ORGANIZATION FOR AUTISM RESEARCH

Kit for Kids
Activity Booklet

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Organization for Autism Research Kit for Kids Activity Workbook
This workbook belongs to:

_____

Being Different

Look at all your friends. What do you see? There are clear physical differences such as height, hair, and eye color. However, there are aspects of our personalities and interests that make us similar and different from each other. Some of your friends like the same music or the same sports team as you. You probably also have friends who like a different musician or the rival team. Despite having different or similar interests as your friends, you are still able to maintain your friendship.

What Does It Mean to Have Autism?

Kids with autism have brains that work differently than yours. Autism affects how people act and communicate in social situations, such as when you are in class, at the mall, or in the cafeteria. This causes them to have more difficulty talking or interacting with you than some of your other peers. Despite this challenge, they are still a lot like peers their age. They probably share the same interests as you and your friends, such as sports, computer games, reading, or watching movies. Kids with autism want to be treated like any other classmate.

Complete the next activity to learn more about what makes us the same and different.

Everyone shares interests in common and interests that are different from other people. Our shared and different interests are what make each of us unique. Circle sentences that are true for you and add some of your own. Then, share with your classmates what you circled. Notice that nobody's worksheet looks exactly the same.

I have a dog

I have a younger sibling

I like computer or video games

I like sports

I like the color red

I speak Spanish

I am a brunette

I like to watch TV

I have a fish

I like winter

I want to be a teacher

I like the beach

I have green eyes

I like to read

I have glasses

I have an older sibling
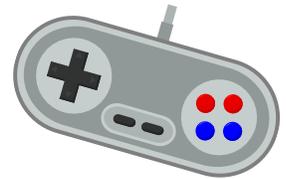
I like math

I am a blonde

I have a cat

I like to play outside

I speak French

I have gone to multiple schools

I have blue eyes

I like summer

I want to be a doctor

I am an only child

I have braces

I have brown eyes

I want to be President

I _____

I _____

I _____

Expressing Ourselves

We express our feelings through actions. These actions tell people around us whether we are happy, sad, or upset. Usually, we express our feelings in similar ways as our friends and families, but there are still slight differences. Sometimes we laugh more than our friends at something funny, or get angry about things that do not make our friends angry.

What Does It Mean to Have Autism?

Kids with autism have a hard time communicating what they are feeling to other people. How and when they express their feelings is sometimes different than how you express yours. For example, when they are upset or excited, they sometimes may make loud noises, spin, run, jump, or repeat the same phrase over and over.

Complete the next activity to learn more about how some of our actions make us the same and different.
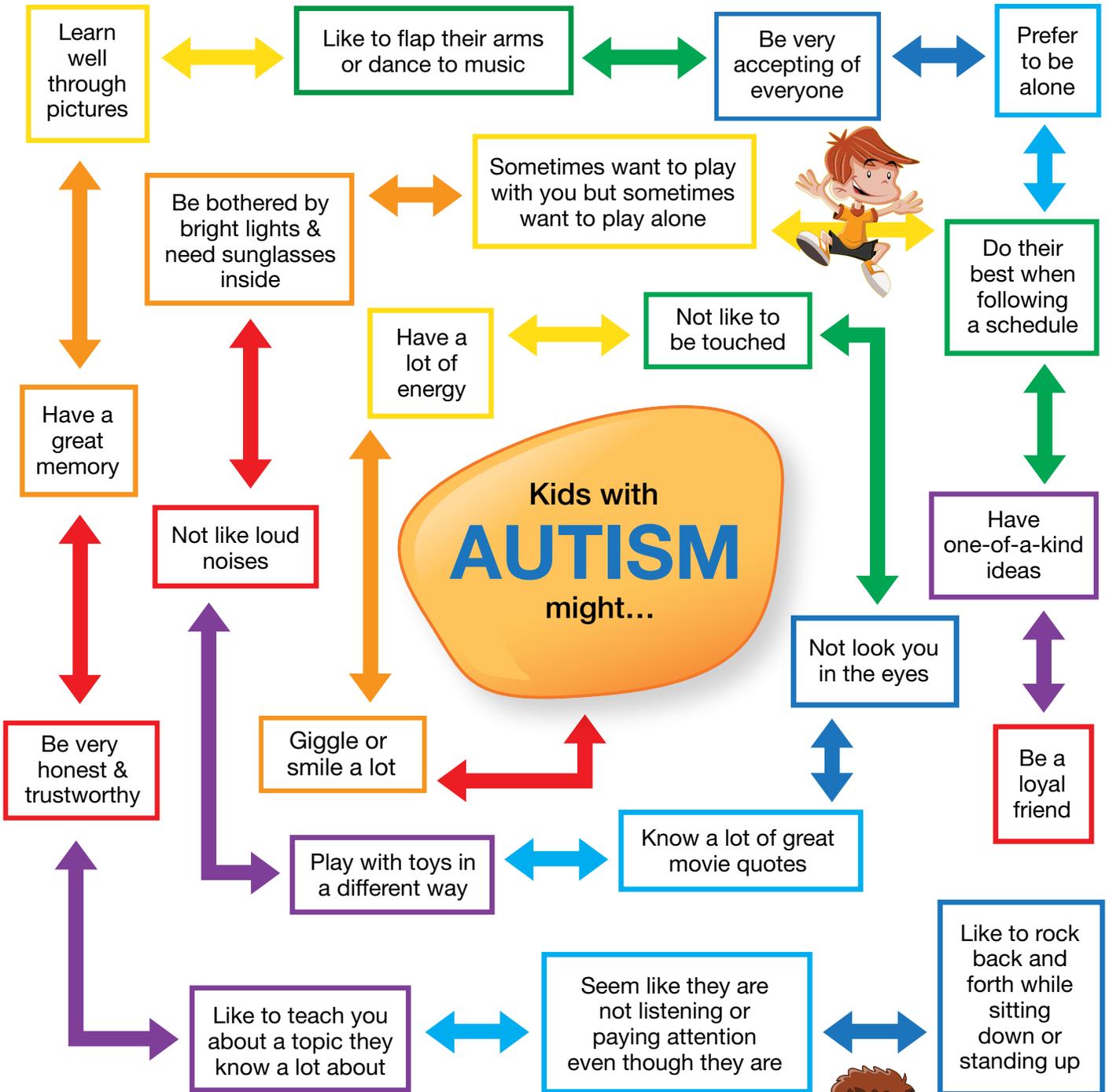
Look at the chart on the next page. Use the space below to write down ways you might express yourself in the same ways as Nick and other kids with autism.

Learn well through pictures

Like to flap their arms or dance to music

Be very accepting of everyone

Prefer to be alone

Be bothered by bright lights & need sunglasses inside

Sometimes want to play with you but sometimes want to play alone

Do their best when following a schedule

Have a lot of energy

Not like to be touched

Have a great memory

Kids with AUTISM might…

Not like loud noises

Have one-of-a-kind ideas

Not look you in the eyes

Be very honest & trustworthy

Giggle or smile a lot

Be a loyal friend

Play with toys in a different way

Know a lot of great movie quotes

Like to teach you about a topic they know a lot about

Seem like they are not listening or paying attention even though they are

Like to rock back and forth while sitting down or standing up

Using Our Senses

We all have five senses: sight, smell, touch, taste, and sound. We use our senses to learn about the world around us and to navigate daily life. They tell you if you like or dislike something you eat, if a noise is too loud or quiet, and if it's hot or cold outside.

What Does It Mean to Have Autism?

Kids with autism also use their senses to learn about the world around them. They sometimes react differently to the surrounding environment because their senses are extra sensitive. This can cause them to be upset or excited over situations you do not get upset or excited about. A light can sometimes be too bright and hurt their eyes, or a smell can make their head hurt. When something in their environment bothers or excites them, it can be difficult for them to express their feelings. This sometimes causes them to act in ways that might seem "weird" to you, but really that's just their unique way of trying to tell you what's going on.

Complete the next activity to learn more about how kids with autism have senses that work differently.

Brainstorm some ways you can make the classroom a more sensory-friendly place for your classmates with autism. List each of your ideas under the sense they affect.

Smell

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Sight

1. Turn off bright lights ____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Hearing

1. Close hallway door ____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Taste

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Touch

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

My brother Nick sees the world through a different lens because he has autism. I know Nick is different than my other friends because he has trouble expressing his words and actions. The other day my friends wanted to go on a walk to get ice cream, so I invited Nick to come along too.

We started our trip across town. Soon after leaving, a police car passed us. The sirens were wailing, and the lights were flashing as it sped by. All my friends and I covered our ears because the noise was so loud, but Nick wasn't fazed by it. Instead, he had his ear to the ground, almost as if he was listening to something else. We kept journeying towards our destination and soon ran into our neighbor and his puppy. We all took turns petting the puppy. When it was Nick's turn, he started flapping his arms and spinning in circles because he was really excited by how soft the puppy was.

We were getting closer to town, but couldn't remember what street to turn on. My friend Tommy argued that we should turn on Blue Avenue, while my friend Amy said we turn left on Trenton Lane. Soon, everyone started arguing and no one could agree. Nick tugged at my shirt. I brushed his hand away. He kept tugging, "What?" I yelled at him. He mumbled, "Cookie smell." That's when I remembered, the ice cream shop was on the corner of Baker Avenue. It always smells like cookies from the pastry shop next door. Nick was right! We started heading toward Baker Avenue, following the smell of cookies. As we got closer to the ice cream shop the scent of baked cookies became stronger and stronger. It smelled delicious, but only made us hungrier. Nick, on the other hand, kept pinching his nose and made an upset face as we passed it. The smell must have been even stronger for him.

Finally, we made it to the ice cream store. It was bustling inside. The waitresses were flying past us trying to deliver orders, there was a long line, and families were eating at tables. Nick seemed to notice none of this. Instead, he just stood in the doorway and stared at the fan on the ceiling go round and round. When it was our turn to order Nick didn't know what he wanted, so I asked for samples for him to try. One after the other he made an upset face. Finally, he had a bite of pistachio – a very strange flavor – he immediately sat down and started rocking back and forth with a big grin on his face. "We will have one small pistachio," I told the clerk.

Even though it sometimes slows us down on our adventures or makes people stare at us when Nick tags along, I always remind my friends Nick is just like us – a kid. He likes to do kid things too, and have friends to do them with.

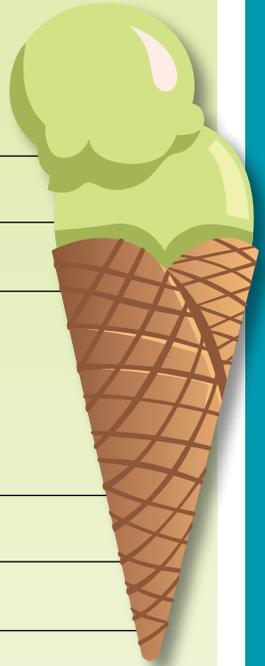**Think about the story you just read and answer the following questions.**

1 How would you describe autism to someone else?

_____

_____

_____

2 Describe some ways someone with autism might react to something in their environment that bothers them.

_____

_____

_____

3 Why is it important to include people different than us?

_____

_____

_____

Unscramble the following words in each of the sentences to learn more about autism. The word bank will give you hints.

Behaviors   Genetics   Senses   Differences
Learning   Express   Spectrum   Communicating
Similarities   Eighty eight

1. One in _____ children are diagnosed with autism.
   (hyigte htgie)

2. Kids with autism have difficulty _____ with others.
   (mumnicaitocng)

3. Some doctors think autism is linked to _____ .
   (cetisneg)

4. People with autism _____ their emotions in different ways.
   (pexssre)

5. Autism affects our five _____ .
   (nesses)

6. Our _____ make us unique and help define who we are.
   (fefirncsde)

7. A disorder that affects all who have it differently is called a _____ disorder.
   (crpemust)

8. _____ about autism helps make our classroom a respectful place.
   (negilnar)

9. Kids with autism probably have _____ interests as you.
   (ilsmira)

10. Autism affects how we respond in different social settings, or our _____ .
    (aibohsevr)

Find the following words hidden in this word find! Each of the words is related to autism. Can you find them all?

AUTISM   DIFFERENT   SIMILAR   BEHAVIORS
EXPRESS   SENSORY   SPECTRUM   COMMUNICATION
EIGHTY-EIGHT   CLASSROOM

N	S	E	N	S	O	R	Y	Z	E	X	P	R	E	S	S	O	A	R	V
W	P	A	L	S	K	D	J	Z	M	C	N	V	B	T	F	A	T	E	N
D	F	S	O	S	I	M	I	L	A	R	T	I	O	N	J	Q	U	S	M
W	R	P	H	U	I	R	F	X	L	Z	B	Z	S	D	Y	X	O	E	D
D	A	E	R	H	J	K	G	E	N	E	T	I	C	L	E	D	D	A	E
E	W	C	E	F	J	I	G	H	D	F	R	Y	B	N	W	K	C	R	R
V	A	T	K	I	P	O	O	F	L	C	K	A	R	D	R	J	Z	C	T
V	L	R	F	A	G	A	R	I	F	O	D	C	U	V	D	Y	N	H	U
L	I	U	M	C	U	H	G	F	H	M	C	L	O	T	C	J	B	O	C
O	Z	M	N	L	O	F	T	T	K	M	A	I	E	N	I	H	H	P	L
B	D	W	V	A	J	D	L	Y	N	U	N	Z	W	J	A	S	K	W	E
M	A	K	H	S	F	I	K	F	E	N	N	U	A	K	M	R	M	F	A
N	N	D	L	S	X	F	P	O	D	I	E	V	U	U	A	O	R	C	R
N	K	C	Y	R	V	F	A	U	S	C	G	A	T	T	N	I	W	N	N
T	A	V	R	O	A	E	E	R	C	A	R	H	I	Y	D	V	E	K	I
R	T	F	Y	O	D	R	N	M	P	T	K	E	T	R	A	A	E	L	N
U	Y	U	W	M	F	E	E	Z	O	I	P	B	R	D	K	H	P	G	G
V	Z	I	Q	L	H	N	B	M	F	O	F	L	M	S	E	E	A	F	C
C	G	A	C	Q	N	T	X	G	H	N	A	R	J	Q	L	B	D	D	A
X	A	S	P	E	R	E	E	R	S	G	N	I	C	K	S	F	G	R	L

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