



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

SPECIAL SELECTION
Aventura
Festival
2012

HONORARY AWARD
BEST NARRATIVE
Int. Independent
Film Awards
2011

SPECIAL SELECTION
Arleia
Film Festival
2012

FIJALTY
Le Festival
International Du Film
Sur Le Handicap
2012

SPECIAL SELECTION
San Diego International
Kids' Film Festival
2011

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Exit 6
Film Festival
2011

OFFICIAL SELECTION
International
Children's Rights
Film Festival
2011

WINNER - BEST ADVERTISING
Canadian Diversity
Film Festival
2012

PRODUCED
Action Uccel
NAS - UK
2011

OFFICIAL AWARD OF MERIT
International Film
Festival for Peace,
Inspiration & Equality
2012

MEMORABLE
JURY'S CHOICE
Global
Shorts
2012

BEST FILM IN THE
HONORARY AWARD
Golden Door Int.
Film Festival
2012

WINNER
Public Media
Awards - Excellence
2012

WINNER - BEST ADVERTISING
St. Albans
Film Festival
2011

Amazing
things
happen

SPECIAL SELECTION
Västernorrland
Film Festival
2012

OFFICIAL SELECTION
International Public
Advertising
Festival of Seoul
2012

OFFICIAL SELECTION
In The Box
Film Festival
Australia
2012

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Local Gars
National Kids
Film Festival
2012

OFFICIAL SELECTION
World Independent
Cinema Awards
Nice, France
2012

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Belgian International
Children and Family
Film Festival
2012

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Annual Copenhagen
Film Festival
2012

SPECIAL SELECTION
Social Short
Film Awards
2012

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Social Short Film
Awards Portugal
2012

SPECIAL SELECTION
Cardiff
Mini Film Festival
2012

WINNER
Champion Action
Network Festival
2012

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Mindscope
Film Festival
2012



What does Autism look like?

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

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

AMAZING KIDS

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Autistic Spectrum Condition



2020
OFFICIAL SELECTION





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 “misunderstandings”
- 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"





The negative reactions

- They don't understand autism so they push it aside.
- They think they know what autism is and they don't agree it's the right diagnosis.
- They don't know how to handle it and it's overwhelming for them to consider.

Professionals and Resources can help

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*



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

Things you want family and friends to understand

Info and Resources

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

