



# ASES e - NEWS

DATE: OCTOBER 2011

*Available for Professional learning sessions at your school or organization.*

## **Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders:**

**Session 1: ASD and Positive and Practical strategies to support Behaviour.**

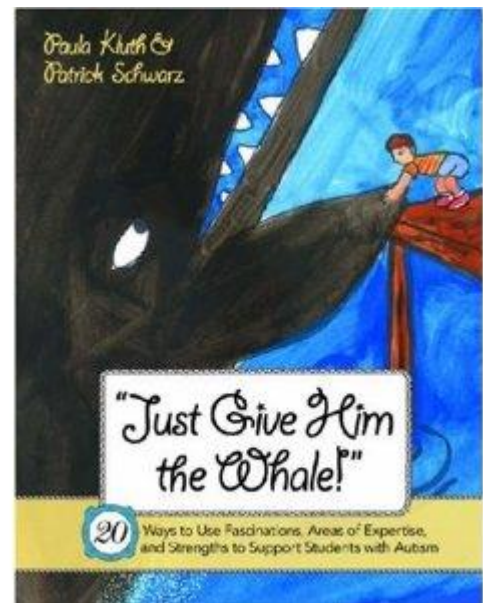
**Session 2: Learning and Social success with Visual supports**

***Ringwood Club October 18***

## **20 ways to use Fascinations, Areas of expertise and Strengths to support students with Autism**

**"Just Give Him The Whale" By Paula Kluth and Patrick Schwarz**

1. To develop a relationship with the student
2. To expand social opportunities
3. The expand communication skills and opportunities
4. To help minimize anxiety
5. To plan for exclusive schooling
6. To build classroom expertise
7. To boost literacy learning
8. To comfort
9. To inspire career ideas
10. To encourage risk taking
11. To connect students to standards-based content
12. To encourage in-depth study
13. To make sense of a confusing world
14. To let students shine and showcase talents
15. To give students "power"
16. To encourage chit-chat
17. To boost mathematics skills and competencies
18. To teach manners, cooperation, and the expression of empathy
19. To encourage greatness
20. To make life worth living





## Circles I<sup>®</sup>

# Intimacy and Relationships

<http://elearning.autism.net/tipsheet/en/TipsheetCircles1IntimRelation.pdf>

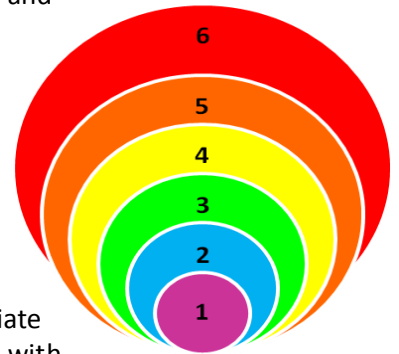
### What is Circles?

The CIRCLES program teaches social distance and levels of intimacy through the use of six colour coded concentric circles. Starting from the centre circle, which is self, each new coloured circle represents behaviours, feelings, and actions appropriate to the distance from the centre or self.

The CIRCLES program assists students to discriminate different degrees of intimacy and adapt their behaviours accordingly. Students are asked to think about/discuss the level of talk, trust and touch which is appropriate for each circle.

### Why would I use Circles teaching with my child?

The CIRCLES program provides a concrete reference to otherwise subjective and vague concepts which may be difficult for individuals with autism and other related disorders to fully understand. These concepts tend to be the "unwritten rules" of society which may need to be introduced and taught in a more structured format such as CIRCLES. The CIRCLES program can be adapted to fit the individual needs of the student and/or to address specific concerns (e.g. inappropriate touching, talking to strangers). CIRCLES teaching can also empower/equip students with knowledge of the various persons who may come into their lives and to then decide for themselves what level of intimacy is appropriate/not appropriate.



### The coloured CIRCLES and their meanings\*

#### 1. Private Purple CIRCLE

- You are the most important person in your world.
- No one touches you unless you want to be touched.
- You are only in your private circle if you are alone. As soon as you can see someone, you move to another circle.

#### 2. Blue Family CIRCLE

- There are very few people that hug you and who you hug- your mother or father, brother/sister girlfriend or boyfriend.
- Sometimes, other family members (grandparents, aunts and uncles) may hug you or get hugs from you depending on how close you are to them

#### 3. Green Friendship CIRCLE

- There are a few people who you are close friends with and give far away hugs to (i.e., a friendly but not intimate hug).
- Far away hugs can be a pat on the back.

#### 4. Yellow Acquaintances CIRCLE

- You see many people everyday who you might know but are not friends with. These are called acquaintances
- You can choose to shake hands with acquaintances and when you are introduced to someone.
- Sometimes acquaintances give high fives or just say, "hello"

#### 5. Orange Community Helpers CIRCLE

- You have adults in your life who are there to help you and may get to know you very well - your teacher, your CHAP worker, hockey coach, doctor etc.
- Nod or wave hello to people who help you
- Sometimes, these people may touch you as part of helping you. You decide how comfortable this makes you feel. You can ask them to "stop".

#### 6. Red Stranger Circle

- Strangers are the many people you see every day that you do not know at all.
- You do not talk to strangers (conversations). Sometimes you might say "hi" or "excuse me" as you walk by.
- You do not touch strangers.
- Strangers do not touch you.
- You decide who can touch you- you decide when to say "STOP", and when to walk away.

#### TALK, TRUST and TOUCH (the 3 T's)

You can decide what level of talking, touching and trust there is with the people in your various coloured circles. Each level is different depending on the degree of intimacy which is required or present.



## SENSORY

# Difficulties with Physical Contact

<http://autismhelp.info/childhood/sensory/categories,id,435,1-1.aspx>

*“Ben becomes hostile if someone accidentally brushes against him or touches him.”*

### **Why does this happen?**

- Children with autism can have an unusual response to being touched, especially if physical contact is unexpected. Adults with autism have described how a light touch or brush from another person can cause discomfort or pain.
- Most children with autism prefer physical contact and affection to be on their terms. They may find it difficult to cope if another person initiates the contact.
- Some children with autism don't understand the 'meaning' of physical contact. This is because children with autism have trouble interpreting the meaning of gesture, body language and emotions.
- If a child has a negative reaction to physical contact, remember that he may actually like the person who initiated the contact; it's just the contact that he dislikes.

### **What you can do**

- Allow the child to sit at the edge of the mat at group time, or to eat at the end of the lunch table where there is little through traffic. Some children need this personal space in order to reduce anxiety and cope with group situations.
- Some children with autism will tolerate (and even enjoy) firm, constant pressure, like being 'sandwiched' between two bean bags. The child may find it relaxing if he has a space to retreat to when he is feeling overloaded by the presence of others. See Behaviour Management >Creating a comfort zone for more information.
- If the child's parents agree, talk to the other children about the child's difficulties with physical contact and ask them to be tolerant of his difficulties.
- Role play situations will help the child develop more appropriate responses to physical contact.
- Games and songs that encourage physical contact with others can help to increase the child's tolerance to being touched.

Let the child go first or last when the group is moving into different activities. Try to avoid lengthy 'line up' times where other children are fidgety and in close proximity.

- An occupational therapist may be able to provide some strategies and a desensitisation program to support difficulties with physical contact.



## USING SENSORY TOYS TO IMPROVE LEARNING AND BEHAVIOUR *Sue Larkey*

Children with an autism spectrum disorder often seek out sensory activities, eg chewing, twirling, and fidgeting. They find specific sensory experiences calming, eg rocking, flicking, visual patterns, flapping. Holding an object in their hands can often enhance learning. For example, if given a sensory toy to hold at mat time a child can sit for longer, concentrate better, be less disruptive to peers, is calmer and has reduced anxiety levels. Sensory toys can also replace inappropriate behaviours.



Is there one MAGIC WAND to improve learning and behaviour?

So many teachers and parents of children with ASD ask me this question. The simple answer is no, because a combination of strategies is required, but if there was ONE idea that makes a big difference and is so easy to use it would be using what is called a fidget toy. The irony is that it is the strategy that is most resisted by educators.

A small 'fidget toy' in the hand of a majority of children with ASD will dramatically improve their learning and behaviour.

I acknowledge that the idea that playing with a 'toy' improving concentration is the opposite experience for teachers and parents with non-ASD children.

For children with ASD this strategy can be a MAGIC WAND. It calms them, reduces stress, and reduces distractions, therefore increasing learning readiness and promoting good behaviour. Many children with ASD seek movement to calm and process, by allowing the child to actually move their fingers using a "fidget toy" it actually increases learning.

A good indicator of whether a child needs fidget toys is "WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU REMOVE THEM?"

If you remove the toy and you see other behaviours emerge this indicates the child actually "seeks" this and "needs" it. For example the behaviors you will see could include:

- ☐ Will they pick their fingers?
- ☐ Will they chew their collar or hat string?
- ☐ Will they start moving their legs, body?
- ☐ Will they be easily distracted by other children?

Many students with ASD actually listen and concentrate BEST with a sensory toy!

**Reminder:** Have rules around sensory toys. Have set times they put in their pocket, on desk, in their hands etc.





## Rigid Routines

<http://autismhelp.info/primary/obsessions-and-inflexibility/categories,id,672,1-1.aspx>

*“Every morning when Dylan arrives, he goes straight to the blocks. He insists on making three trains before he’ll do any other activity. Nothing that we say or do changes this behaviour.”*

### **Points to note**

- Children with autism have a very strong need for routine. This may be caused by their difficulty in predicting future events and anxiety about ‘what happens next’. Some children may insist on things happening in a certain order.
- Order gives them a sense of comfort and makes the child feel secure. Any changes in routine threaten this sense of security and may cause anxiety. Attempts to stop or modify these routines are likely to be met with great resistance.
- Some children with autism have a very strong desire to complete a task that they have started. The behaviour may be compulsive. They may stubbornly insist on completing the task, refusing to do anything else.
- Requests for the child to move on to something else may make the child very upset and anxious, and even less likely to co-operate.
- Children with autism can become very anxious or upset when transitioning from one activity to the next if they are in the middle of a preferred activity, this can lead to behaviours of concern or tantrum like behaviour.
- Children with autism have difficulty with sequencing of events. They may be reluctant to try new activities, especially if they do not understand what is expected of them.
- Many children with autism are perfectionists. They may carefully repeat a task over and over until they are satisfied with the result.

### **What you can do**

- While these rituals may seem odd or bizarre, the behaviour does serve a purpose. Only try to change routines that interfere with the child’s learning or the learning of others, If the behaviour is offensive.
- Firstly, decide whether it is necessary to change the child’s routine behaviour. If the routine doesn’t interfere with your daily program or harm anybody else it may best to wait and see if it disappears over time.
- It will be necessary to conduct a review of the child’s stress level and look at ways of reducing stress before trying to change any behaviour.
- If it is necessary to change the behaviour, you will first need to change the environment. This may mean taking the blocks away temporarily or changing the sequence of events, i.e.



start the program with outdoor activities or a song.

- A gentler approach may be to gradually introduce small changes into the child’s routine. Use a kitchen timer to show the child how much time is remaining until new the task is completed.
- Give the child a transition cue to warn them a new task or activity is coming and some time to finish what they are doing and move to the next task, “finish blocks now, outside time next”. Some children with autism may need the sign for finish or a picture cue.
- The child may be more willing to leave the task if he is reassured that he can return to it later.  
It may help to show the child a visual timetable so that he knows when he is able to return to the activity.
- If the routine is comprised of a number of steps, encourage the child to skip some of these steps. It is a good idea to introduce slight variations to activities to help the child become more tolerant of change.
- Redirect the interest in trains (or whatever the obsession may be) into other activities. Encourage the child to draw or paint a train, or look at books about trains rather than build a train of blocks.
- One way to reduce stress is to use schedules. See Visual Schedules for more information. It is a good idea to allow for some spontaneity and flexibility within the structure and routine of classroom activities.
- Try using a visual timetable. The child may be overwhelmed by the number of activities available. It may help if the child is able to choose activities from picture cards, placing them on an activity strip. As each task is completed he can post the cards into a special post box. You can download picture cards by going to the Visual aids page.
- It is good for children to learn to cope with minor changes, however not all will be able to do so. If you want to try this, use a large exclamation mark on a visual schedule or on the blackboard. Tell the child that this means a surprise and emphasise that it will be lots of fun! Make sure it is an activity that you know the child will enjoy.





## Making the Transition from the World of School into the World of Work

**Temple Grandin, Ph.D.** Assistant Professor Colorado State University USA

During my travels to many autism conferences I have observed many sad cases of people with autism who have successfully completed high school or college but have been unable to make the transition into the world of work. Some have become perpetual students because they thrive on the intellectual stimulation of college. For many able people with autism college years were their happiest (Szatmari et al., 1989).

I would like to stress the importance of a gradual transition from an educational setting into a **career**. I made the transition gradually. My present career of designing livestock facilities is based on an old childhood fixation. I used that fixation to motivate me to become an expert on cattle handling. Equipment I have designed is in all the major meat plants. I have also stimulated the meat industry to recognize the importance of humane treatment of livestock. While I was in college I started visiting local feedlots and meat packing plants. This enabled me to learn about the industry.

Many successful people with autism have turned an old fixation into the basis of a career. I was lucky to find Tom Rohrer, the manager of the local Swift Meat Packing plant, and Ted Gilbert, the Manager of the Red River Feedlot (John Wayne's feedlot). They allowed me to visit their operations every week. They recognized my talents and tolerated my eccentricities. These people served as important mentors. Educators who work with autistic students need to find these people in the **business** community. I finished up at Arizona State University with a Master's Thesis on cattle handling and chute design. At the same time I did some freelance writing for the Arizona Farmer Ranchman Magazine. This enabled me to further learn about the livestock industry and develop expertise.

My next step was to get hired for my first job at a large feedlot construction company. Emil Winnisky, the construction manager, recognized my talents in design. He also served as a third important mentor to force me to conform to a few social rules. He had his secretaries take me out to **buy** better clothes. At the time I really resented this, but today I realize that he did me a great favor. He also told me bluntly that I had to do certain grooming niceties such as wearing deodorant. I had to change. I was most interested to read this passage in one of Kanner's papers about people with autism that make a successful adaptation: "Unlike most other autistic children they become uneasily aware of their peculiarities and they begin to make a conscious effort to do something about them." (Kanner et al. 1972).

Emil was an eccentric guy himself and that may explain why he hired me. About six months after I was hired, Emil was fired. I continued to work for about a year, and I quit because I was asked to participate in some highly questionable business practices. While I was at the construction company I learned drafting from Davy, their wonderful draftsman. Davy and I got along, he was a shy loner who drew the most beautiful drawings. From contacts I made at the construction company I started doing freelance design work. I started my independent consulting and design business one job at a time. People respect talent, and I soon developed a reputation for being an expert.



While I was slowly building up my business I had enough financial resources so I did not have to take a job at McDonald's to pay the bills.

The freelance route has enabled people with autism to be successful and exploit their talent area. Computer programming is often a good area. To get the business started people with autism need someone to help them get some of their initial jobs. A freelance business also helps avoid some of the social problems with a job in one place. I can go in, do the design job, and then get out before I get involved in a social situation where I could get into trouble. Other freelance businesses which can work well for people with autism are piano tuner, motor repair, and graphic arts. These jobs all make use of skills that many people with autism have, such as perfect pitch, mechanical ability and artistic talent.

### ***Lack of Social Understanding***

I soon developed a reputation in Arizona for being an expert in my field, but I got into trouble socially. I caused a big bunch of trouble for Tom Rohrer, Manager of the Swift plant. I did not understand that people have egos, and that protecting their egos was often more important than loyalty to the company. I naively believed that all Swift employees would always act in the best interests of their employer. I assumed that if I was loyal and always worked for the good of Swift's, I would be rewarded. The other engineers resented me. They sometimes installed equipment wrong, and they never consulted me. They did not like this "nerd" telling them how to do it. Technically, I was right but socially wrong.

I caused trouble for Tom Rohrer after I wrote a letter to the President of Swift about a bad equipment installation which caused cattle to suffer. The President was embarrassed that I had found a fault in his operation. I thought he would be pleased if I informed him of the mistake; instead he felt threatened and told Tom to get rid of me. Fortunately, Tom did not kick me out.

Over the years I have learned to be more tactful and diplomatic. I have learned to never go over the head of the person that hired me unless I have their permission. From past experiences, I have learned to avoid situations where I could be exploited or my employers might feel threatened. I learned diplomacy by reading about international negotiations and using them as models.

Getting in trouble over the social aspects of work is a problem area for many people with autism. Learning the work part of the job is easy. Many people with autism expect all people to be good. It is a rude awakening to learn that some people are bad, and they may try to exploit them. This is a lesson that an independent person with autism must learn. For people with autism who take lower level manufacturing jobs, the other employees should be involved and trained to help the person. The co-workers need to be trained to understand autism. A higher functioning person with autism can avoid trouble by keeping his mind on his work. One man worked for five years in a lab, and his employer was happy with his work. One day he got into trouble when he went drinking with the guys and got fired. He would have been better off if he had declined. To avoid problems, I keep my contacts with clients in the technical department. Attempting to date or flirt with people in my client's work places would cause many problems, so I just don't do it.



## TIPS for a person with autism to make a successful transition into a job or career.

1. **Gradual Transitions** - Work should be started for short periods while the person is still in school.
2. **Supportive Employers** - Parents and educators need to find employers who will be willing to work with people with autism.
3. **Mentors** - People with autism, especially the higher functioning, need mentors who can be both a special friend and help them learn social skills. The most successful mentors have common interests with the person with autism.
4. **Educate Employers and Employees** - Both employers and employees need to be educated about autism so they support the person with autism and help him. They also need to understand an autistic person's limitations with complex social interactions to help him avoid situations which could cause him to lose his job.
5. **Freelance Work** - Freelance work is often a good option for very high functioning people who have a special skill in computers, music, or art. The person with autism will need someone to help him get the business started and possibly educate clients about autism. Successful freelance businesses have been started in computer programming, piano tuning and graphic arts.
6. **Make a Portfolio** - People with autism have to sell their skills instead of their personality. They should make a portfolio of their work. Artists can make color photocopies of their work, and computer programmers can make a demonstration disc. The portfolio of the person's work should be shown to the people in the art or computing department. In all of my jobs, I had to get in the "back door." Since people with autism do not interview well, the personnel department should be avoided. Technical people respect talent, and a person with autism has to sell his talent to an employer.

### References

Kanner, L., Rodriguez, A., and Ashenden, B. (1972). How far can autistic children go in matters of social adaptation? *Journal of Autism and Childhood Schizophrenia* (Now titled: *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*), 2: 9-33.

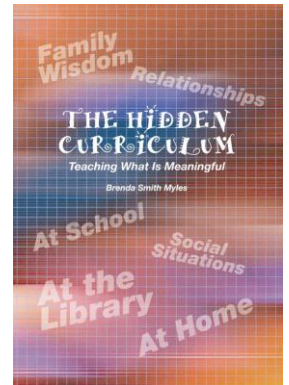
Szatmari, P., Bartolucci, G., Bond, S., and Rich, S. (1989). A follow-up study of high functioning autistic children. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 19: 213-225.



## The Hidden Curriculum

by Brenda Smith Myles

<http://www.aspennj.org/pdf/information/articles/the-hidden-curriculum.pdf>



Sometimes teachers think that all kids know the rules even when they have not been told them. Then when someone, like you or one of your friends, breaks one of those rules you get in trouble. That seems so unfair! The rules that teachers think you know without being taught are called the "hidden curriculum"

Here are some "hidden curriculum" rules that teachers might think YOU know. I hope these help you out in school!

- Do not talk to other kids in the classroom when the teacher is giving a lesson.
- When the teacher is scolding another student, it is not the right time to ask the teacher a question.
- If one small thing occurs and a teacher corrects you, it does not mean that your entire day is bad.
- During a fire drill go with your class to the nearest exit. This is not the time to go to the bathroom or to ask to go to the bathroom.
- You should talk to teachers in a nice tone of voice because they will talk to you in a more positive manner. Teachers also like it if you smile every once in a while.
- When your teacher gives you a warning about behavior and you continue the behavior, you are probably going to get in trouble. If you stop the behavior immediately after the first warning, you will probably not get in trouble.
- If one of your classmates tells you to do something you think might get you in trouble, you should always stop and think before acting.
- Friends do not ask other friends to do things that will get them in trouble. Doing it will not make them think you are cool. Instead, they may think you are gullible and laugh behind your back. Tell them to do it themselves and see what they do.
- Not all teachers have the same rules for their class. Some teachers do not allow any talking unless you raise your hand. Others may allow talking if you are not disruptive and annoying other students. It is important to know the rules different teachers have for their class. The rules will always change from teacher to teacher and it will not do any good to focus on the fact that it is not fair.
- When a teacher tells another student to stop talking, it is not a good idea to start talking to your neighbour since the teacher has already expressed disapproval of that action.
- When hearing someone speak using incorrect grammar, do not correct him every time, especially in a critical manner. The person you correct will think it is rude as if you are trying to point out his faults.
- When you see someone in the hall at school that you are attracted to, find a way to let them know without going directly up to them and saying loudly, "YOU'RE CUTE!!!" That will make the recipient of the comment uncomfortable.



# Boardmaker Share

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

BoardmakerShare is the perfect community for finding thousands of Boardmaker activities on hundreds of topics. Now, the redesigned BoardmakerShare makes it easier than ever to share Boardmaker activities, and find the groups who are using them along with you.



These resources have been developed using Boardmaker however you can click on the image to copy.

<http://www.boardmakershare.com/Activity/9657/Frustrated-Choice-Board>



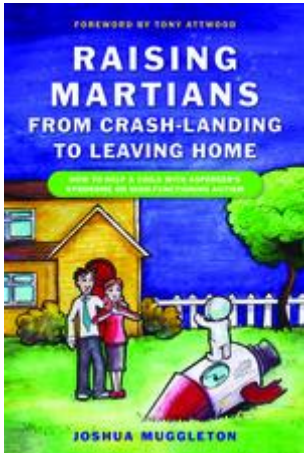
<http://www.boardmakershare.com/Activity/822576/im-ready-to-worki-need-a-minute-card>



Autism Spectrum  
Education Services



BOOKS

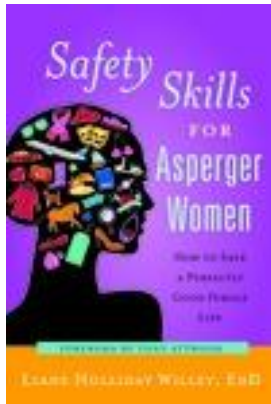


### Raising Martians - from Crash-landing to Leaving Home

*How to Help a Child with Asperger Syndrome or High-functioning Autism* [Joshua Muggleton](#)

Having a child with Asperger's Syndrome can feel a bit like raising a Martian. They look the same as all the other children, but somehow, they are just...different. You don't speak the same language, you don't see the world in the same way, and you have no idea what the future holds. How on Earth do you go about raising a Martian anyway?

Joshua Muggleton is 21 and has Asperger's Syndrome. Now studying psychology at the University of St Andrews, he has been through all the trials and tribulations of the school system. In Raising Martians, he combines his personal experience into what it means to have AS with his knowledge of autistic spectrum disorders to produce an invaluable guide for parents.



### Safety Skills for Asperger Women

*How to Save a Perfectly Good Female Life* [Liane Holliday Willey](#)  
Foreword by [Tony Attwood](#)

Life with Asperger Syndrome can be a challenge at the best of times, and trials and tribulations that neurotypicals take in their stride can leave Aspies perplexed and unsure of how to solve problems and keep themselves safe, both physically and emotionally.

Liane Holliday Willey explores the daily pitfalls that females with AS may face, and suggests practical and helpful ways of overcoming them. The focus throughout is on keeping safe, and this extends to travel, social awareness, and general life management. With deeply personal accounts from the author's own experiences, this book doesn't shy away from difficult issues such as coping with bullying, self-harm, depression, and eating disorders. The positive and encouraging advice gives those with AS the guidance to safeguard themselves from emotional and physical harm, and live happy and independent lives.



## Early Motor Experiences Give Infants a Social Jump Start

ScienceDaily (Sep. 9, 2011) — In a new study published September 9 in the journal *Developmental Science*, researchers from the Kennedy Krieger Institute and Vanderbilt University found that early motor experiences can shape infants' preferences for objects and faces. The study findings demonstrate that providing infants with "sticky mittens" to manipulate toys increases their subsequent interest in faces, suggesting advanced social development.

This study supports a growing body of evidence that early motor development and self-produced motor experiences contribute to infants' understanding of the social world around them. Conversely, this implies that when motor skills are delayed or impaired -- as in autism -- future social interactions and development could be negatively impacted.

"Our results provide us with a new way to think about typical, and also atypical, development," said Klaus Libertus, PhD, the study's lead author and a research scientist at Kennedy Krieger Institute's Center for Autism and Related Disorders. "The mind is not independent from the body, especially during development. As motor skills advance, other domains follow suit, indicating strong connections between seemingly unrelated domains. Such connections have exciting implications, suggesting that interventions could target the motor domain to foster social development."

Previous research has found that infants diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) show less interest in faces and social orienting. While the current study was conducted with typically developing infants, it indicates that infants who are at risk for ASD or show signs of abnormal social development may benefit from motor training as early as 3 months of age.

"For parents, this means that early motor development is very important and they should encourage motor experiences and active exploration by their child," said Dr. Libertus. "Fostering motor development doesn't have to be complex or require sticky mittens. Any interactions or games that encourage a child to develop independent motor skills are important."

In the study, the researchers divided 36, typically-developing, 3-month-old infants into two groups -- one receiving active motor experiences and the other receiving passive experiences. Infants in the active group were given mittens affixed with strips of Velcro, known as "sticky mittens." The researchers observed as infants in the active group played with the "sticky mittens" for 10 minutes each day for two weeks.



While wearing the mittens, a brief swipe of the infants' arm made toys, also covered in Velcro, "stick" as if the infant had successfully grasped the object. Parents first demonstrated this by attaching the toy to the mitten, but then the toy was removed and the infant was encouraged to independently reach for the toy again.

In the passive group, infants were fitted with aesthetically similar mittens and toys, but without Velcro. Passive infants also played with the mittens and toys for 10 minutes each day for two weeks, but were only passive observers as parents provided stimulation by moving the toy and touching it to the inside of the infants' palms.

After two weeks of daily training, the researchers tracked the infants' eye movements while they watched images of faces and toys flash on a computer screen. Infants in the passive and active groups were compared with each other, as well as to two control groups of untrained infants composed of non-reaching 3-month-olds and independently-reaching 5-month-olds. Researchers found the following:

- The active group showed more interest in faces rather than objects. In contrast, the passive group showed no preference.
- Infants in the active group focused on faces first, suggesting strengthening of a spontaneous preference for faces.
- When compared to the untrained control groups, the social preferences of the 3-month-old infants who experienced active training were similar to those of the untrained 5-month-olds, indicating advanced development following training.
- Finally, individual differences in motor activity observed between all 3-month-old infants in the study were predictive of their spontaneous orienting to faces. Regardless of training experiences, the more reaching attempts infants made, the stronger was their tendency to look at faces. Thus, motor experiences seem to drive social development.

"The most surprising result of our study is that we see a connection between early motor experiences and the emergence of orienting towards faces," said Dr. Libertus. "Logically, one would predict exactly the opposite. But in the light of seeing actions as serving a social purpose, it does make sense."

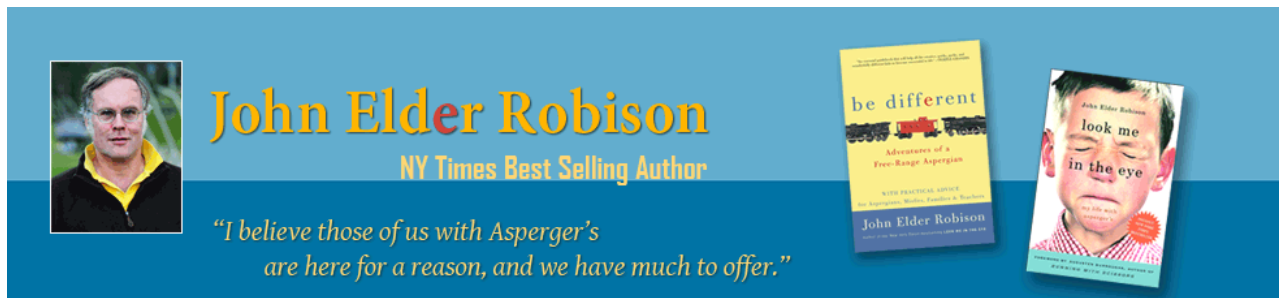
A key question researchers hope to answer next is whether these early changes will translate into future gains for these children. "Our results indicate a new direction for research on social development in infants," said Dr. Libertus. Dr. Libertus and his colleagues will continue to observe these children to see if the social development benefits achieved during the current study are sustained one year later.

The above story is reprinted (with editorial adaptations by *ScienceDaily* staff) from materials provided by [Kennedy Krieger Institute](#).



## Internet

- <http://johnrobison.com/> Best selling author of “ Look me in the Eyes” and “Be Different, Adventures of a Free range Aspergians”



**John Elder Robison**  
NY Times Best Selling Author

*“I believe those of us with Asperger’s  
are here for a reason, and we have much to offer.”*

- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/autism/default.htm>  
Department of Education Autism Friendly learning website

## APPS FOR Fun & LEARNING



**Strip Designer.** Turn your photos into entertaining comic strips. Add text balloons and boxes to your pictures. Give your photos a hand-drawn effect to make them look like a real comic book.



**Fraction Monkey is an educational Angry Birds for kids.** It teaches kids valuable math skills while they play in a safe world.

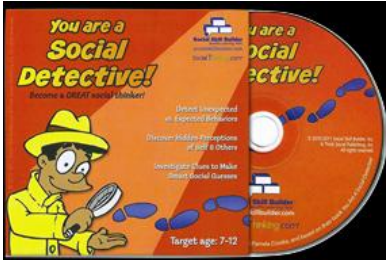
- Launch flying cupcakes at the right answer to score big

- Explore 40 levels including the jungle, ocean and outer space
- Practice adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing fractions
- Answer math problems created by teachers

Children have so much fun they don't even realize they're practicing fractions. This is the perfect game for kids, parents and teachers!



# Resources



## What is a Social Detective?

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

To become a Social Detective, students learn to use their social smarts to figure out that others are having thoughts about them and they should have thoughts about others. Using these social smarts will help students make smart guesses and understand someone else's social plan. They also learn that their own actions have consequences in how people think, feel and react to them.

Components of becoming a Social Detective include:

- ◆ Using **Social Detective Tools** (your eyes, ears and brain) to understand the feelings of others.
- ◆ Being a **Social Thinker** - aware of the people around us and understanding that they are having thoughts about each of our behaviors.
  
- ◆ People have different thoughts about us when we do **Expected or Unexpected Behaviors**. Expected Behaviors are things we do and say that give people good thoughts about us and make them feel good, too. Unexpected Behaviors can give people uncomfortable thoughts and make them feel icky, or mad or bad. This means that we didn't figure out how to act in that place with that person, and they don't feel good about us.
  
- ◆ **Thinking With Your Eyes** - look at a person to make them feel that you are thinking about what they are saying or doing.
  
- ◆ **Brain in the Group** - paying attention to what is happening in the group by thinking about others with your eyes and listening to what they are taking about.
  
- ◆ **Body in the Group** - make others feel that you are part of the group by keeping your body turned toward others in the group. Also make others feel comfortable by respecting their space and not crowding them.
  
- ◆ When you learn how your actions affect what others are thinking, saying or feeling, you are using **Social Smarts**, and you are learning to be a Social Detective!

## **Small Steps Big Skills™ Video Game!** <http://www.sandbox-learning.com/>

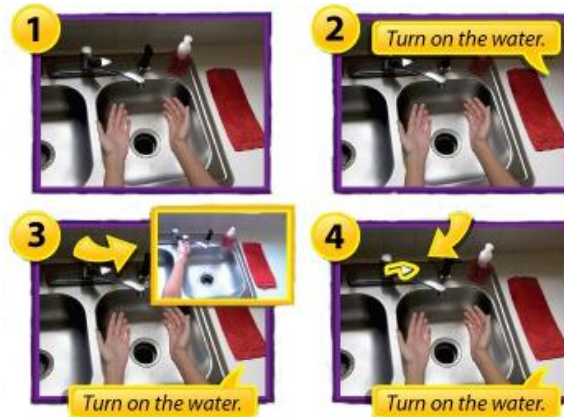
- Teaches 22 skills for independence
- Combines Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) methods of video modeling and least to most prompting by having players watch the skill being completed (video modeling) then they practice it in a game format (least to most prompting)
- Shows a variety of materials to promote generalization



- Is evidence-based. Results from a beta version of the game appeared in [Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities](#) (December, 2009) and [Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities](#) (June, 2010)
- Demonstrates skills from a first person perspective to realistically show how skills are completed and to remove showing age or gender
- Rewards kids with 8 fun game
- Customizable by adding your own videos
- Collects data at each step of the skill
- Compatible with PC or Mac

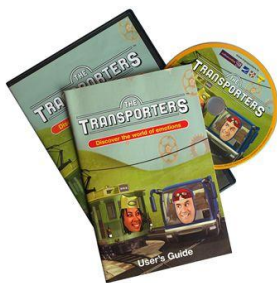
*Small Steps, Big Skills*<sup>TM</sup> video game teaches skills for independence by simulating actually doing the skills! Players watch a video of the skill being completed then practice with increasing prompt levels as necessary.

- Level 1 – Independent:** Players independently complete the step
- Level 2 – Verbal:** Players hear a voice over of the step
- Level 3 – Verbal + Video Model**  
Players watch a screen in screen video of the step
- Level 4 – Verbal + Simulated Physical**  
Players see the correct step highlighted



**Skills Taught in *Small Steps, Big Skills*<sup>TM</sup>** The game will cost \$89.95 US + shipping and handling.

## Teaching Facial expressions and Emotions

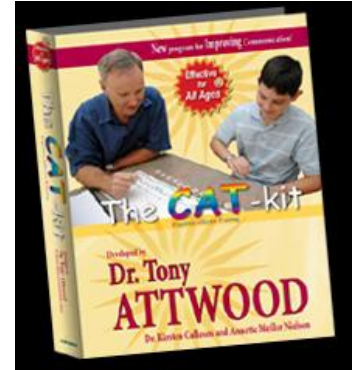


**The Transporters** was developed with the [Autism Research Centre](#) at Cambridge University. It uses animated vehicles with real human faces to help children transfer learning to real life. Episodes and quizzes are designed to be enjoyed repeatedly. Children love to watch them again and again - and this helps them learn.  
<http://www.thetransporters.com>



**The CAT-kit** <http://www.catkit-us.com/>

The Cognitive Affective Training (CAT) kit is a program that consists of visual, interactive, and customizable communication elements for children and young adults. It is designed to help students become aware of how their thoughts, feelings and actions all interact and, in the process of using the various visual components, they share their insights with others. It is an easy and effective way to work with neurotypical children and young adults as well as with people with developmental disabilities.

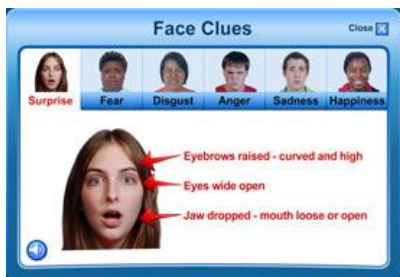


Most of us begin the complex process of learning to recognize facial expression of emotions in infancy. From the faces of parents, siblings, grandparents, or other caregivers, we develop a considerable amount of expertise in this aspect of socialization at an early age. For some children with Autism, Asperger's, or other

developmental deficiencies, this is often not the case. Since skill in recognizing facial expression of emotions is important to functioning in a social environment, there is value in helping children develop this skill. But, what if it doesn't develop normally? FACELAND uses an Amusement Park theme to engage and motivate. 6 "Schools" introduce concepts as "clues" and 11 game-like activities offer practice that is fun!

**FACELAND "Schools"** are based on the hypothesis that some children will build skill in facial recognition of emotion by:

- Breaking them down into smaller pieces (clues)
- Promoting clue acquisition via spaced repetition
- Checking for understanding of clues using new examples
- Combining clues for "part to whole" learning
- Utilizing instruction that incorporates photos, mirror mimic sessions, and varied interaction



**FACELAND "Games"** motivate practice and skill acquisition. The program uses a diverse range of subjects to aid generalization/transfer of recognition skills to real life situations

Surprise, Anger, Fear, Disgust, Sadness, and Happiness were the emotions selected because they are the most basic of human emotions. These emotions are expressed in cultures throughout the world. FACELAND is based on a portion of Paul Ekman's research, the leading psychologist in the study of facial expression of emotions.

<http://www.donjohnston.com/products/autism/faceland/>



# Helping Children with Autism

## Parents & Carers: General Enquiries

### 1. Raising Children Network Autism website:

Provides impartial and evidence based information, online resources and interactive functions to support parents, families, carers and professionals.

- [www.raisingchildren.net.au/autism](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au/autism)

### 2. FaHCSIA website:

Provides an overview of the Helping Children with Autism package and information about FaHCSIA Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) policy.

- [www.fahcsia.gov.au/autism](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/autism)

### 3. Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) – Medicare Enquiry:

The Department of Health and Ageing has made new Medicare items available for children aged under 13 years (for diagnosis and treatment planning) and under 15 years (for treatment).

- [www.health.gov.au/autism](http://www.health.gov.au/autism)
- [epc.items@health.gov.au](mailto:epc.items@health.gov.au)

DoHA helpline: (02) 6289 4297

Medicare Australia: 132 011

### 4. Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR):

DEEWR is delivering initiatives to help improve the educational outcomes for school aged children with ASDs.

- [www.deewr.gov.au](http://www.deewr.gov.au)

Australian Autism Education and Training Consortium (AAETC):

- [www.autismtraining.com.au](http://www.autismtraining.com.au)

### 5. Autism Associations

Following diagnosis, families are able to contact an **Autism Advisor** to access local information, advice and practical help. The Autism Advisors can be contacted through the lead agency associations. Contact your state Autism association.



## Helping Children with Autism

### Parents & Carers: General Enquiries

#### 6. Play Connect Playgroups, provided by Playgroup Australia:

The Autism Spectrum Disorder Playgroup Program targets children aged zero to six with ASDs or ASD like symptoms. Children will not require a formal diagnosis of an ASD to attend a playgroup.

- [www.playconnect.com.au](http://www.playconnect.com.au)
- [info@playgroupaustralia.com.au](mailto:info@playgroupaustralia.com.au)  
1800 790 335

#### 7. Helping Children with Autism Enquiry Line:

For more information about the Helping Children with Autism package please contact the enquiry line or the ASD Inbox.

1800 289 177 (TTY 1800 260 402)

- [asd@fahcsia.gov.au](mailto:asd@fahcsia.gov.au)
- 

#### 8. Early Days Workshops:

The Early Days Workshops are aimed at equipping parents and carers of children with ASDs or ASD like symptoms to more effectively manage the pressures they face in raising their children at home.

- [www.earlydays.net.au](http://www.earlydays.net.au) 1800 334 155

#### 9. Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centres

Six Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centres are being established. They will provide early learning programs and specific support for children with ASDs.

- [asdchildcare@fahcsia.gov.au](mailto:asdchildcare@fahcsia.gov.au)