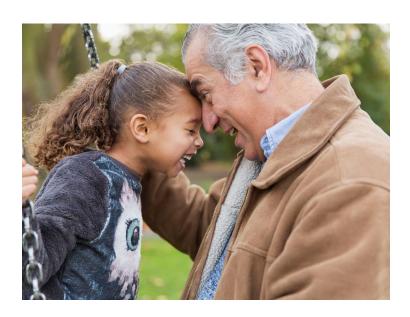
Understanding Autism
Grandma, Grandpa, and Others:
Educating and Including Your Extended
Family& Friends







Educating: What is Autism

- Developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges.
- Typically appears during early childhood.
- A "spectrum condition" that affects people differently and to varying degrees.
- No known single cause of autism, early diagnosis helps a person receive the support and services that they need, which can lead to a quality life filled with opportunity.

CDC & Autism Society





- Three Areas of Challenges:
 - Communication
 - Social Interactions
 - Behaviors

What does Autism look like?

Communication



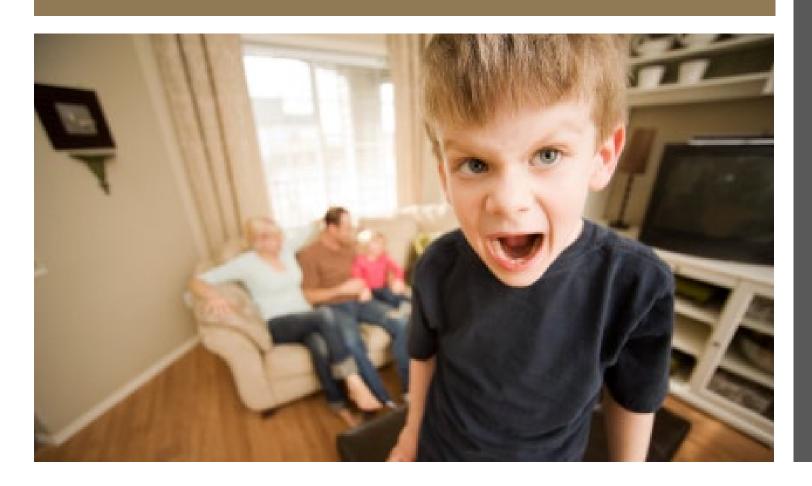
- Delay in language abilities
- Atypical speech patterns
- Repetition
- Difficulty with conversations
- Difficulty with play skills



Social Interaction

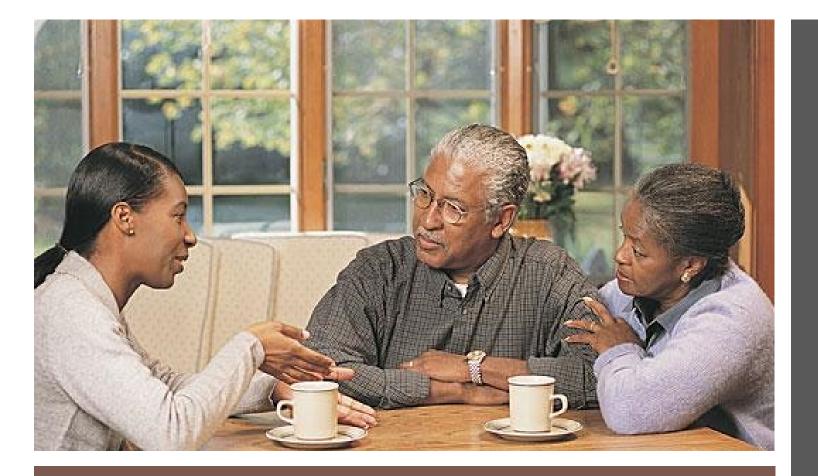
- Poor eye contact
- Impairments with facial expressions or forms of body language
- Difficulties with non-verbal or subtle communication, such as gestures
- Trouble identifying and communicating emotions
- Difficulty initiating and maintaining friendships
- Difficulty sharing and taking turns

Behavior



- Repetitive motor movements or repetitive play or actions
- May be fixated on a single item, idea, or person
- Often show a preference for predictability and "sameness." For example, you may see difficulties when the schedule changes or when going or leaving places
- Sensory challenges
- Leads to tantrums, meltdowns, and other behaviors





Tips for "the conversation"

- Anticipate difficult reactions
- Stay positive
 - Recognize that they may have fears and "grief"
- Be ready to answer questions.
- If you do not know the answer, be honest!
- Offer to explore it together!!!
- Anticipate "misundstandings"
- Share things specific to your child and how to best interact with and support them

Educating: Myths & Misunderstandings

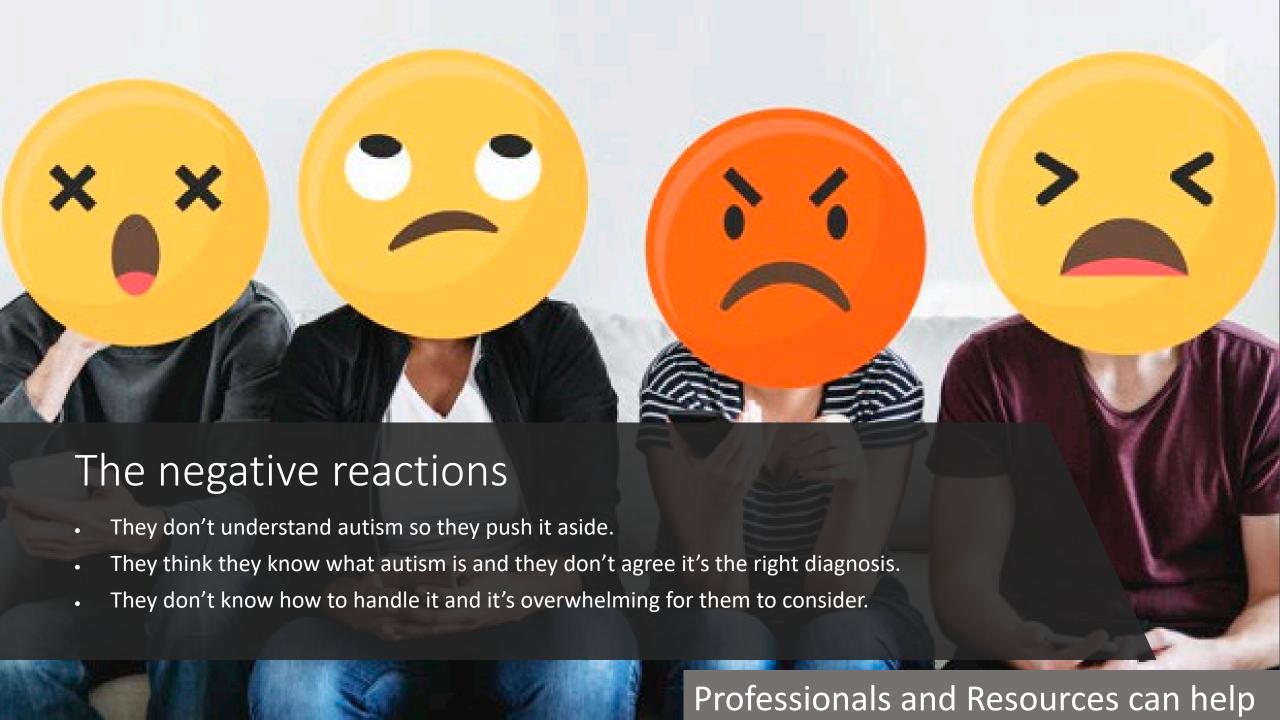
- ASD is a form of intellectual disability.
 - The CDC reports that about 41% of individuals with autism have an intellectual disability.
- Individuals with autism can't have relationships



Educating: Myths & Misunderstandings

- They'll grow out of it
- You need to set better rules and consequences OR
- You need to "lighten up"





Things you want family and friends to understand



- We need to be "flexible" we might be late or have to leave early
- But we also need to be structured last minute changes might not be great...
- We can't just "get a babysitter"
- We have certain rules for a reason



Things you want family and friends to understand

- You're tired
- Don't stop
 - Including us
 - Talking with us
- You need to hear "you are doing a good job"

Info and Resources

- Autism Society
 - https://www.autism-society.org
- Autism Speaks
 - https://www.autismspeaks.org/sites/ default/files/100 Day Tool Kit Youn g Children.pdf
- VCU Autism Center
 - https://vcuautismcenter.org
- UVA's Autism Drive
 - https://autismdrive.virginia.edu
- Green Box ABA
 - YouTube Channel <u>https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0e9t37dZ8XHSgDhmTQEAlw</u>

