and will speak at length about the pros and cons of each make and model.</p> <p>Wendy, Canada</p>
<p>My 3 year old can recite a 30 minute video, word for word. And that's after watching it once or twice.</p> <p>Marcia, PA</p>
<p>My 5 year old brother can do multiple flips on the parallel bars without ever being shown how.</p> <p>Jason, NY</p>
<p>My 7 year old son with Aspergers has taught me more about science than my years of schooling could ever come close to. He is a joy to be around and someday may just save our planet.</p> <p>Amy, PA</p>
<p>My daughter has an excellent memory. She's 10 now and she remembers things in detail from when she was 2 years old.</p> <p>Nancy, RI</p>
<p>My three year old cousin learned how to write in one month and learned how to read in less than two months.</p> <p>Anne, DC</p>
<p>My 3 year old is amazing on the computer. Somehow he learned how to use the mouse and keyboard, find and bookmark his favorite Internet sites and play any computer game.</p> <p>Melanie, CA</p>
<p>My son knows the model of every toilet seat cover and where it was produced - Hey, it's still a talent!</p> <p>Debra, PA</p>
<p>My son is fascinated with vacuum cleaners. He knows about every make and model, what kind of motor they have and the attachments they come with.</p> <p>Lauren, MI</p>
<p>One of my students is a math wizard. He's in 3rd grade and he can calculate very complicated math in his head. It astounds me every time.</p> <p>Maya, FL</p>
<p>Every time my son meets someone he asks them what car they drive. He never forgets the make and model, no matter how many years go by.</p> <p>Maureen, IN</p>
<p>My 5 year old daughter has never done a day of gymnastics in her life and she can do a triple flip like it's a piece of cake.</p> <p>Lindsey, NJ</p>
<p>My son can tell you exactly what kind of truck is approaching before it is even in sight.</p> <p>Theresa, CA</p>
<p>My 4 year old is a master escape artist. It doesn't matter how we try and bolt the door, lock the gates, secure the windows - he can find a way to get out.</p> <p>Sammy, OH</p>

<p>If I can't understand what my son is saying, he can go to his bookcase, instantly pick out the book he wants, turn to the specific page he needs and point to the word he's trying to say.</p> <p><b>Audrey, MD</b></p>
<p>My 3 year old daughter can climb to the top of our refrigerator in about 3 moves</p> <p><b>Limor, WA</b></p>
<p>My son is 22 months old. He counts up to 200 in 5's. He can do it in reverse too. We have no idea how he learned this.</p> <p><b>Lynne, PA</b></p>
<p>My 7 year old is an Internet search guru. He can find absolutely anything from the script for Shrek to ancient Japanese culture and tradition.</p> <p><b>Ronnie, NY</b></p>
<p>My 8 year old has always had an interest in the solar system. He knows about every planet, including their moons, weight, density etc.</p> <p><b>Shannon, FL</b></p>
<p>By the age of 4, my son had memorized EVERY highway sign in CT. His passion for over a year was drawing out highway signs from memory. I don't need a GPS! I've got him. :-)</p> <p><b>Douglas, CT</b></p>
<p>My 7 year old nephew loves the American Museum of Natural History in NYC. When he got home, he searched through all his toys and recreated all his favorite exhibits from the museum</p> <p><b>Simone, NY</b></p>
<p>My cousin has autism and he knows exactly how long it takes for every traffic light in his town to turn from red to green.</p> <p><b>Tina, GA</b></p>
<p>My son loves zip codes. He can tell you the zip code for every area in the USA</p> <p><b>Becky, MN</b></p>
<p>My child can "speak" to cats. He goes down to their level, rubs up against them and greets them. The cat always responds. They sound so much alike it's hard to determine who is who.</p> <p><b>Bev, NY</b></p>
<p>My 13 year old daughter remembers where she got every one of her beanie babies going back to 10 years ago.</p> <p><b>Noni, NY</b></p>
<p>My 6 year old daughter talks just like Mater from Cars. She can recite every song she hears with perfect pitch and knows the name of the artist. She can remember the smallest detail from the time she was 2. If anything is moved in a room (even one she only visited once), she immediately notices.</p> <p><b>Lisa, MD</b></p>
<p>My son at the age of 4 could name all of the makes and models of the cars on the road and now he is 8 and can tell you the year as well now.</p> <p><b>Heidi, UT</b></p>
<p>My nephew can say the alphabet backwards and forwards and no matter where you stop him he can continue from that point in either direction. He can also tell you the day of the week your birthday is going to be on the next year.</p> <p><b>Pepper, OR</b></p>
<p>My 6 year old grandson is like a skilled engineer. He can draw beautifully and he makes gorgeous Lego projects.</p> <p><b>Linda, WA</b></p>
<p>My son is able to re-create a scene, for example a doctors visit. He re-arranges the furniture as best he can to look like the doctors office, and then he mimics the doctors visit, playing each part word for word, including the sound effects such as papers rustling in the background.</p> <p><b>Vickie, PA</b></p>

My son loves music and drawing! He has been drawing since he was 1 year old and is remarkable! His singing isn't too bad either :)

April, PA

I used to work with a 5-year-old boy that could tell you the exact square footage of a room just by looking at it!!!

Shauna, GA

I once worked with someone who could give you which day of the week a given month / date / year fell on, going back a hundred years.

Clementine, NJ

My 6 year old can recite songs after listening to it a couple of times.

Teresa, GA

My son can tell you the CD track number of any song, even if years have gone by since he's heard it. He also has many early memories, some before age 2.

Ashley, CT

At 18 months of age my son already had the dexterity to remove two slats from his crib without breaking any of the wood.

Sarah, UT

My child has incredible musical ability. I'm sure he hears notes that we don't hear. He has perfect pitch and melody.

Lori, NH

My son is a master at matching up things. His favorite thing to do is look at any printed item, newspapers, phone books, magazines. He gets multiple phone books and matches up the listings in them.

Angie, OH

My son, Ryan, can remember any person's name and birthday almost instantly. Just say Hi and tell him your birthday and he will remember. He also can tell you any celebrity's birthday he's read about on the internet.

Stacey, GA

My 2 1/2 year old can look at a bolt and pick out the right socket to fit it.

Michelle, CA

My son can watch a 6 hour taped video once and then remember exactly when the commercials come on, leave the room, and return just when the programs come back on.

Carole, NY

My son is remarkable. At 18 months he knew all the colors, shapes and numbers 1-100 without being taught. He can sign on to AOL and go to my Favorites and play games, it's amazing. He has curly hair, we call him Einstein. He is indeed remarkable.

Jenny, MN

My 14 year old loves to draw on the computer. He has made some remarkable pictures that we frame and give as presents. My 19 year old (yes, I have two Autistic sons) knows how to "goggle". No one taught him.

Rosario, TX

I know this sounds weird, by my 9 year old son has some ESP thing going on. He has predicted births of babies, phone calls from distant relatives, and once told my husband to "watch out for Katie". We knew no one named Katie and that day he startled a horse, the person riding it was Katie! Made him a believer!

Patti, CT

# Therapies For Autism

## Introduction

While this is by no means an extensive guide, it will give you a brief introduction to the various therapies from **OUR** perspective. Books have been written about the different therapies and we certainly can't do either of them justice in a couple of pages. We have mentioned some of the popular choices but there are certainly more options. It's a great idea to get in touch with other parents in your area as you can benefit from their experience.

## What's the best method of therapy?

We firmly believe that parents are the most qualified to decide which method of therapy should be used. While others can educate parents on the various therapies and approaches, parents know their children best. There are many approaches to teach children with autism. It's worth taking the time to do some research and decide which one you think your child will respond to best. There is no right method. Each person will have a different experience. It's not a life altering decision. If you choose a method and you're unhappy, you can always change it.

## ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis)

ABA is a method where behavior is taught through a system of rewards and consequences. Think about how this works in your own life. You get up in the morning and go to your office. You work (behavior) and get a salary (reward). You don't get into late every morning because you don't want to disappoint your boss or get reprimanded (consequence). The behavior we teach is broken down into small steps.

Let's take an example that's used with a child. We are teaching a child to ask for juice. First, we ensure the child can identify juice. We may start with pictures and ask the child to point to the juice. The child will get rewarded with a toy or favorite food when responding correctly. Next we might teach the child to say "juice". After that, we would teach the child to say "I want juice". We can add further steps such as "please", asking where the juice is kept etc. The child will get rewarded at predefined intervals. A lot of praise is used in ABA.

## Discrete Trials

While a lot of ABA programs utilize discrete trials they are NOT the same. There are many ABA programs that do not make use of discrete trials. Like all therapies, some children respond well to these and others do not. In essence, discrete trials are practicing a certain skill repeatedly. This can help to maintain and understand the skill. Let's take a look at how this works in our lives. If I explain to you that light, TV and radio transmissions are electromagnetic waves. They are a wavy disturbance that repeats itself over a distance called wavelength and that wavelength is the distance between one wave crest to the next. You might ask me to repeat this. In fact, you might need me to repeat this a few times for you to grasp the concept and remember it. This is how discrete trials work.

Let's take an example that's used with a child. We might be teaching the child his phone number. We would say "What's your phone number"? If the child gets it incorrect, we would tell him the answer and ask the question again. This time he might get it partially correct so we would tell him again and repeat the question. The third time the child might respond correctly, get rewarded and we would perhaps ask again to ensure he really got it. The number of consecutive trials is usually decided by the program coordinator.

## AVB (Applied Verbal Behavior)

Like ABA, Verbal behavior also rewards specific behavior. Many people use a combination of the two methods. Verbal behavior is often done in the natural environment where the behavior specifies its own reinforcer. Let's take a look at how this works in our own lives. If I ask you to make me a cup of coffee (behavior) and you make me one (reward) then my behavior has been rewarded with my request. Verbal behavior also places an emphasis on fluency. This means that the child can respond quickly to questions and switch thoughts. This is demonstrated in our own lives as follows. You and I are chatting about a movie. In the middle I ask you to pass the sugar (fluency). You pass it to me and we continue talking about the movie. Suddenly you switch topic to tell me something funny that happened (fluency).

In order to demonstrate this approach, let's take an example that's used with a child. The child wants to swing outside. We would go outside and instruct the child to say "I want to swing". We would agree and the child would swing. (Behavior specifies the reinforcer). During this, we might push the swing lightly and teach the child to say "push it faster" or "I want to go higher". (Behavior specifies the reinforcer). While the child is swinging, we might throw in some other questions like "What's your brother's name"? or "What school do you go to"? (fluency).

## Floor Time

This method of therapy is based on mutual, shared engagement. Parents and caregivers enter the child's activities by following the child's lead. The intention is for the parent to draw the child into more complex interactions which are referred to as "opening and closing circles of communication". Let's look at how this works in our own lives. It's the difference between asking your spouse how his day was without paying any attention to the answer (not floor time) to being really interested which then sparks on a whole new level of conversation (floor time). It's the difference between instructing your child to do a chore (not floor time) to sitting with her and really talking about her day (floor time).

Let's take an example that's used with a child with autism. If the child wants to line up cars in a row, the parent might take turns lining up his cars. Then the parent may accidentally place a car in the wrong spot. This opens up the possibility for the child to open and close a new circle of communication in order to fix this error. Similarly, a child might be meowing like a cat. The parent might join in and then pretend to bark like a dog. This allows for a new circle of communication.

## Son Rise

The Son Rise program is based on total love and acceptance of the child. While other therapies use play and instruction, this philosophy states that if the child knows that he is respected and cared for, he is more likely to communicate and seek interaction. This method of treatment believes it's far more effective if parents take the main role. While this is feasible for many families, it can be challenging for others.

Let's take an example that's used with a child with autism. A child is stimming by flapping his arms. The parent will sit next to the child and imitate him. The parent will begin flapping his arms just like the child. If the child slows down, the parent will match his pace. The goal is to build a rapport and connection which facilitates eye contact, social development and inclusion of others in play.

## RDI

While this is not often used as a therapy in and of itself, it can be a worthwhile addition to any program. The theory of RDI is to create numerous daily opportunities for the child to respond in more flexible, thoughtful ways. As time goes on, these "frameworks" gradually move into more complex environments. RDI believes in capturing memories to build a repository of competence. This therapy is often done by parents or those close to someone with autism. The program teaches dynamic intelligence. The parent and child become a team and the child learns how to match his pace and stay in sync with those around him. While the beginning activities may be structured, such as "building a beanbag mountain" together, skills are gained and transfer over into daily life, for example setting a table together or packing for a vacation.

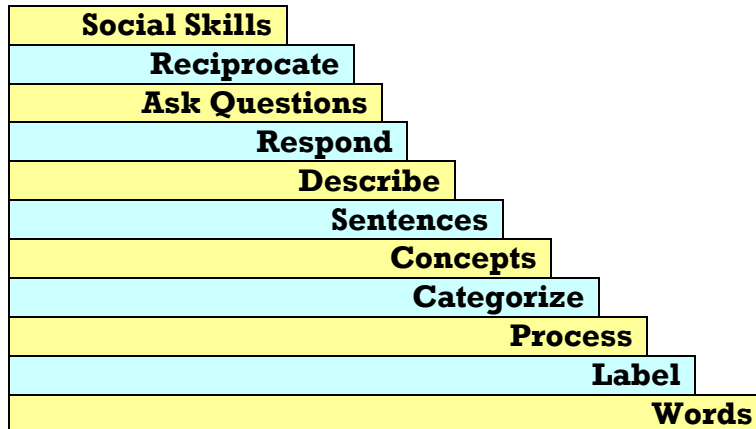
## Where do I begin?

People with autism want to communicate. They want their needs met. They want to enjoy life. Their idea of enjoyment and communication may not be the same as ours but that doesn't make it wrong. It makes it different. This can be hard to accept at first because we think our method of communication is the key to happiness. As we learn the communication style of someone who has autism, we are better able to teach them our communication methods. If language is possible for a person with autism, we should certainly concentrate on this. Language is an easy method to get our needs met.

Just like we can't run before we can walk, we can't possibly have a conversation until we learn the fundamentals. If you take it step by step, you will find that it's rewarding and fun to climb this staircase. Where do you begin? Think of that special person in your life who has autism. Where are they in this communication staircase? Because many people with autism have scattered skills, they can be ahead in some areas while below in others. If all bases are covered, the results will be great.

Although we've put Social Skills at the top of the staircase, appropriate social behavior should be taught at all levels of the communication staircase. We have a wonderful collection of social story books to help you do this. <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-social-stories.htm>

### **WHICH LEVEL OF THE COMMUNICATION STAIRCASE IS THAT SPECIAL PERSON IN YOUR LIFE?**



### Words

In teaching language, words are the first step. Many Speech and Language Pathologists teach children how to form their lips to make the appropriate sounds. Visuals motivate children to learn. A popular choice to begin learning words is Learn to talk about Animals. Children love this set. It's filled with a range of animals that we find in the zoo, the farm and in the wild. <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-ltt-animals.htm> Another popular set is Learn to talk about Household Items. This set contains items the child sees every day such as the TV, tissues, keys, money etc. <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-ltt-household.htm>

### Label

When a child with autism learns words it becomes fun to label everything. To acquire this skill, it's a good idea to teach in a structured setting. We have a number of perfect materials for this level. Some popular choices are Learn to talk about Vehicles & Occupations <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-ltt-vehicles.htm> and Fill-ins and Reversals. <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-fill-ins.htm> To label actions, a great purchase is the Question Set – What and How. Once the child has mastered actions, you can keep the set until you're ready to begin working on questions. After teaching in a structured setting, always try and carry the skills over to the natural environment as much as possible.

## **Process Information**

For a child to function effectively it's important to understand the world around him. We have created perfect materials for this level of the communication staircase. One example is Rooms of the House. This item helps a child understand the space they live in. It teaches what we find in our homes and how we use the items. For example, we sleep in a bed and we find it in a bedroom. We cook in an oven and this is in the kitchen. <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-rooms.htm>. On a broader scale, it's important to understand our environment. The seasons play a big part in our activities, the clothes we wear and the foods we eat. <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-seasons.htm>

## **Categorize**

It's important to be able to organize information so that we can understand our world. We develop this by learning to categorize. We have a number of excellent materials that easily achieve this goal. One example is Abstract Categories. This set will teach categories in addition to abstract information. <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-abstract.htm> Another important item for this level of the communication staircase is learning to match. It's essential that a child can match identical items as well as non-identical items. We have an item that was designed specifically for this skill. It's called Matching Identical and Non-Identical Items <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-match-items.htm>

## **Concepts**

Concepts are basic fundamentals that are a stepping stone to further learning. An example is Patterns – no problem. Patterns and sequences are the very basis of math. This skill must be learned as the first level of math. Don't worry; no writing is needed with this item. We know it's best to concentrate on one skill at a time. <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-patterns.htm>. Another important concept is Things that go together. It's important to be able to make connections and associations and this set teaches how to do that. <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-things-together.htm>. Yet another couple of excellent concept items are Mastering Mathematics <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-maths.htm> and Motivating Match facts <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-mfacts.htm>

## **Forming Sentences**

When language doesn't come easily to a child, forming sentences can be a complicated skill to acquire. When learning to converse, step one is the ability to finish a sentence. Step two is reversing it which teaches comprehension. When these are in place, you have your foundation! It's that simple! Natural Learning Concepts has a product to fill this gap. Fill-ins & Reversals is an essential step in the acquisition of language. <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-fill-ins.htm>

## **Describe**

This is a very important level in the communication staircase. First we get words, then we label, we learn to categorize information and understand concepts. We've ensured that we have comprehension and can form sentences. Now it's time to relay information to others. The first step in learning to do this is to master the skill of describing. A whole series was developed to master this skill. It is an extremely popular series and if you've seen it, you'll know what I'm talking about. It's called the Learn to talk about Series. It contains 7 packs which can be purchased individually or bundled together. <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-learn-talk.htm>

## **Respond**

While responding may come naturally to somebody without autism, it doesn't necessarily hold true for someone with autism. There are many that know the answer to a question but because social interest may not be highly developed, they don't really see the point in responding. There are just as many who need direction on how to answer a question and the ability to understand a question. Luckily there's a whole series that teach this skill explicitly. These items are best sellers with good reason. The complete Question Series and Question set will teach those to answer and comprehend all the "WH" questions. This is one of those sets you can't afford not to get. <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-questions.htm>

## **Ask questions**

Have you ever studied a conversation? You will notice that a lot of questions are asked, information is relayed, concepts are understood and there are plenty descriptions. On this level of the communication staircase it's important to be able to ask questions. There are a lot of good options for this. The Question Series <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-complete-qseries.htm> and Question Set <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-question-set.htm> can be used for this as well as the conversation starters. The conversation starters are an excellent tool for teaching this skill with written prompts. <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-conversation-starters.htm>

## **Reciprocate**

Reciprocation is the art of conversation. Relaying information and questions in a back and forth method. Reaching this level of the staircase is always so exciting because this is where conversation truly begins to happen. There are a number of items that will support teaching this goal. To name a few are the social story books <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-social-stories.htm>, the Question sets <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-questions.htm> and the Learn to talk about Series <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-learn-talk.htm>. By far, one of the most essential items in this area is the Conversation Starters. Children practice conversation in simple steps. They learn the flow of information continues about the same topic. They teach spontaneous conversation as the child fills in the blanks and is also prompted to ask questions. This item has been referred to as a Speech Teacher's Dream. <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-conversation-starters.htm>

## **Social Skills**

Appropriate social behavior is an essential part of communication. These skills often do not come naturally to children with autism. Social story books are an excellent method of teaching these skills. Natural Learning Concepts has a variety of books that children love and relate to. In addition, there are comprehension questions at the end of each story to ensure the child understands what is expected in a social situation. For the list of Social Story books, please visit <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-social-stories.htm>

Natural Learning Concepts realizes how many skills are needed. In order to get the most value, the company ensures that its items have multiple purposes. For example, Question Set – What and How teaches actions, what questions and how questions. Fill-ins and Reversals teaches comprehension, fill-in the blanks and labels. For the full line of items, please visit <http://www.nlconcepts.com>



## **Listen to people with autism**

**I have always found that I learn volumes from people with autism. Here are some real life experiences told by people with autism and aspergers. Nothing has been censored. These are their words. With respect to privacy, the names below are pseudonyms.**

My mom always encouraged me to pursue my interests. She taught me that learning isn't something that just happens in school. School is for getting used to dealing with people and endless paperwork. Learning can happen anytime, anywhere. When I was 4, she participated in a project to tag monarch butterflies so their migration patterns could be studied. We'd go out in the field, find eggs or caterpillars and take them home, and put them in cages and keep them safe while they went through chrysalis, then tag and release them when they emerged as butterflies. If it weren't for my mom, I don't know how I would have gotten through school. Teachers thought I just was lazy and not paying attention. Mom knew I was bored. Unfortunately, there wasn't anything she could do to keep me from getting beaten up in school, or to make gym class less agonizing.

### **Richard**

When I was a child, people weren't aware of sensory issues, so a lot of things I did seemed neurotic and I was simply blamed for being difficult. People also neglected to explain to certain things which didn't make sense to me (although I suspect they didn't *know* how to explain). I also felt that people had an inability to empathize with me. It would have made a big difference for me if I had been allowed to study on my own. My schooling years would have been so much better if the school system accommodated my differences, evaluated my knowledge and didn't make me use the typical testing system which didn't (and still doesn't) make any sense to me. I could never understand why the teachers were always nitpicking about something that seemed so unimportant. Most people never noticed how smart I was. They just thought I was strange.

### **Dan**

I wish I was told that it was OK to be who I am. I was led to believe that my life purpose is to grow up, get married, have children and then have my life defined by the achievements of my children. Life seemed so bleak because I never wanted to do this. I discovered much later that I could do what I choose but I would have had something to look forward to if I'd known this earlier. I was almost non-verbal when I was younger (I still don't talk much) and people used to talk about me as if I couldn't understand. I hated this. I would have liked some formal training in music or the arts. I couldn't ask for this but I would have responded positively if someone had offered it to me. I think that all parents should aspire for greatness.

### **Debbie**

My parents didn't want to get jobs because they believed that only they could help me. Mom overprotected me and kept me away from other children because I'd always get hurt. I think it might have helped if she had participated in groups like the PTA and/or home schooled me. I needed her help to select friends for me in the local community. I didn't know how to ask her to do that. I would have liked more opportunity with athletics at a younger age, even if it were "special" athletics. I was homebound a lot. My mom doesn't have a mean bone in her body. She unconditionally loved me and always made me feel secure. Dad had an instinct for when I'd be in trouble. He would rescue me from being beat up on occasion. Mom encouraged some skills I am proud of today and accommodated my hyperlexia. They helped me feel proud of what I could do. I think that has made me confident today.

### **Sue**

Nobody taught me life skills that could have saved me from stress later on. Like how to use a checking account. My parents weren't honest with me about the testing I underwent as a child or my years in special education programs. I knew there was something wrong with me and I thought it must be very bad. As I grew older my parents were more understanding. They let me know it was fine to be who I was. They didn't make me play with other children. They bought me books and took me to museums instead. They told me it was OK to do things in my own time instead of worrying about when other people did them. Now I have two friends and a job and I'm very happy. I still love museums.

### **Ben**

I wish I was given tutoring for my homework. It's not that I didn't understand the work. I just didn't understand the way they asked the questions. I heard that now they will modify the curriculum. This is good if the testing is also modified. If it isn't, I don't see the point. I didn't want friends when I was young and I was always forced to play with other children. I hated it and to this day I still don't have any friends. It brings back too many memories of being forced to play with someone. I really didn't see the point and I still don't. I don't talk very much. I can but I choose not to. I prefer to sign. I love being with my brother and his family. He knows I don't like to talk and he doesn't try and make me. I don't live with my parents but I spend a lot of time with them. I like that.

### **Steven**

My problem began when it became obvious to me that something was different about me. If my parents knew I had autism maybe they could have helped me more. For example, I often would get over stimulated while clothes shopping (which I hated under the best circumstances) and would refuse to look at things or shout that I wanted to go home. What neither I nor my parents realized was that I wasn't doing this because I was a selfish little brat, but because after dealing with people all day at school then having to try clothes on (most of which I hated or found uncomfortable to wear) my mind was teetering on meltdown. Going shoe shopping was enough to trigger a panic attack. More than anything, it was just not knowing what made me so stressed out or different that made things bad. I didn't want friends but I also didn't want to be ridiculed and rejected. If someone had understood me and said I was OK my life would have been better.

### **Chris**

I didn't like school. It would have been better if I was allowed to learn about subjects that interested me. I wanted to check out books that were on my level. I would have liked to skip recess and not sit with my class at lunch. I would have liked having things explained to me rather than being yelled at just because they are obvious to 'everyone else'. I would have like to be allowed to show what I knew. I think self-directed projects instead of having to do the class projects would have helped here. I wish my parents had listened more to me than the teachers.

### **Anthony**

School was very difficult in elementary. I made enemies of the popular girls from first grade until third, which meant I had no friends. My parents took me out and put me in private schooling after that, which helped a lot. I always had a hard time connecting with people and was accused of being too intense or too easily distracted in class. Today, I try to be very careful about the number of times I raise my hand, or not answering questions too many times in a row, or hijacking the conversation. My parents always told me how smart I am and I'm glad they did. I don't always get noticed but I can achieve a lot. My sister is my friend and I have a boyfriend. My boyfriend has autism.

### **Kirsten**

I think I would have appreciated music lessons more than most kids but I never got them. I didn't ask for them I just thought my parents knew I wanted them. My parents never stopped me from stimming. I'm grateful for that. When I got older I learned that I shouldn't do it in public. I am non verbal. Talking hurts my ears and makes me very tired. I have friends and we sign together. I am happy.

### **Tom**

## Memorable Moments

**A memorable moment is any moment you enjoyed with someone on the autism spectrum. It can be funny, cute, happy, touching, silly, whatever. Sharing these moments are meaningful to everyone. They create hope, laughter and joy. These are some of the moments that people have been generous to share. We encourage you to read and post one at <http://autism.nlconcepts.com/tool/mb/nlconcepts>**

I have been a behavioral aid for just about 3 years now. One of my proudest accomplishments has been working with a boy who at 16 years old did not know how to ask questions. Finally he started asking "How was your day at work?" "What did you eat for lunch"? The most memorable moment, however, was after I returned from a trip. I had not seen him for a week. He opened the door with the biggest smile and a wave and the first thing out of his mouth was, "Hi Erin! How was your trip?" He now will ask questions until the cows come home. He is so special and one of my most favorite companions.

I'm an ABA therapist and I was working with one of my 4 year old students. I thought I'd forgotten to bring my notebook so when I found it I told him "I did a good job, I brought it with me". So he gave me a reinforcer - an Oreo cookie which is something he usually gets as a reinforcer. It was too funny.

I've always been so envious of the other mothers at school because their kids rush to greet them when they pick them up. My son always walks towards me, staring blankly ahead and doesn't show any happiness that I'm there. Suddenly that changed about 6 months ago. He started smiling at me when I arrived to pick him up and some days he runs towards me. I just can't get enough of it. It makes me so happy.

My 4 year old has autism. We went to a new therapist who showed him some ink blots. She said "What's this"? He said, "A mess". She showed him the next one and repeated the question. Again he replied a mess. The therapist was amused and she took a different approach. "What do you think about all this"? My son replied "I'm not cleaning it up". We both burst out laughing.

My son is 7 and has autism. He is so literal and take understands things exactly as they're said. He was with his grandpa who told him there was a shake over at Arby's with his name written on it. My son proceeded to inspect the shake intently and proclaim, "Grandpa, my name is NOT on this cup!"

Another time his uncle who was playing with him asked "Why did the chicken cross the road?" My son thought about it and said "No cars". Good idea!!

I work as a middle school Special Education teacher with students on the spectrum. After Spring Break, one of my kiddos who has Asperger's came up to me and told me that he had a gift for me. When we entered the classroom, he presented me with a small box. I opened it and there was a coffee mug inside. Imagine my surprise when I pulled it out and saw that he had drawn a picture of an apple on it and even written a personal inscription. "2nd best teacher" I use it with pride and show it off at every opportunity.

I don't know where to start. My son was diagnosed with Autism in September 2006. He's different to others but a ton of fun. We were playing outside the other day and he kept chasing me and vice versa with a basketball and he couldn't stop laughing. I love times like that with him because it was one of those really good laughs where you think your belly is going to explode. A lot of people ask me if I ever wish he were "normal" and at first I did, but now I realize that "normal" would be too boring for me. I love the challenge and all the work I have to put into raising my son. I feel that if he was up to speed with other 3 year olds I wouldn't know how to appreciate the time I have with him as much. So for everyone with autistic children, see it as a blessing. God chose you for a reason. I see my son as an opportunity to help someone and teach him how to do more than what is expected of him. I have actually gotten him to get over his social phobias. It was rough but he did it, so keep trying and loving your children.

While on the floor, on my knees, bending over to work on a student's Field Day tee shirt, my shirt rose up in the back to expose my back. My student, who had at that point **never made a spontaneous statement**, sat back on his knees with a devilish little smile on his face and exclaimed, "Ms. Aggie, your pants are falling down!"

He was proud of the reaction he provoked (a lot of laughter) and hasn't stopped talking since.

At our last doctor's visit, my son who was just recently diagnosed with Asperger's was reluctantly sitting there while I talked. I had picked him up from school earlier in the day because he was complaining that he didn't feel well. I told that doctor that I thought he looked "pale". We continued talking and my son got up and walked over to the pile of toys. He came back over carrying a red bucket and a very concerned face. He asked if he looked like the "pail" and was his face red? Well, life sure stays wacky with two boys on the spectrum.

My son uses a picture schedule. He wanted a cookie and I told him he had to wait until after dinner. When I went to the kitchen to prepare dinner, he had made a picture schedule and left it on the kitchen counter. It was a picture of "Mommy" THEN "Giving cookie to Jake" THEN "Mommy" THEN "Making dinner". It was so funny that I gave him a cookie right then.

One day I was walking in the mall with a little 5 year old boy on the spectrum. We came upon a new mom breastfeeding her baby. He immediately noticed and started to walk up to them. We had been working on joint attention and being the good little student that he was he exclaimed "Look! Food toys!" as he noticed where the baby was drinking from.

My daughter Jenna is completely non-verbal but we know she can understand what we tell her to do. Last week, she had taken her food plate into her room in order to eat while watching her favorite movie. My husband and I had gone in to check on her and she had dumped all her chips off the plate unto her bedroom floor. My husband told her to pick up all her mess and put it back on the plate. She just looked at him, picked up the plate, placed it on top of the chips on the floor and then returned to whatever she was doing. It was like she said "Well if you can't see it, the chips aren't there".

# The Sensory Challenge

(In honor of Occupational Therapists and people with autism)

**Take the Sensory Challenge. Are you ready? Good. Close your eyes and imagine this:**

You're in a room with a group of people. You're trying to listen to the speaker but there is a buzz in your ears. It's so loud you wonder if there's a fly in your head. The lights in the room are continually flickering. You keep blinking to avoid the flashes. Now you have a headache.

**Open your eyes. How did you feel? What did the speaker say?**

This is the effect fluorescent lights have on some people with autism

You're watching a puppet show. There are people next to you, in front of you and behind you. The noise level is loud. There are people laughing all around you. One of the puppets has a shrill voice. It echoes in your head and you don't understand what the puppets are saying. You try and filter out the sound but it's impossible. You are continually startled as the audience breaks into applause, clapping and cheering wildly for no apparent reason. In desperation you cover your ears and squeeze your eyes shut hoping it will all just go away.

**Open your eyes. How did you feel? Did you enjoy the show?**

This is the effect typical noise levels might have on some people with autism.

You're at a BBQ. The sun is hot. The heat makes your skin prickle and the light is blinding. Your friends call you to play ball but there is a haze in front of your eyes. You try and push it away with your hands. Why can't anybody else see it? The sound of insects is all around. You see them wherever you turn. They're on the leaves, in the sky and on the grass. You should be eating but you feel nauseated. The air is permeated with the smell of food, drinks, lotion and smoke from the grill. It's overpowering and all you can do is nibble on some chips.

**Open your eyes. How did you feel? Did you participate in the BBQ?**

This is how a summer day event can feel to someone who has autism

You enjoy playing basketball but today you have to wear your team clothes. The socks are rough and they hurt your feet. With each step, the seam slides across your toes and it's awfully painful. You're on the court and you miss the ball. You didn't see it because you were trying to reposition your shirt. The label on the inside feels like a jagged piece of paper that constantly grazes your skin. You can't shoot the ball in the hoop because you're rooted to the spot. Your shoes are so uncomfortable, you're afraid to jump in fear of the painful landing that's bound to happen. Your team is really mad at you.

**Open your eyes. How did you feel? Did you enjoy the game?**

This is the effect that some clothing can have on a person with autism.

You like eating cereal. It's crunchy and it tastes good. You like eating yogurt. It's smooth and creamy. Oh no! Somebody wants you to combine them! They think you should mix it up and eat them together. The very thought of lumpy and smooth swirling around in your mouth makes you physically gag. At your request they leave it separate but still put them on the same plate! How could you possibly eat? You feel physically ill looking at the lumpy and smooth on your plate. It reminds you of... of... Oatmeal! The King of all lumpy, smooth mixtures. Your stomach is churning and you need to throw up. You close your eyes and pray that the plate in front of you will magically disappear.

**Open your eyes. How did you feel? Did you enjoy your breakfast?**

This is the effect that some foods can have on a person with autism.

You're at the mall. It's a large wide open space where everything echoes. Your skin begins to tingle. There are sights and sounds everywhere. You don't know where to look first. Your mind is reeling. You're afraid and you feel exposed. You long for protection. You want to swaddle yourself in a blanket and pretend you're in a cocoon. People whiz by. Their footsteps and chatter reverberate in your head. You lose sense of yourself and the space around you. You wonder if your feet are on the floor or if you've merged with the mall. In sheer terror, you retreat in the far corners of your mind – a safe place that never fails you.

**Open your eyes. How did you feel? Was the mall fun?**

This is the effect busy places might have on people with autism.

**If you have autism we respect and commend you for dealing so well with situations that can feel unbearable. If you're an occupational therapist, we honor you for the wonderful work you do in helping people with autism deal with sensory challenges.**

- **By Jene Aviram** This article is property of and copyright © 2003-2007 Jene Aviram of Natural Learning Concepts. Reference of this article may only be included in your documentation provided that reference is made to the owner - Jene Aviram and a reference to this site <http://www.nlconcepts.com>

## Teacher Approval

Think back to when you were 6, 8 or 10 years old. Do you remember your teacher? Do you remember how you looked up to her? Her words were golden. Do you remember when you forgot to do your homework or weren't paying attention? Her stern words cut you to the core. Not because she was mean but because you desperately wanted her approval.

School ended and those days were long forgotten. Then my child was diagnosed with autism.

**Why didn't anyone warn me I'd become that 8 year old again?**

**I desperately need teacher approval, not for me, but for my child.**

**This is a common sentiment of parents to children with autism. So if you're a teacher, Autism consultant, SLP, ABA therapist, OT, PT, Psychologist, Social worker, Camp Counselor or anyone else that's an authority figure to a child with autism –**

**THIS IS FOR YOU!**

My child has autism. I know that. I'm not in denial. How could I be? I live it every day. I have other children. My friends have children. I know the difference. They answer questions, my child might not. They play together, my child might not. They share their thoughts, my child might not.

My child is different. He is on his own mission. I'm happy to be by his side. I am thrilled when he learns something new, no matter how small. I am proud when he accomplishes something I once never thought possible. I take delight in his idiosyncrasies. Please rejoice with me. Please notice his worth.

My child is multifaceted. He has weaknesses and strengths. He has deficits and skills. People are always pointing out the deficits. Please join me in noticing his skills.

**Teachers.** In our meetings, please allow for some time to recognize my child's good points. When you do, I go home walking on air. When you don't, I drive home in tears.

**SLP's, OT's and PT's.** When your opening statement is a positive remark about my child, I begin to relax. When you only voice concerns, my stomach twists into knots.

**ABA therapists & Camp counselors.** When you greet me by telling me my son had a great day, my anxiety fades. When you focus on the deficits, your words hurt me deeply all day.

**Consultants, Psychologists and Social Workers.** When you begin with positive observations, my heart soars in delight. When you only stress your concerns, my heart splits in two.

My child faces judgment at every turn. I invite you to stand apart! Stand strong with us! Unique is good! Let's tell the world! Help me instill pride in my son. Show him his greatness. Try and see his perspective. Praise him as much as you can. By doing so, you improve my child's life and build his confidence. You will motivate and inspire him. He will exceed your expectations and I will be eternally grateful to you.

**- By Jene Aviram**

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## The Light Side Of Autism

**While there are many that focus on the disabilities associated with autism, we take delight in their unique personalities, talents and abilities. The humor pages will make you laugh as you think fondly of those with autism spectrum disorder.**

**PLEASE NOTE: These pages are done in good humor with the best of intentions**

### 10 Things to make you smile :-)

1. It's absolutely amazing how many stores have ceiling fans
2. When I'm in the mood to answer the same question 300 times in a row, I know just who to go to
3. I never have to be creative at dinner. Its chicken nuggets & peas. Every night! Or else :-)
4. I know where every fire hydrant is located in the entire city
5. I had no idea there were so many uses for a household spoon
6. If I ever get insomnia, I'll always have company
7. Sixty-four airplanes fly over my house every day
8. If I develop a sudden fascination with vacuum cleaners, my child can tell me everything about them - as many times as I'm willing to listen
9. Refrigerators can actually hum
10. Buy new shirt. Remove tag. Wash 8 times. Ready to wear.

### The Autism Paradox

1. It's easy to recite an entire book but difficult to make up a story
2. It's easy to line up toys but difficult to stay in line
3. It makes perfect sense to climb on the sofa but little sense to sit on it
4. Memorizing the Presidents in order - 10 minutes. Packing a school bag - 10 hours
5. Family pictures on the wall are boring but that speck of dust next to it, now that's fascinating!
6. Talking about weather patterns - piece of cake. Talking about my day... impossible!
7. Ability to focus on spinning objects - timeless, ability to focus on homework - 3 seconds
8. Being called by name, can't hear it. Some owl hooting in the distance - clear as a bell
9. How to operate the remote control - zero instruction. How to button up pants - intensive instruction
10. Navigating social rules - poorly skilled, Navigating from the back seat - highly skilled

**- By Jene Aviram**

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**Natural Learning Concepts** <http://www.nlconcepts.com> (800) 823-3430 [info@nlconcepts.com](mailto:info@nlconcepts.com)

## **Your Child Might Have Asperger's if...**

1. You're shocked when you find out that your child's spontaneous language is actually a collection of lines from ads, movies and commercials. Then you marvel how he can actually do this and make sense!
2. Your child is fascinated that your skin can actually crawl and he lightly touches your bare arm to witness this incredible event.
3. You ask your son if he's ready to go to the Park and he doesn't answer right away because he's thinking about the last time he was in the park when he saw a toy car, which reminds him of the Toy Store, which reminds him that the Toy Store also sells dinosaur figures, which reminds him of a museum he went to 6 years ago, which reminds him.....
4. Your child thinks there's nothing more fun than reading about the mechanics of a fan, unless of course he's explaining it to someone.
5. He simply does not see the point in making a car race down a ramp when you can turn it upside down and watch the wheels spin in unison.
6. He finds the word "ripple" hilarious, "dabble" bothers his ears and he firmly believes the word "tip-top" should be "top-tip"
7. You're late and you ask your child to please hurry and find his shoes. He finds them but doesn't put them on because you forgot to mention that part.
8. You ask your child which book he borrowed from the school library this week. He replies and then proceeds to tell you the name of every book and its author that he's borrowed from the library the entire year - in the order he borrowed them!
9. You know facts about things like the Homo erectus species who lived in bamboo forests with huge primates called Gigantopithecus and that the very first Europeans were called called Homo heidelbergensis.
10. Not only do you know these things but your child makes sure you never forget by explaining this era to you in detail, every moment he can.
11. His uncle explains that it was just a figure of speech when he said "My head is about to explode" and your child is devastated because he wanted to see what that would look like.
12. You'll never be silly enough to ask your child if you look fat because you know you'll get the truth.
13. You assume your six year old is mumbling to himself but on closer listening, you realize that he is actually reciting the Gettysburg Address.
14. You have no idea how your 6 year old even knows about the Gettysburg Address and where he could have possibly learned it.
15. Your child appears deep in thought when for no apparent reason, he suddenly bursts into laughter. He looks around surprised that no one else found his thought funny.

**- By Jene Aviram**

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## **The Author's Personal Experience – Jené Aviram**

My son was diagnosed at 2.5 years old. They said he had pdd nos, most likely aspergers. I was devastated. Did that mean he wouldn't get married, have friends and have a normal life? I wanted to fix the problem. I listened to what everybody said and followed their advice. My son did ABA therapy. He cried for 2 months. It devastated me but I let it happen and I take responsibility for it. In retrospect my son should never have done discrete trials. When I realized this I stopped them immediately. I'm not saying discrete trials are bad. I'm saying they didn't work for my son.

ABA therapy can be fun and from then on I committed to making sure it was. I needed materials that he could relate to. I couldn't find them on the market so I began making them. My son learned fast. I kept giving the materials away and making new ones. As the months passed, my son's growth doubled and tripled. Language, comprehension and communication increased dramatically.

I soon had professionals and parents calling me with product requests and thus, Natural Learning Concepts was born. I opened the company with Jocelyn Blum, one of the most talented people I know. She is also my mother. We're committed to producing materials that people with autism enjoy. All our materials get an "autism stamp of approval". We test them on children with autism and modify them as many times as necessary. We like to be sure that our products inspire children to learn.

My son still can't have a typical conversation but he can do the most profound things. He hears things we don't hear. He memorizes everything. He has intense interests and his general knowledge is phenomenal. Books are his best friend and he researches everything. I am thrilled about all his new skills but the other things aren't going away. He still has lots of self stimulatory behavior. His intense interests and obsessions seem out of control. He has no social interest in his peers. I speak to parents, professionals and our customers and they are all experiencing similar results. Progress is great but they still can't make that social leap. What is missing? By this time I have spoken to many people with autism. I've read their books and articles. I've spoken to parents, teachers and professionals.

I spent days, weeks, months and eventually years on message boards of people with autism. In listening to people with autism, it suddenly became very apparent. Nothing is missing! People with autism are perfect just as they are. It's often hard to be accepting of them because we care so much. We want them to lead fulfilling lives and for us this means society's idea of a fulfilling life. For example, just the thought of someone being unmarried and spending most of their life alone seems like a miserable existence. Even though we do it with the best of intentions, we are often making them wrong for being who they are. Our first instinct is to cure them, change them or fight autism.

People with autism want to understand the world around them. They want to learn communication skills. They're aware of sensory, language and social difficulties. We can teach them these skills while applauding them for their differences. Our materials are created to be appealing and motivating to people with autism. Have fun when you teach. Laugh together. Teachers who believe in their students and make learning a fun experience get astounding results.

People on the autism spectrum have phenomenal skills. Their brains function differently to ours and they are capable of such a diverse range of exceptional abilities. It's incredible how many talents they have that we could never have the capacity to tap into. If we focused on building their natural talents more actively we might find that the amount we can learn from them is staggering. What an exciting possibility that we have just as much to learn from them as we do to teach them. Because people with autism have such a different way of thinking and being, they can contribute greatly to us and to how we view life. We would do wonders for their self esteem, happiness and productivity in life if we spent more time encouraging them for their abilities. On a broader or global scale, imagine creating a world where society views people with autism for who they are – different to us, but absolutely remarkable!

## **Companies that make a difference**

There are many companies whose products and services are unrelated to the field of autism, yet they are extremely supportive to those with autism spectrum disorder and their families. An example of one such company is All American Van Lines. We thought this would be a good one to mention since they service the entire USA. Please let us know if you hear of other autism friendly companies so that we can add it to our database.

### **All American Van Lines (1-888-777-MOVE)**

This company moves homes and businesses across the USA. It comes as no surprise that this excellent company has a perfect record and does perfect moves. So what does a moving company have to do with Autism? Read on.....

The owner of the company is Ronnie and his child is on the autism spectrum. He knows how tough it is for some children to make transitions. He understands how many have a need for sameness. He completely gets that things need to be in place and perfect for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Ronnie understands that many children with Autism feel like their lives are in turmoil when they move. He ensures that his company does absolutely EVERYTHING in its power to make the move perfect for your child or someone you love. He will give you a great discount too. He knows how much money you spend helping your child with Autism. Not only that, but he contributes a percentage of each move to Autism causes. He is dedicated in helping people with autism and their families in every way possible.

#### **Read about one person's experience...**

I was dreading our moving day because my 11 year old autistic son simply couldn't understand. He hates change in his routine and environment and I had no idea how we were going to get through this.

Somebody had referred me to All American Van Lines because of their empathy for Autism. I spoke to the owner personally. He was amazing and gave me a nice discount. But I was still an emotional wreck. After all, it was his employees that would be doing the move and how would they be?

We arranged to do the move while my son was at school. I knew it would be too much for him to see everything being taken out of our house. The company arrived on time and went right to work. The movers were unbelievable. The just couldn't do enough for me. They moved everything to our new house much quicker than I expected.

When everything was in, one of the guys said "Right, let's get to work" and we went to my son's new room. They placed the furniture in a hundred different ways until I was satisfied. They set up his TV and DVD player. They helped me unpack the books into his bookshelf. I arranged his pencils on the desk just as he likes them. They hung everything in his wardrobe. They even offered to help me put his clothes in his closets. On the way out, they made sure the piano was in the perfect spot in the living room. My son loves the piano but he needs to look out the window when he plays.

I was completely dreading the move and it turned out to be one of greatest experiences. By the time we brought my son to his new home, everything was in place, just as he likes it. Transitioning to our new home turned out to be so easy. I highly recommend All American Van Lines to anyone that's moving. I can't thank the owner enough for his kindness and caring attitude. I get tears in my eyes just thinking about it.

**- Karen, Plainview NY**

**Contact the company for a discount – <http://www.cybermove.com> 888-777-MOVE**

**Natural Learning Concepts <http://www.nlconcepts.com> (800) 823-3430 [info@nlconcepts.com](mailto:info@nlconcepts.com)**

# **NATURAL LEARNING CONCEPTS**

## **Our Mission**

People with autism have a unique way of communicating but that doesn't mean it's wrong. It means it's different. Many are capable of such a diverse range of exceptional abilities. If we focused on building their natural talents more actively we might find that the amount we can learn from them is staggering. What an exciting possibility that we have just as much to learn from them as we do to teach them. Because people with autism have such a different way of thinking and being, they can contribute greatly to us and to how we view life. On a broader or global scale, imagine creating a world where society views people with autism for who they are – different to us, but absolutely remarkable!

## **Products and Services**

### **Materials to teach children**

Our goal is to increase language and communication of skills of children who fall on the autistic spectrum or have development delays while showing them how much fun it is to do so. Our materials are created to be appealing and motivating to people with autism. Natural Learning Concepts understands there are many levels of communication. Materials that students relate to are created to achieve mastery in language and social skills. We will always aspire for greatness in those with autism. We make sure that our materials are top quality and equally enjoyed by educators as well as those on the autism spectrum.

### **The creation of our materials**

NL Concepts consult with a team of parents and professionals for product development but never forget the most important team members – children with autism. Children with autism test each and every product before they go into production. Items are modified as many times as necessary until they are proven as a motivating and effective method of helping children with autism learn.

### **Autism job placement for adults**

#### **Did you know?**

People on the autism spectrum have phenomenal skills. Their brains function differently to ours and they are capable of such a diverse range of exceptional abilities. It's incredible how many talents they have that we could never have the capacity to tap into. Some are able to calculate the square footage of a room instantly, just by looking at it, others are math wizards and others have incredible memories. Given a supportive environment, they can contribute to the work force in ways we never dreamed possible.

#### **Autism job placement**

This service provides employers with an opportunity to hire people on the autism spectrum. Employers receive a tax credit if the employee receives financial aid. If the employee doesn't receive financial assistance, the company receives great benefits from a valuable employee with a unique perspective. There is no charge for this service. It has simply been created to benefit employers and people with autism.

#### **Good reasons to hire people with autism**

Many have the ability to focus intently on projects. Others are very detailed and excel in any position requiring this skill. Some are excellent at finding imperfections and make top notch editors. With excellent research abilities, many make outstanding technical writers. Often they have a wealth of knowledge and have excellent computer skills. Typically people with autism are punctual, loyal and dedicated employees who prefer to remain in the same company for a long period of time.

### **Support and inspiration for families**

Passionate about the Greatness of Autism, Natural Learning Concepts is dedicating to promoting the "**Remarkabilities**" of people on the autism spectrum. At a very young age, some children do complicated math. Three year olds teach themselves to read proficiently. Four year olds could almost qualify as a paleontologist. We encourage you to read some of the "**Remark-abilities**" that parents have posted on our website. The **memorable moment's** section allows people to share the great experiences they have with the special person in their life who has autism. People with autism bring us laughter and joy. Visit the section on our website called "**The Greatness of Autism**". Read our book "**What does it mean to have autism?**" It has changed the way many people think about autism. It will uplift your spirits and amaze you.

## About Natural Learning Concepts

Jené Aviram and Jocelyn Blum founded Natural Learning Concepts in 2003. Jené was born and raised in South Africa and has a background in Computer Network Engineering. When her son and later her nephew were diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, her passion became autism. With a driving force, she became determined to teach her son to communicate. Along the way, she discovered how remarkable people with autism are and how much we can learn from each other. Jocelyn Blum is also from South Africa. She has extensive qualifications in the field of Human resources. With two grandsons on the autism spectrum, Jocelyn too been personally affected. Jocelyn is filled with talent and energy and her driving force to help people with autism is unstoppable.

## How we began

When Jené's son was diagnosed with pdd nos - Aspergers, Jené was determined to help him communicate. She found she needed learning materials that were just not available, so she started making her own. The materials proved to be so effective that soon she was giving them away and making new ones at a fast pace. It didn't take long before parents and professionals were calling with product requests and thus, Natural Learning Concepts was born. As the company grew, so did their vision. NL Concept's commitment to people with autism transpired into an inspirational corner on the website. People come and give each other hope, encouragement and share a positive outlook on autism. With Natural Learning Concepts total dedication, it came as no surprise when the Autism job placement service was launched, a vital and exciting new resource to assist people on the autism spectrum in finding employment.

## What you can do

You're already doing it! That's why you're reading this. Thank you for taking a stand for those with autism. We encourage you to spread the word about how remarkable people with autism are. Let them read for themselves how extraordinary this population is. Post a **"remarkability"** or **memorable moment** on our website. Your experiences inspire others and help them on their journey. If you have a job to give someone with autism, please do. If you don't, think again. Need a babysitter, tutor or handyman? People with autism are diverse and have many skills. Refer the NLC Autism Job Service to everyone you know. By doing so, you make a difference and join us in improving the lives of many.

## How we can help you

We have developed and continue to expand a range of learning materials to help children engage in and enjoy social interactions with family, friends and others in their environment. We want everyone to succeed and we always welcome suggestions. Let us know what would make a difference for you. We take every request seriously. We are also here to uplift your day. Visit our website and read the section on the Greatness of Autism. If you need assistance on the autism job service, we urge you to contact us. If you need an ear, we can be that too. You are always welcome to call us at (800) 823-3430 or e-mail us at [info@nlconcepts.com](mailto:info@nlconcepts.com)

### Important links

Natural Learning Concepts <http://www.nlconcepts.com>

"Remarkabilities" – <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-remarkable.htm>

Memorable Moments – <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-moments.htm>

Autism Job Placement – <http://www.nconcepts.com/autism-jobs.htm>

Post a job - <http://autism.nlconcepts.com/tool/mb/nlconcepts>

## Introducing Natural Learning Concepts

For **Jene Aviram** and **Jocelyn Blum**, the founders of Natural Learning Concepts, autism is a personal issue. They understand what it takes to teach a child with autism and their materials have helped children around the globe thrive and blossom.

Parents can't afford to purchase materials that sit on a shelf. They need products that work and that last!

Natural Learning Concepts achieves this goal with a simple formula. Children with autism are an important part of product development. They test each and every product before it goes into production. Items are modified as many times as necessary until they are proven as a motivating and effective method of helping children with autism learn.

"The secret of our success is simple. We know that children with autism progress when they are motivated to learn. They are the "Directors" of product development. We take care of the quality and content and they make sure the materials are motivating and appealing. It's a winning formula"

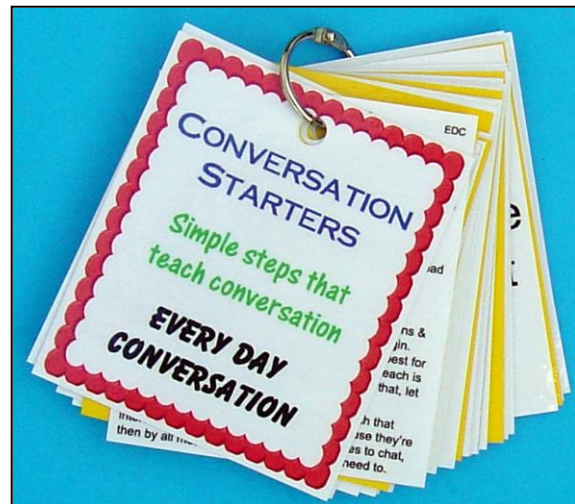
-- Jene Aviram, **Co-Founder**

"Our goal is to increase language and communication in children while showing them how much fun it is to do so.

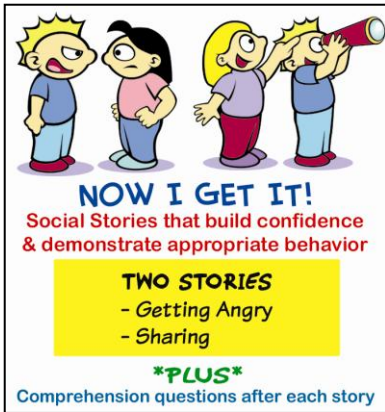
We will always aspire for greatness in those with autism.

We make sure that our materials are top quality and equally enjoyed by educators as well as those on the autism spectrum."

-- Jocelyn Blum, **Co-Founder**

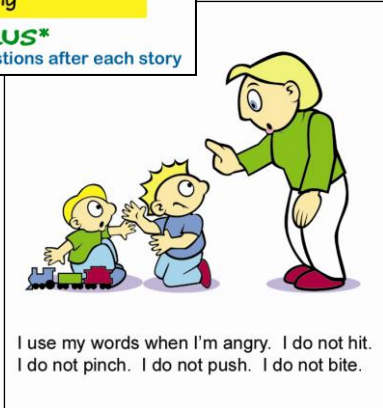


Teaching and learning should be a fun experience. Materials are created to achieve mastery in concepts, language and social skills. The company's acclaimed suite of products addresses the challenges of children with autism as well as those with speech and language delays. Books and materials cover basic concepts and fundamentals right through to conversation and social skills.



Realistic images are important to children with autism and they are magnetically drawn to the vivid, photo-quality products that NLConcepts is so well known for. With clear descriptions at the back of each card and excellent suggested teaching methods, it's no wonder these materials are so widely used in schools and home therapy programs.

The company understands the learning style of those with autism. Materials are designed for children to easily comprehend the concepts presented. With a solid foundation, they build upon each success and parents and educators delight as children progress in leaps and bounds.



The materials are filled with warmth, humor and simple language to address daily situations for children with autism. Through charming yet clearly presented social storybooks in the "Now I Get It!" series, for instance, they illustrate, address and explain everything from playtime activities to difficult concepts such as anger management, transitions, public behavior, and more.

Natural Learning Concepts has helped countless children at all levels of the autism spectrum, as well as those diagnosed with PDD-NOS, Asperger's, ADHD and speech and language delays. Their books and materials are the perfect teaching tools and are routinely used in schools and homes for all types of therapies including ABA therapy, social stories for autism, early intervention and verbal behavior analysis.

With an expansive and truly comprehensive website, a passionate online community, and a widely used series of learning products, Natural Learning Concepts is dedicated and passionate about its work. Everyday we strive to become your trusted resource by providing the best tools for teaching and working with the special child in your life that has autism.

Please visit our website to learn more about us, as well as about the amazing people who take part in our online community:

<http://www.NLconcepts.com>

To contact founders Jene Aviram or Jocelyn Blum directly, please call **1-800-823-3430** or e-mail [Info@NLconcepts.com](mailto:Info@NLconcepts.com)



**HAMBURGER**

**CLASS : FOOD**

- Has a bun
- Has a burger
- Cook it on a grill
- Can buy it at McDonalds

# Some of Natural Learning Concepts Products

**(These are some of the items. Please check the website <http://www.nlconcepts.com> for specials and new items)**

All of our materials were created to assist in the teaching of children at all levels of the autism spectrum as well as those diagnosed with PDD-NOS, Aspergers, ADHD and speech and language delays. Our materials are routinely used in schools and homes for all types of therapies including ABA therapy, social stories for autism, early intervention and verbal behavior analysis. Parents, teachers, and other loved ones enjoy using these tools to celebrate and work with that special child in their life who has autism.

1. The Complete Learn to Talk About Series (All 7 packs)
2. Learn to Talk About Animals
3. Learn to Talk about...Sport
4. Learn to Talk about...Household Items
5. Learn to Talk about...Nature & Outdoor play
6. Learn to Talk about...Vehicles & Occupations
7. Learn to Talk about...Food & Appliances
8. Learn to Talk about...Toys, Baby & Clothes
9. The Complete Question Series (All 3 packs)
10. Question Series – Community Outings
11. Question Series – In the Home
12. Question Series – Entertainment
13. Question Set – What & How
14. Abstract Categories
15. Fills-Ins and Reversals
16. Matching Identical & Non-Identical Items
17. Rooms of the House
18. Seasons
19. Social Stories
20. Conversation Starters
21. Patterns – No Problem
22. Mastering Mathematics
23. Things That Go Together AND the Reason Why
24. What Doesn't Belong
25. Motivating Math Facts



Bedroom (2 of 6)

Item: bed  
Function: sleep in it



BATH (2 OF 5)

**WHY** do you wash your hair?  
To make it clean

**FOR ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THESE TERRIFIC PRODUCTS, PLEASE CONTACT JENE AVIRAM AT 800-823-3430 OR [JEN@NLCONCEPTS.COM](mailto:JEN@NLCONCEPTS.COM)**

## **Complete Learn to Talk About Series (All 7 packs)**

*Start having simple conversations! It's a wonderful experience! Use structured methods to learn how! The complete series has 280 different topics! High-quality laminated photo cards with clear and simple descriptions on the back. You'll be delighted when children talk about animals, comment on their toys, describe community helpers and remark about the outdoors. Whether your student has no language or lots of language; these cards are designed for you. Also perfect for ABA therapy and Verbal Behavior programs. This great series is nicknamed "THE BIG VOCAB BUILDER"*

### **There are seven packs in this series:**

**Learn to Talk About...Animals** – What they look like, the sounds they make and what they like to eat  
**Learn to Talk About... Sport** – All children talk about Sport, now your child can join in! Popular sports & how we play them.

**Learn to Talk About... Household Items** – Talk about the things we use every day

**Learn to Talk About... Nature & Outdoor Play** – Fun outdoor activities and the wonders of the world

**Learn to Talk About... Vehicles & Occupations** - Community helpers and all the vehicles we use

**Learn to Talk About... Food & Appliances** – Delicious foods, home and entertainment appliances like the computer and TV

**Learn to Talk About... Toys, Baby & Clothes** - The clothes we wear and toys that kids love to play with

### **Learn to Talk About... Animals**

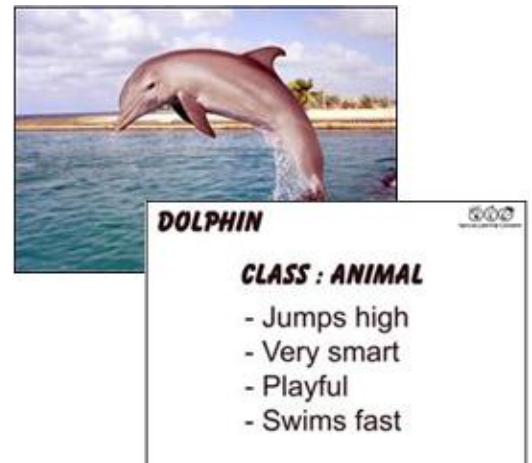
*Start having simple conversations* with these high-quality laminated photo cards of animals that children love, in 40 great topics. Talk about what they look like, the sounds they make and what they like to eat. The back of each card describes the animal clearly and simply. Whether your student has no language or lots of language; these cards are designed for you. This pack is also perfect for ABA therapy and Verbal Behavior programs.

**Price: \$19.95 Size: 5x3.5" Qty: 40 topics**

### **Learn to Talk About... Sport**

*Start having simple conversations* as all children talk about Sport. Now your student can join in! Use the structured methods enclosed and soon your child can be an avid participant. Learn to talk about all the fun sports and how we play them. High-quality laminated photo cards with clear and simple descriptions on the back. Whether your student has no language or lots of language; these cards are designed for you. This pack is also perfect for ABA therapy and Verbal Behavior programs.

**Price: \$19.95 Size: 5x3.5" Qty: 40 topics**



### **Learn to Talk About... Household Items**

What's more important than the things we use every day?

Identify and know the functions of 40 common household

objects. *Learn to talk about them all!* Use the structured methods enclosed and watch in awe as your student gains an understanding of the environment and talks about the things we use every day. High-quality, laminated photo cards with clear and simple descriptions on the back. Whether your student has no language or lots of language; these cards are for you. This pack is also perfect for ABA therapy and Verbal Behavior programs.

**Price: \$19.95 Size: 5x3.5" Qty: 40 topics**

### **Learn to Talk About... Nature and Outdoor Play**

*Start having simple conversations!* Children love to play outside, and what can be more fun to talk about? 40 great topics on outdoor activities and all the wonders of the world! Learning comes easily with this pack as children are naturally drawn to the outdoors. High-quality, laminated photo cards with clear and simple descriptions on the back. Whether your student has no language or lots of language; these cards are for you. This pack is also perfect for ABA therapy and Verbal Behavior programs.

**Price: \$19.95 Size: 5x3.5" Qty: 40 topics**



### **Learn to Talk About... Vehicles & Occupations**

Start having simple conversations! This pack is filled with community helpers and how they get around. This pack includes 40 great topics. Community helpers and vehicles are all around us. You will be amazed as your child begins to discuss them all. Children are fascinated with the firemen and the fire truck, intrigued by the hot air balloon and delight in the ice cream truck. High-quality laminated photo cards with clear, simple descriptions on the back. Whether your student has no language or lots of language, you will love these cards. This pack is also perfect for ABA therapy and Verbal Behavior programs.

**Price: \$19.95 Size: 5x3.5" Qty: 40 topics**



### **Learn to Talk About... Toys, Baby & Clothes**

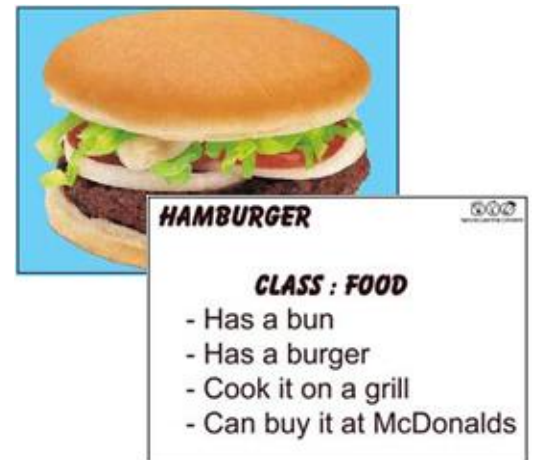
It's easy to have simple conversations with your student. Use structured methods to learn how. If your child wears clothes and likes to play with toys, then this set is for you. If your child sits in a car seat or has a younger sibling, then it's a must! Children delight in this pack as it's filled with all the toys they love to play with. Blocks, puzzles, playdoh, trains, scooters, and xylophones - your child can learn to discuss each one. Going out? Learn why we wear shoes or a coat. High-quality, laminated photo cards with clear and simple descriptions on the back. This pack is also perfect for ABA therapy and Verbal Behavior programs.

**Price: \$19.95 Size: 5x3.5" Qty: 40 topics**

### **Learn to Talk About... Food & Appliances**

Start having simple conversations with 40 different topics to converse about. What can be more appealing than learning about all the delicious foods we eat and the appliances we use to prepare them? Not to mention all those other interesting appliances such as the TV and VCR. Yes, this pack is full of all the things that kids like eating and doing. Learning comes easily as so much can be generalized into the natural environment. Talk about how you make toast at breakfast and how we can eat delicious cold ice cream in a cone. High-quality laminated photo cards with clear, simple descriptions on the back. Also perfect for ABA therapy and Verbal Behavior programs.

**Price: \$19.95 Size: 5x3.5" Qty: 40 topics**



### Complete 'Question' Series

**An All-Time Bestseller!** *Your student will understand and answer all the "WH" questions.*

*"WHAT", "WHEN", "WHERE", "WHY", "WHICH" AND "WHO". This unique system gives excellent results! Children are finally able to make sense of "WH" questions using these expertly designed question sequences. Stand back in amazement as your child answers questions at home, then responds to your questions at the supermarket and eagerly answers you on the playground.*

**There are 3 excellent packs in this series:**

**Question Series – Community Outings** – Examples of Question Sequences include the doctor, the shoe store and the supermarket

**Question Series – In the Home** – Examples of Question Sequences include taking a bath, eating breakfast and baking cookies

**Question Series – Entertainment** – Examples of Question Sequences include the movie theater, playground, beach and zoo

### Question Series – Community Outings

**Always a bestseller!** Your student will understand and answer all the "WH" questions. **"WHAT", "WHEN", "WHERE", "WHY" AND "WHO".** This unique system gives excellent results! Children are finally able to make sense of "WH" questions using these expertly designed question sequences. You will be thrilled as your student begins to answer questions about the environment. Places that children visit in the community are included in this pack. Examples are the doctor, the library, school, the supermarket, the shoe store and the hairdresser.

**Price: \$24.95 Size: 5x3.5" Qty: 40**

### Question Series – In the Home

**Long-standing bestseller!** Your student will understand and answer all the "WH" questions. **"WHAT", "WHEN", "WHERE", "WHY" AND "WHICH".** This unique system gives excellent results! Children are finally able to make sense of "WH" questions using these expertly designed question sequences. Stand back in amazement as your child begins to answer questions about all the things we do at home. Examples in this pack are taking a bath, eating breakfast, brushing teeth, playing hide and go seek and baking cookies.

**Price: \$24.95 Size: 5x3.5" Qty: 40**

### Question Series – Entertainment

**All time bestseller!** Your student will understand and answer all the "WH" questions. **"WHAT", "WHEN", "WHERE", "WHY" AND "WHICH".** This unique system gives excellent results! Children are finally able to make sense of "WH" questions using these expertly designed question sequences. You will be delighted as your child starts answering questions about all the entertainment spots. This pack is a fun filled experience of all the places children love to visit. Examples include the petting zoo, movie theater, beach, playground and amusement park.

**Price: \$19.95 Size: 5x3.5" Qty: 40 topics**



PLAYGROUND (2 OF 5)

**WHERE** can you spin?  
On the tire swing

### Question Set – What & How

**A Bestseller!** This winning formula teaches children to answer "HOW" and "WHAT" questions with ease. "HOW" questions are broken down into 3 simple steps for understanding. "WHAT" questions also designed to teach actions. Prepare to be astonished as children begin to effortlessly respond to "WHAT" and "HOW" questions. **This versatile pack is expertly designed to teach at 3 different levels: Beginner level** (identify and label actions), **Intermediate level** (teach children to understand and answer "WHAT" question), **Advanced level** (teach the student to answer a "HOW" question in a 3-step answer). The pack includes all things kids love, such as reading, blowing bubbles, playing T-ball and feeding the ducks.

**Price: \$24.95 Qty: 40 Size: 5x3.5"**

### **Fill-Ins and Reversals**

Does your child have trouble with early conversation? *Then don't leave out this essential step!* This skill is a **definite prerequisite to having a conversation**. When learning to converse, step one is the ability to finish a sentence. Step two is reversing it which teaches comprehension. When these are in place, you have your foundation! **It's that simple!** 84 high-quality laminated photo cards with writing on the back make this concept easy to learn.

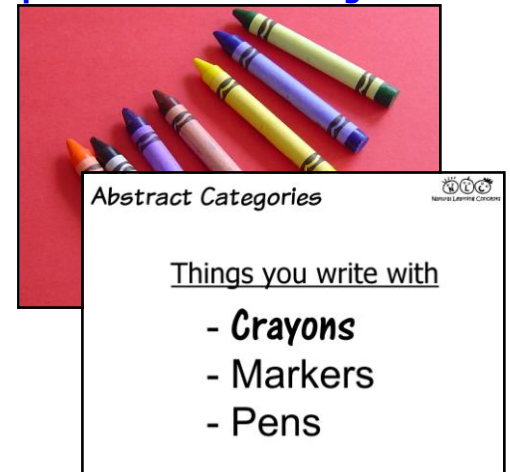
**Price: \$19.95 Qty: 84 Size: 3.5x2.5"**

### **Abstract Categories**

**You will be delighted with how easily children grasp abstract concepts and abstract thought**

with these visuals. These 84 high-quality laminated photo cards will teach children to easily master abstract information, such as *things that are noisy, things that fly, things that are tall and things you find at birthday parties*. All cards have clear and simple explanations on the back. Each abstract category has 3 cards in a set (for example: gloves, a coat and a hat are all *things that keep us warm*).

**Price: \$19.95 Qty: 84 Size: 3.5x2.5"**



### **Matching Identical & Non-Identical Items**

**A perfect set to teach matching skills.** These 84 high-quality laminated photo cards teach children multiple skills. Teach children to match identical items. Then go on to teach matching non-identical items. Does your student understand same and different? Teach that too! These cards help children easily master the concept. Learning to categorize? Use these too. There are 4 photo cards in a set. Each set contains 2 identical items and 2 non-identical items. Very popular set that kids love.

**Price: \$19.95 Qty: 84 Size: 3.5x2.5"**

### **Rooms of the House**

**Essential starter pack!** Packed with all the things we find in our homes. Children master concepts they use many times each day. Which rooms do we have in our house and what do we use them for? What do we find in the rooms and why do we need them? **Children flourish when they begin to understand their world. An absolute must for ABA therapy programs.**

**Price: \$14.95 Qty: 40 Size: 5x3.5"**

### **Seasons**

Children love it when the seasons change. *Don't let your child miss out on the fun!* **When children understand what to expect, they too will eagerly anticipate** stomping through rain puddles in Spring, splashing in the pool in Summer, snuggling under the covers in Winter and crunching through leaves in the Fall. These high-quality laminated photo cards teach children how we change the way we dress and the activities we do according to the seasons. Jam-packed with things children love, such as running through the sprinklers and riding bicycles.

**Price: \$14.95 Qty: 40 Size: 5x3.5"**



## **Social Stories ("Now I Get It!" Series)**

*Social stories teach children to effectively deal with social situations. Children learn appropriate behavior and good communication skills. Every page has a color illustration. The comprehension questions at the end of each story are a huge bonus. These ensure that children understand the expectations and reinforce the concepts. Perfect for children who are learning to navigate the social rules.*

**Price \$9.95 Pages: 20**

Content: Color illustration on every page. Comprehension questions.

### **Social Story Titles Include:**

#### **[NOW I GET IT! Saying "Excuse me" and Please & Thank you](#)**

**This book is perfect for children who:**

- Are learning to interrupt politely when they want something
- Are learning to wait their turn before speaking
- Are learning good manners.
- Are learning when to say Please and Thank you

#### **[NOW I GET IT! Getting Angry and Sharing](#)**

**This book is perfect for children who:**

- Have difficulty expressing their anger appropriately
- Are learning to deal with their feelings
- Are learning how to share

#### **[NOW I GET IT! The Playground and The Beach](#)**

**This book is perfect for children who:**

- Need guidance with appropriate behavior on the playground
- Are learning joint attention
- Are learning safety rules and behavior at the beach

#### **[NOW I GET IT! Answering Questions and Saying Hi & Bye](#)**

**This book is perfect for children who:**

- Are learning to respond appropriately
- Are learning to answer when asked a question
- Are learning when and how to greet people

#### **[NOW I GET IT! The Restaurant and The Movies](#)**

**This book is perfect for children who:**

- Are learning appropriate behavior in a restaurant
- Are learning manners when eating out
- Are learning appropriate tone of voice
- Are learning to stay seated in the Movies

#### **[NOW I GET IT! Fire Drills and Assembly](#)**

**This book is perfect for children who:**

- Have difficulty with fire drills at school
- Have trouble dealing with transitions during fire drills
- Learning to follow along with their peers during assembly
- Learning appropriate behavior in assembly

#### **[NOW I GET IT! Talking About My Day and When Things Change](#)**

**This book is perfect for children who:**

- Have difficulty with transitions
- Find it difficult to talk about the day
- Need help in dealing with situations that weren't anticipated or expected
- Need help learning to share social information



## Conversation Starters

*Simply brilliant techniques to teach conversation skills! Children practice conversation in simple steps. Students fill in the blank and learn to respond in conversational format. There are two stages of teaching. The first stage teaches children to spontaneously answer questions while stage two teaches children to inquire about other people and initiate conversation. These sets use the flip method, are the perfect size to carry around and very simple to use. Card size is 3"x3.5" and each set has six different topics.*

### Conversation Starters – School

Six different topics are included which are recess, classroom, gym, music class, about school and lunch. Each topic begins with a yellow card so they can be found quickly. Each card has a question on the front. Flip it over and the beginning of the answer is on the back. Different conversations to teach a child how to engage in an appropriate conversation. **This set is \$9.95**

### Conversation Starters – Things I like to do

Six different topics are included: music, play, sport, computer games, books and TV. Each topic begins with a yellow card so they can be found quickly. Each card has a question on the front. Flip it over and the beginning of the answer is on the back. Different conversations to teach a child how to engage in a appropriate conversation. **This set is \$9.95**

### Conversation Starters – Every day conversation

Six different topics are included which are the car, getting dressed, getting ready to go, today, music and dinner. Each topic begins with a yellow card so they can be found quickly. Each card has a question on the front. Flip it over and the beginning of the answer is on the back. Different conversations to teach a child how to engage in a appropriate conversation. **This set is \$9.95**

### Conversation Starters – Home and Family

Six different topics are included which are vacation, breakfast, the weekend, grandma and grandpa, birthday and about you. Each topic begins with a yellow card so they can be found quickly. Each card has a question on the front. Flip it over and the beginning of the answer is on the back. Different conversations to teach a child how to engage in a appropriate conversation. This set is **\$9.95**



## Patterns – No Problem

Patterns and sequences are the very basis of math. Here is a fun, easy way to learn **without needing to write**. Flip over to any pattern sheet and place the cards on the table. The child picks the cards and completes the pattern. All cards attach with Velcro. Lots of different pattern types included in the pattern sheets. This pattern set is reinforcing to children and gives them a positive outlook to beginning math. Lots of different pattern cards and 36 laminated cards that easily attach with Velcro. The patterns in this book range from simple to complex. Pattern type examples are AABB, ABAB, ABAC, ABBA etc. **Price \$15.50**

### **Mastering Mathematics**

Learn math **without having to write!** That's right. Stop focusing on penmanship and start focusing on math. Simply place the card in the correct block. [Essential prerequisites and basic math skills](#). So easy to use that all teachers love it! This great workbook comes with laminated cards. Math skills that children learn in Kindergarten and Pre-K. Some of the skills included are match picture to number, addition, fill in the blanks, least to most, match the word to a number, identify shapes and learn to count backwards. Children love this reinforcing workbook and card set. **No Writing Required. Simply place the card in the correct square. Price \$16.95**

### **Motivating Math Facts**

Math facts don't have to be challenging. They can be fun. Children love these catchy number rhymes. Designed to be entertaining and funny, children have so much fun with these they don't even realize the purpose is to learn math facts! 10 cards with catchy number rhymes. Each card has 10 math facts, example 8+1 is 9 Leave that, it is mine, 8+2 is 10 Stop grabbing it again.... all the way to 8+10 is 18 If you touch it I will scream!

Each number card is illustrated with a picture that depicts the number

**Download Price: \$4.95**

### **Things that go together AND the reason why**

[Children learn to make connections and associations](#). The first "Things that go together" set that includes a "Why" card. When a child can visually see why things go together, it all makes sense. A very popular item that kids love! The Flip and Velcro system makes learning easy and fun. Attach and detach the laminated cards as needed. You pick the first card and the child picks the association and reason why card. Alternatively, you can pick the "Why" card and the child finds the associations and attaches them using Velcro. Lots of different options to learn this skill easily.

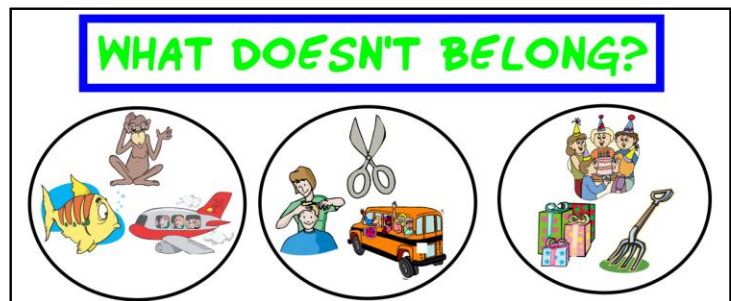
**Price \$17.95**

### **What doesn't belong?**

Teach problem solving, discrimination and reasoning skills. There are tons of combinations and children will easily learn how to group similar items and identify which items don't belong. This item has 48 unique cards, a cover, an instruction sheet and 2 sheets with possible combinations of cards that go together. Simply cut out the cards, keep your combination sheet handy and begin teaching. The sheet will tell you at a glance which cards can be grouped together. Since the cards are numbered, it's easy and quick to use. Cards can be used in multiple categories allowing for lots of different combinations. Examples of combinations include community workers, school, noisy, birthday party, art supplies, circus animals and many others.

Simply cut out the cards, keep your combination sheet handy and begin teaching. The sheet will tell you at a glance which cards can be grouped together. Since the cards are numbered, it's easy and quick to use. Cards can be used in multiple categories allowing for lots of different combinations. Examples of combinations include community workers, school, noisy, birthday party, art supplies, circus animals and many others.

**Download Price: \$4.95**



## Autism Job Placement Service by Natural Learning Concepts

**Jene Aviram** and **Jocelyn Blum**, the founders of Natural Learning Concepts, launched a job service for people with Autism/Asperger's. This free service is very much needed and welcomed by the community.

It's an opportunity for autism friendly employers to provide jobs to people with Autism/Asperger's. There is no fee for this service and it is NOT limited to location. If you can get on-line, you can get a job! People around the globe visit the website and it's the perfect place to connect if you have autism and are seeking a job or if you're an employer with job openings.

### Autism job skills

People with autism are diverse and have varied skills. Just like anyone, their work preferences and skills are in-line with their

interests and motivation.

Some people with autism require routine work with low stress levels. Others would do well in a position where they can bring their unique talents and skills to the workforce. If you have a job to fill in your organization, please post it or let us know and we'll gladly add it to our job database for you.

### Tax credit

Many employers inquire about this benefit. Employers do receive a tax credit if the employee receives financial aid from the government. If the employee doesn't receive financial assistance, the company receives great benefits from a valuable employee with a unique perspective.

### Summer and part time jobs

This service is not limited to full time employment. There are a wealth of candidates on the autism spectrum who would like part time and summer jobs. We urge you to look in your organization and see if you can find a place to support one of these remarkable people. Please don't "pre-decide" jobs people are capable of doing. If you're hesitant or unsure, please call us and let's talk about it.

"We practice what we preach! When we needed staff we were determined to hire someone on the autism spectrum. People with autism often get overlooked because of poor social and interview skills. We believe quality of work is far more important than interpersonal skills. At times, we might be required to give some extra support but the rewards are GREAT. We have a wonderful employee and he loves his job! ***If everyone does this with even one employee in their company, this world will be a wonderful place to live for people who have autism.***"  
-- Jene Aviram, Co-Founder

"Some people on the autism spectrum have phenomenal skills. Their brains function differently to ours and they are capable of such a diverse range of exceptional abilities. It's incredible how many talents they have that we could never have the capacity to tap into. Some are able to calculate the square footage of a room instantly, just by looking at it, others are math wizards and others have incredible memories. Given a supportive environment, they can contribute to the work force in ways we never dreamed possible."

-- Jocelyn Blum, Co-Founder

### Good reasons to hire people with Autism and Asperger's

- Many have the ability to focus intently on projects.
- Others are very detailed and excel in any position requiring this skill.
- Some are excellent at finding imperfections and make top notch editors.
- With excellent research abilities, many make outstanding technical writers.
- Often they have a wealth of knowledge and have excellent computer skills.
- Some have excellent catalog and sorting skills.
- Others excel in routine work and never miss a beat.
- Typically people with autism are punctual, loyal and dedicated employees who prefer to remain in the same company for a long period of time.

-- Jocelyn Blum, **Co-Founder**

### You're not an employer and you don't have a job to give?

Think again. Do you need a babysitter, painter, handyman, accountant or tutor for your child? There's no job too big or too small. I know you're a supporter of people with autism. That's why you're reading this. Every time you need some work done, please think about this service first. There are a lot of wonderful applicants that would love an opportunity.

### I'm on the autism spectrum. Where do I start?

Welcome! We invite you to visit our website to read a little about this job service. <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-jobs.htm>.

Please post your skills and job preferences at <http://autism.nlconcepts.com/tool/mb/nlconcepts>. We want you to get your desired job with the supports you need, while being commended for who you are. Please remember that you're welcome to call or e-mail us with any questions. Our contact information is below.

### I'm an employer. How do I begin?

Thank you for taking a stand for people with autism. It takes people like you to help society view those with autism for who they are - different to us but absolutely remarkable. If you have work available - there's no job too big or too small. Read about the job service here

<http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-jobs.htm> and post job openings at

<http://autism.nlconcepts.com/tool/mb/nlconcepts>. There are lots of great applicants with a wealth of skills. You are more than welcome to call us with any questions.

### Contact Information

Please visit our website to learn more about us as well as the wonderful people that take part in our on-line community <http://www.nlconcepts.com>

To read about the job service please visit our website <http://www.nlconcepts.com/autism-jobs.htm>

Please post your desired job skills or job openings at <http://autism.nlconcepts.com/tool/mb/nlconcepts>

To contact founders Jene Aviram or Jocelyn Blum directly, please call Natural Learning Concepts at **1-800-823-3430, (631) 858-0188**, or e-mail [Info@NLconcepts.com](mailto:Info@NLconcepts.com)

"People with autism might have different perceptions, behavior and mannerisms. That doesn't make them wrong, it makes them unique. However, it's what we focus on that makes the difference. Why do so many programs insist on "prohibiting perseverations and obsessions"? Why not refer to this behavior as "special interests" and encourage people with autism to expand on their natural talents and interests? If we commend them for who they are and really believe in them, people with autism will excel in more ways than imaginable. The Government will need to spend far less funds supporting people with autism. Those on the spectrum will have self esteem, lead productive lives and contribute greatly to society."

-- Jene Aviram, **Co-Founder**



## **Resources**

**There are a myriad of resources for people with autism and their families. They exist in every country, state and town. If you're struggling because somebody close to you has received a diagnosis of autism, YOU'RE NOT ALONE! The autism society is a wonderful place to check for resources and support in your area. You can always contact us too. Our heart is with you.**

### **ALABAMA CHAPTER**

<http://www.autism-alabama.org>

(205) 951-1364

### **ARIZONA CHAPTER**

<http://www.phxautism.org/>

(480) 940-1093

### **LONG BEACH CALIFORNIA CHAPTER**

Visit the Long Beach California Chapter

<http://www.autismsocietyca.org>

(800) 700-0037

### **CENTRAL CALIFORNIA CHAPTER**

<http://www.asaccc.org/>

(559) 227-8991

### **LOS ANGELES CALIFORNIA CHAPTER**

<http://www.asalosangeles.org>

(562) 804-5556

### **SAN DIEGO CALIFORNIA CHAPTER**

<http://www.sd-autism.org>

(619) 298-1981

### **SANTA BARBARA CALIFORNIA CHAPTER**

<http://www.asasb.org>

(805) 560-3762

### **DENVER COLORADO CHAPTER**

<http://www.autismcolorado.org>

(720) 214-0794

### **CONNECTICUT CHAPTER**

<http://www.autismsocietyofct.org>

(888) 453-4975

### **DELAWARE CHAPTER**

<http://www.delautism.org>

(302) 472-2638

### **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

<http://www.autism-society.org/chapter130>

(202) 561-5300

### **FLORIDA MIAMI CHAPTER**

<http://www.autism-society.org/chapter726>

**Natural Learning Concepts** <http://www.nlconcepts.com> **(800) 823-3430** [info@nlconcepts.com](mailto:info@nlconcepts.com)

**FLORIDA ORLANDO CHAPTER**

<http://www.asgo.org>  
(407) 855-0235

**GEORGIA CHAPTER**

<http://www.asaga.com/>  
(770) 904-4474

**HAWAII CHAPTER**

<http://www.autismhawaii.org>

**IDAHO TREASURE VALLEY CHAPTER**

<http://www.asatvc.org>  
(208) 336-5676

**ILLINOIS CHAPTER**

<http://www.asacic.org>  
(217) 241-2023

**INDIANA- CENTRAL CHAPTER**

<http://www.autism-society.org/chapter150>  
(317) 291-6272

**IOWA CENTRAL CHAPTER**

<http://www.autism-society.org/chapter157>  
(319) 378-1241

**KANSAS CHAPTER**

<http://www.autismsocietyoftheheartland.org>  
(913) 706-0042

**KENTUCKY CHAPTER**

<http://www.asbg.org>  
(859) 299-9000

**LOUISIANA LAFAYETTE CHAPTER**

<http://www.autism-society.org/chapter285>  
(337) 236-6658

**MAINE CHAPTER**

<http://www.asmonline.org>  
(800) 273-5200

**MARYLAND BETHESDA CHAPTER**

<http://www.autism-society.org>  
(800) 328-8476

**MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER**

<http://www.geocities.com/asamasschapter/>  
(781) 237-0272

**MICHIGAN KALAMAZOO CHAPTER**

<http://www.asa-kal.org>  
(800) 628-6421

**MINNESOTA CHAPTER**

<http://www.ausm.org>  
(651) 647-1083

**MISSOURI CHAPTER**

(314) 863-0077

**NEBRASKA CHAPTER**

<http://www.autismnebraska.org>  
(402) 472-4346

**NEVADA CHAPTER**

<http://www.autism-society.org/chapter547>  
(775) 786-9315

**NEW HAMPSHIRE CHAPTER**

<http://www.nhautism.com>  
(603) 679-2424

**NEW JERSEY – MT. LAUREL CHAPTER**

<http://www.solvingthepuzzle.com>  
(856) 722-8518

**NEW MEXICO CHAPTER**

<http://www.nmautismsociety.org>  
(505) 332-0306

**NEW YORK – MELVILLE CHAPTER**

<http://www.nsasa.org/index.html>  
(631) 271-1481

**NORTH CAROLINA – RALLEIGH CHAPTER**

<http://www.autismsociety-nc.org>  
(800) 442-2762

**NORTH DAKOTA CHAPTER**

[nd-northdakota@autismsocietyofamerica.org](mailto:nd-northdakota@autismsocietyofamerica.org)  
(701) 281-8254

**OHIO - CINCINNATI CHAPTER**

<http://www.autismcincy.org/>  
(513) 561-2300

**OKLAHOMA CHAPTER**

<http://www.asofok.org>  
(405) 370-3220

**OREGON CHAPTER**

<http://www.oregonautism.com/>  
(888) 288-4761

**PENNSYLVANIA- READING CHAPTER**

<http://www.autismsocietyofberks.org/>  
(610) 736-3739

**PUERTO RICO CHAPTER**

(787) 723-0822

**RHODE ISLAND CHAPTER**

(401) 595-3241

**SOUTH CAROLINA CHAPTER**

<http://www.scautism.org/>

(800) 438-4790

**SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER**

<http://www.autismsd.com>

(605) 737-0377

**TENNESSEE CHAPTER**

<http://www.tnautism.org/>

(615) 385-2077

**TEXAS – AUSTIN CHAPTER**

<http://www.autism-society.org/chapter244>

(512) 479-4199

**VERMONT CHAPTER**

(800) 559-7398

**VIRGINIA-RICHMOND CHAPTER**

<http://www.asacv.org/>

(804) 257-0192

**WASHINGTON CHAPTER**

<http://www.autismsocietyofwa.org/>

(888) ASW 4 YOU

**WEST VIRGINIA- NITRO CHAPTER**

<http://www.wvautism.org>

(304) 546-0897

**WISCONSIN - MADISON CHAPTER**

<http://www.autismmadison.org/>

(608) 213-8519