What is Autism?

I Have Autism

When you play with children with autism spectrum disorder ...

- Be patient
- Teach a little bit at a time
- Make sure they are paying attention to you before you talk
- Show them how to play
- Give them choices
- Say nice things to them
- Give them time to relax and do what they want to do
- Find ways to use things or topics they like in your activities and games

We also have....

- What is Autism animation
- I Have Autism brochure also in Spanish
- Activity templates
- Strategies for Teenagers & Adults
- ... and other resources!

www.HANDSsinAutism.org

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The HANDS (Helping Answer Needs by Developing Specialists) in Autism® Interdisciplinary Training & Resource Center is located within the Department of Psychiatry at the Indiana University School of Medicine. Support for the foundational development of the HANDS in Autism® Center has been provided through a combination of federal and state funding as well as private philanthropies. To learn more, please contact Naomi Swiezy, Ph.D., HSPP, Director, at nswiezy@iupui.edu or find us at www.HANDSsinAutism.org.
People with autism spectrum disorder can have a hard time with things that are easier for other people:

1. Talking or making conversation
2. Playing together
3. Controlling their body movements
4. Understanding that people have different interests
5. Being comfortable with different sounds, textures, lights, and tastes

People with autism spectrum disorder aren't sick. You cannot catch this disorder.

People with autism spectrum disorder have brains that work a little differently than ours. They may learn differently. They may see, hear, feel, or smell things differently.

Children with autism spectrum disorder may have a hard time telling people what they are thinking or how they are feeling. Sometimes they may use pictures to help them talk and understand things. Here is an example:

Children with autism spectrum disorder may:

- Say things over and over.
- Not want to share or play with you.
- Act like they can't hear you.
- Move their bodies in ways that look different (rocking back and forth or flapping their arms or hands).
- Not understand how you feel.
- Become upset when even small things change.

Everyone is good at some things (STRENGTH) and not as good at other things (WEAKNESSES)

Can you...

- cook?
- sing?
- run fast?
- draw?

What are your strengths?

- ____________________
- ____________________
- ____________________

What are your weaknesses?

- ____________________
- ____________________
- ____________________

Children with autism spectrum disorder have strengths...

- Understanding pictures
- Paying attention to one thing
- Learning routines
- Learning small bits at a time
- Playing with people they know well

... and weaknesses too!

- Understanding words
- Moving to new activities
- Learning a new way to do things
- Making new friends
- Understanding that other people have different interests