



**Autism Society**  
Inland Empire



# Teaching Autism Acceptance in Schools

**3RD- 5TH GRADE**



**2023**

# 5 tips for teaching about Autism



## START THE CONVERSATION

Think about how everyone is different and how nice it feels when people accept and include each other.

## EXPLAIN IT

We have a PowerPoint, a recommended video and books that can help. You want to use simple terms children can understand. By talking about Autism, you help correct common myths and misconceptions, give students the why behind the behavior, and help them connect with their classmates.

## FOCUS ON ABILITIES OVER DISABILITIES

Whichever way you define and explain Autism to your students, make sure to focus on abilities rather than deficits. Find something these children have in common with the other kids to help them relate to them better, and give them suggestions on how to include them throughout the school day – games they enjoy, topics they like to discuss.

## ENCOURAGE QUESTIONS

Children are curious by nature, and they will probably have many questions about Autism, but they may not feel comfortable asking everything on their minds for fear of being rude or looking silly. A great way to encourage open and honest communication is to ask everyone to write a question down on paper and leave it in a box so you can do an anonymous Q&A session.



## TEACH EMPATHY

While we don't want the world to feel sorry for children with Autism, students can empathize with others. Encouraging them to imagine what it would be like to walk in another child's shoes may make them stop and think before excluding or teasing them.



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LEARN MORE



[IEAutism.org](http://IEAutism.org)

**Your local Autism connection**

# Autism Acceptance Lesson Plans

## 3rd - 5th Grade

### Walk in Someone Else's Shoes



#### Objective

To raise awareness of the ways we are all similar and different. Talk about the word "kindness" and "acceptance." Students will list words of what kindness means to them.

#### Vocabulary:

- Kindness
- Acceptance

#### Supplies for Lesson Plan

- Attached worksheets,
- Recommended books
- Linked video

#### Supplies Bubbles of Kindness (Optional)

- Magazines
- Scissors

## INTRODUCTION

Tell students acceptance means being OK with people the way they are.

### ACTIVITY 1

1. Tell the students that April is Autism Acceptance Month. Autism is something that is different, just like having different colored hair, wearing glasses, or having different skin colors.
2. Read a book, watch the video, or use our Powerpoint presentation. These resources can be found on <https://ieautism.org/autism-acceptance-in-the-schools/>
3. Ask the students to:
  - a. Name some ways we are all the same
  - b. Name some ways we are all different
  - c. Name things that show kindness to everyone.
4. Ask the students the following question and write ideas on the board. Because children with Autism may feel the world differently than we do and communicate differently, how can we show them kindness and acceptance? You can use the included handout "How to be a Friend to Someone with Autism."

### ACTIVITY 2

1. After reading a book, watching the video, or using our Powerpoint presentation, ask the students to:
  - a. Name some ways we are all the same
  - b. Name some ways we are all different
  - c. Name things that show kindness to everyone.
2. Research famous people with Autism or why some people with Autism do not like using the puzzle piece to represent Autism.

# LESSON PLAN IDEAS



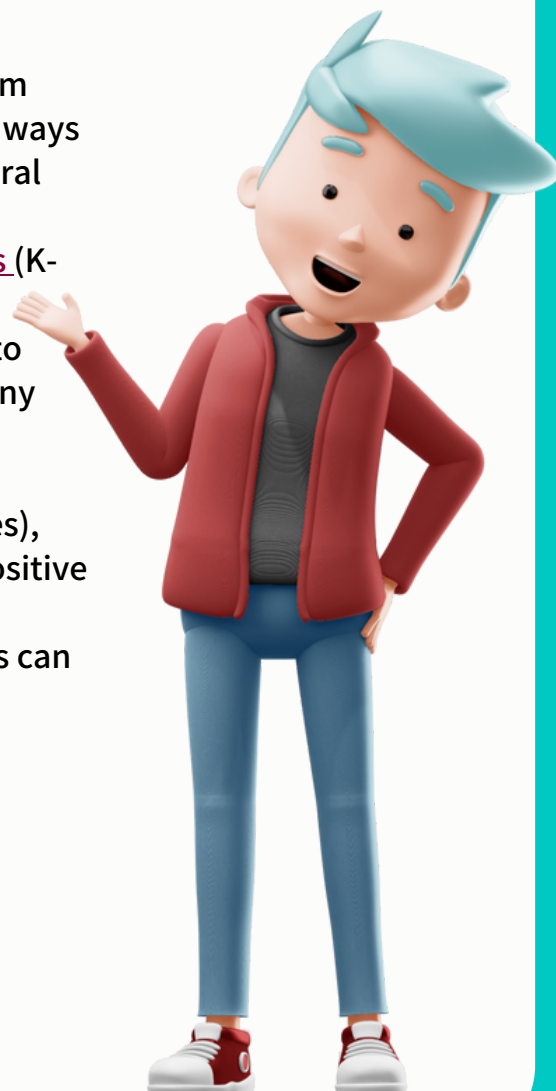
## Elementary 3rd - 5th

### Walk in Someone Else's Shoes Resources

We are all Special and Unique. This presentation can be used as part of a health/life skills lesson, tutor time, and/or for assemblies. The presentation focuses on our differences, similarities, and our feelings. Ideal for PreK, Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. Subjects: Language Arts, Social Studies, Life Skills.

Choose a resource:

- Autism Society Inland Empire's Powerpoint
- Video: Amazing Things Happen - by Alexander Amelines - <https://youtu.be/RbwRrVw-CRo>
- Books:
  - [Nathan's Autism Spectrum Superpowers](#) - The superhero of this book, Nathan, explains his Autism Spectrum superpowers, how they affect him, and ways his friends can help out when his superpowers spiral out of control.
  - [Uniquely Wired: A Story About Autism and Its Gifts](#) (K-5th grade). Instead of depicting Autism as a disadvantage, Zak is shown as having many gifts to share due to his uniquely wired brain. Zak has many features typical of people with Autism, including avoiding eye contact, rapid body movements, an incredible memory, deep passions (trains, watches), and a tendency to repeat phrases. In creating a positive context around Autism and highlighting Zak's similarities and differences, neurotypical students can gain a new perspective.



## Bubbles of Kindness Display

Create an interactive classroom or school display, "Bubbles of Kindness," depicting actions we can take to be kind. Please feel free to use the enclosed template or create your own. Students can write, draw, or cut out a picture showing how to be kind and inclusive to others. Using different colors and types of communication (writing, drawing, and photographs) reinforces the "Spectrum of Autism" and the importance of diversity.

**One student wrote, "Always be kind to everyone.  
That is what our school is made of."**



THE GREATEST IMPACT  
*on our world*

≡ DOESN'T COME FROM A TEST SCORE. ≡

*it comes from simply  
choosing to be kind*

Thank you to [SLP Talk with Desiree](#)  
for this idea

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Walk in Someone Else's Shoes

How do you feel when someone shines a bright light in your eyes?

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any noises that hurt your ears?

\_\_\_\_\_

What smells do you not like?

\_\_\_\_\_

Is there a certain food you do not like? Why? Taste, smell, how it feels in your mouth?

\_\_\_\_\_

Are there things that you do not like to touch or wear because it is too slimy or rough?

\_\_\_\_\_

Think about a fire engine coming down the street with its lights, sirens, and honking its horn. It gets louder and louder and then stops right in front of you. - and then your teacher asked you to do a worksheet with math problems. How would you feel?

\_\_\_\_\_

Pretend you want a hamburger but you cannot talk or write. How would you tell someone?

\_\_\_\_\_

# Bubbles of Kindness Template

Write, draw or use a picture of one way to show someone else kindness.  
Cut out the bubble to make a display in your classroom.

**My Bubble of Kindness**



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[IEAutism.org](http://IEAutism.org)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# FAMOUS PERSON WITH AUTISM

Use a variety of research sources to find out facts and information about a famous Autistic person.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

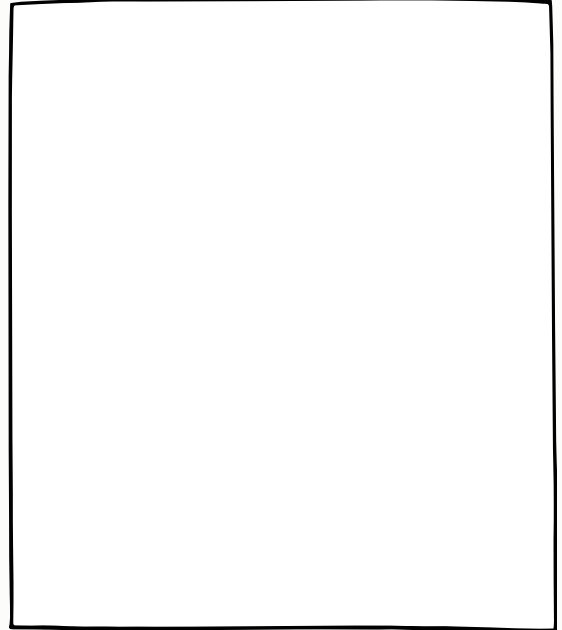
Date of death: \_\_\_\_\_

Facts about their life/childhood:

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Information on what they are famous for: \_\_\_\_\_

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Their strengths and achievements: \_\_\_\_\_

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Other interesting facts about them: \_\_\_\_\_

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Something new I learned today:

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There are many people with Autism. Here is a small sample.  
Research to find others.

## List of Famous People with Autism

- Dawn Prince-Hughes - silverback gorillas researcher
- Greta Thunberg - climate activist
- Satoshi Tajiri - the creator of Pokémon
- Dan Aykroyd – Comedic Actor
- Temple Grandin - animal and autistic advocate
- Darryl Hannah – Actress & Environmental Activist
- Dan Harmon – Producer & Writer
- Sir Anthony Hopkins – Actor
- Cody Ware – Racecar Driver
- Max Park - a Korean-American speedcubing champion
- Kodi Lee – Musician
- Carl Sagan – Astronomer

## Historical People who are Thought to Have with Autism

- Vincent Van Gogh – Artist (source: All Things Interesting)
- Andy Warhol – Artist (source: Applied Behavior Analysis Programs)
- Albert Einstein - Scientist & Mathematician
- William Butler Yeats – Poet (source: Applied Behavior Analysis Programs)
- Emily Dickinson – Poet (source: Early Childhood Education Degree)
- Michelangelo – Poet, Painter, Architect & Sculptor (source: WebMD)
- Thomas Jefferson - revolutionary leader and 3rd president of the United States
- Emily Dickinson – Poet
- Nikola Tesla – Inventor



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# How to be a friend to someone with Autism.



**Do not stare. If you have questions – ask an adult.**



**Use your normal voice to talk. Don't talk like a baby to them.**



**Take Initiative to include them.**



**Find a common interest.**



**Remember sensory sensitivities.**



**Ask questions and give them time to answer.**



**Stand up for him or her.**



**Don't be afraid.**

