



A KID'S GUIDE TO

AUTISM ACCEPTANCE



AN AUTISM NEW JERSEY RESOURCE



STATS & FACTS

About Autism



Autism affects how the brain works and might make it hard to talk, understand other people, or learn new things.



Boys are 5 times more likely than girls to have autism.

You are born with autism. Most families are told their child has autism before the age of three.



Every child is different and unique in their own way, and that includes children with autism.

A person with autism can make a **great friend!**

Autism Rates in The U.S.

The number of kids with autism is growing.

YEAR	2000	2002	2006	2008	2010	2014	2016	2018
RATE	1 IN 166	1 IN 150	1 IN 110	1 IN 88	1 IN 68	1 IN 59	1 IN 54	1 IN 44



NEW JERSEY has the second highest rate in the country:

1 IN 35

10 KID-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES



Have Fun and Make a Difference!

1

READ A BOOK about autism. Ask your teacher or librarian for recommendations.

7

Ask your school to read a **FACT A DAY** about autism in April.

2

Enter Autism New Jersey's **BOOKMARK CONTEST** and design an awareness themed bookmark.

8

SHARE INFORMATION with your family that you learned about autism.

3

SMILE AND SAY HELLO to a classmate who has autism.

9

Ask your favorite store or restaurant to **HANG AUTISM POSTERS**.

4

ASK A TEACHER how to play with or help a friend who has autism.

10

Get permission from your town to **ORGANIZE A BAKE SALE** at a sports game or community event to raise funds for autism.

5

Tell your teacher and parents you would like to **PLAN A WALK-A-THON** to raise funds for autism awareness.

6

Make **AWARENESS THEMED PINS** and ask kids to wear them in April.

NEED SUPPLIES?

You can order free stickers and posters at www.autismnj.org/awareness



APRIL IS NATIONAL AUTISM MONTH

Plan activities to build acceptance during April and throughout the year!

WORDS FROM FRIENDS

MEET

Lindsay and Thomas

They have been friends since 2012 when they met while attending Howell High School, during Lindsay's freshman year.

Since meeting, Lindsay has accompanied Thomas to dances. She's his biggest fan, cheering him on at his Special Olympics bowling tournaments and his basketball, soccer, and baseball games.

Q: How did the friendship start?

L: Our friendship started from the adaptive physical education program at our high school. Thomas and I would spend time together in gym class.

Q: What do you like to do together?

T: I like to go to dances, lunch, and walks with my friend Lindsay.

Q: What is one thing you wish everyone knew about Thomas?

L: I wish everyone knew that his humor is one of a kind!

Q: What do you want your community to understand about Thomas and autism?

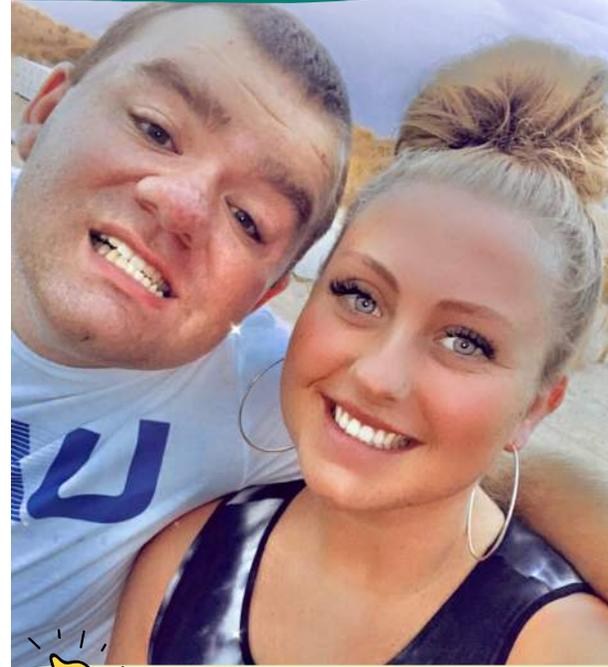
L: Thomas is a friend like no other! He enjoys sharing what he is passionate about, especially when we talk about his favorite books and sayings. I want the community to be more accepting of people with autism and their families.

Q: How does it make you feel when someone doesn't treat Thomas nicely?

L: It would make me feel extremely sad and anxious.

Q: Name your 3 favorite things about Lindsay.

T: My three favorite things about Lindsay is our friendship, her beautiful smile, and how she cares about me.



FRIENDSHIP TIPS

1. **Smile** and say hello. You may not hear a hello back and that is OK.
2. **Include them**, invite them to sit with you at lunch or play a game on the playground.
3. If you're not sure, **ask a teacher** how they communicate.
4. **Find out** what they are interested in.
5. Act like you usually would around a friend - just **be yourself!**

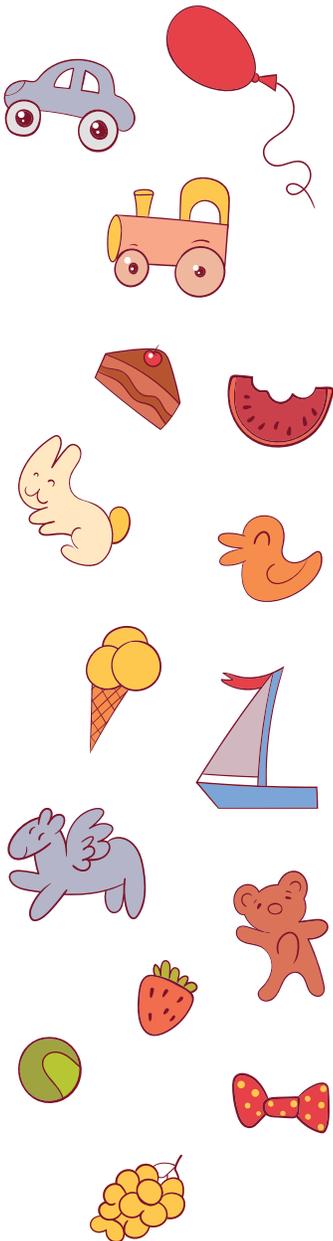


FIND THE HIDDEN OBJECTS

These objects below are hidden in the picture.

Can you find all 15?

Notice that not one friend in this group is exactly like the other!



DESIGN YOUR OWN RIBBON!

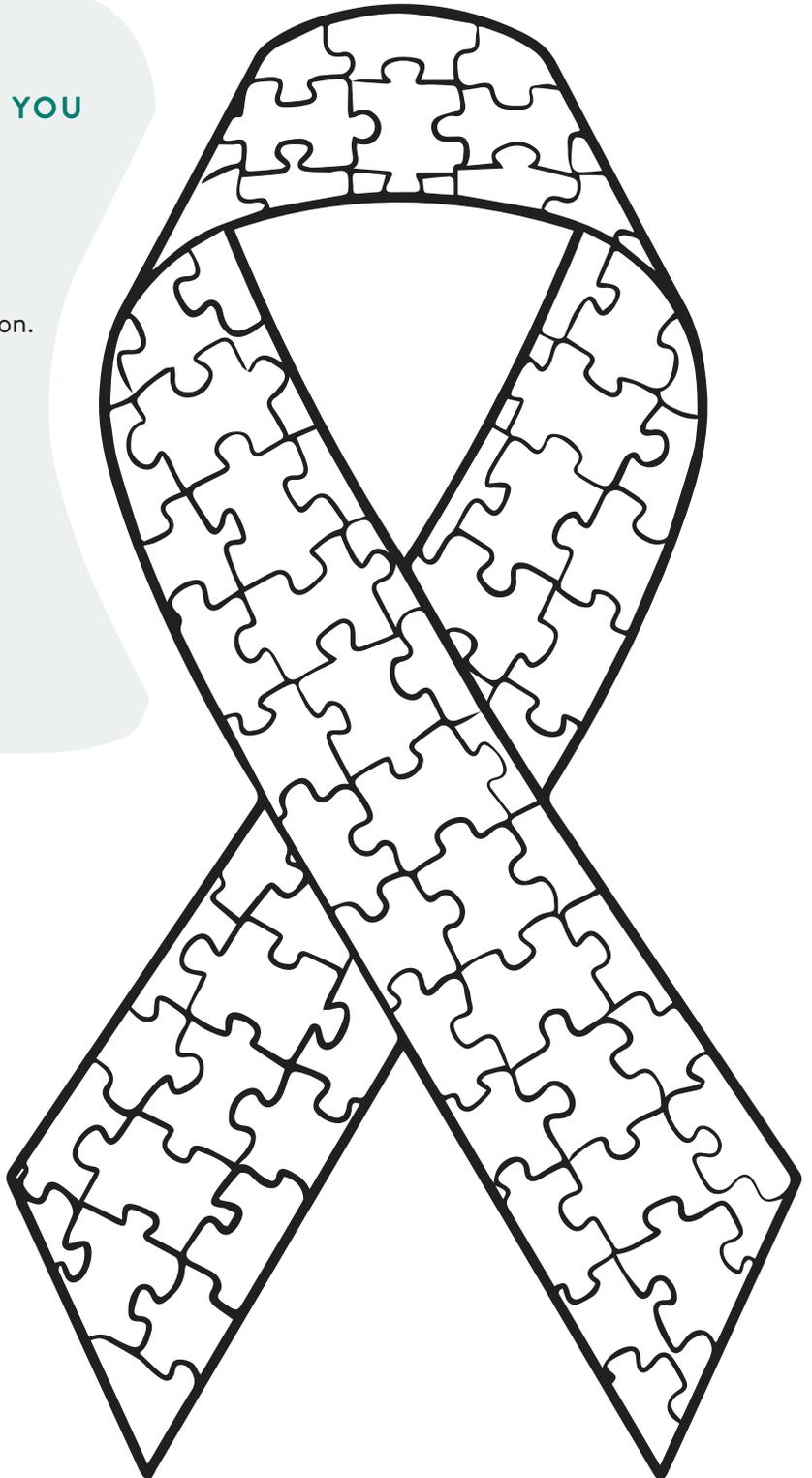


A RIBBON THAT REPRESENTS YOU

The autism awareness ribbon is made up of puzzle pieces in a variety of colors to represent the differences and uniqueness in each child with autism. Design your own ribbon. Think about what makes you **YOU**.

Think about:

- ✕ hobbies
- ✕ sports you play or teams you root for
- ✕ favorite foods
- ✕ colors



HOW A NEED BECOMES A LAW

AUTISM AWARENESS MATTERS

Do you know why Autism Awareness is so important? It can lead to BIG changes for our friends with autism. Here is how a **NEED** can be turned into a **BILL** and passed in our government.

1 Autism New Jersey shares a **NEED** the autism community has.



3 A representative sponsors the **NEED** and introduces it in the form of a **BILL** to a **COMMITTEE**.



2 Autism New Jersey and supporters (like you!) write letters to our local representatives sharing the **NEED**. Local representatives are in two State Government groups called the **ASSEMBLY** and the **SENATE**.

DID YOU KNOW

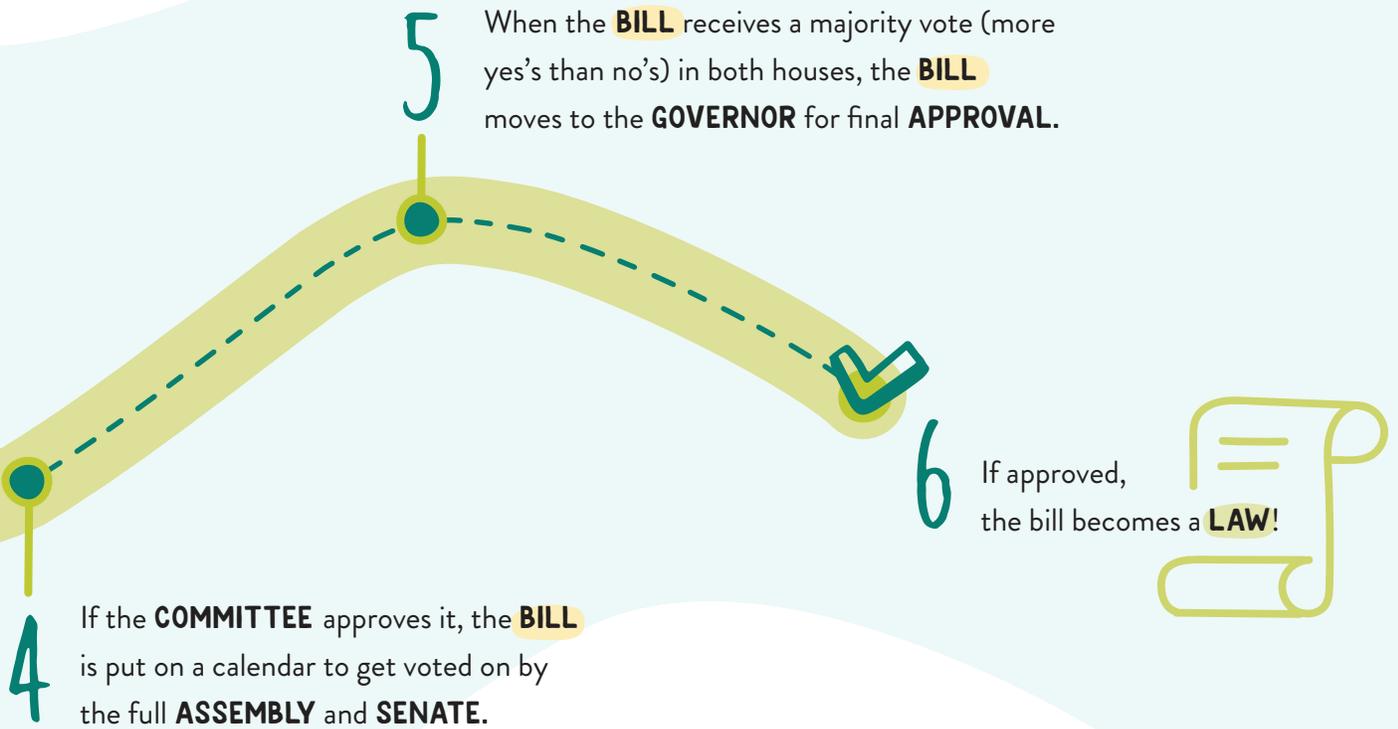
In 2008, a new law was created requiring autism awareness training for all emergency responders, including police officers, firefighters, and EMTs.





GET INVOLVED

To keep the autism community on the minds of our local government officials, we send letters every April, informing them that April is National Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month. Maybe your class would like to send a letter to your mayor! Go to www.autismnj.org/awareness to see a sample letter.



Making a Difference

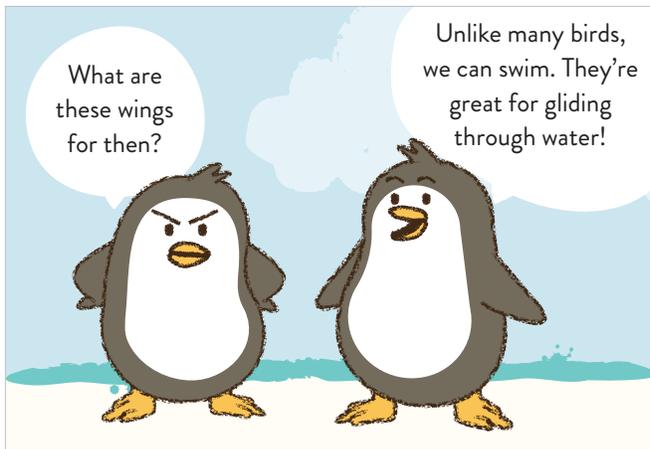
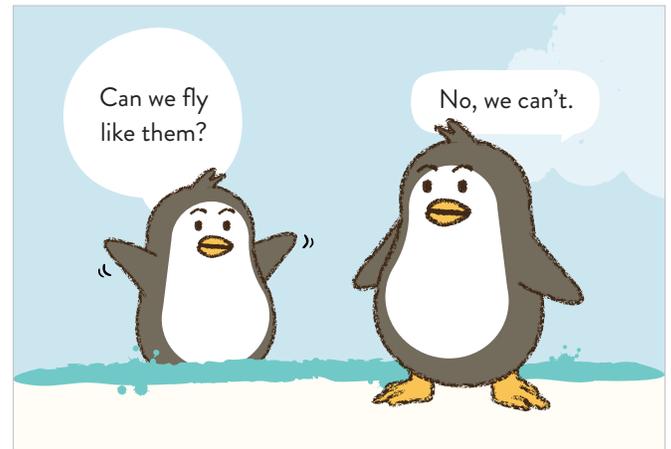
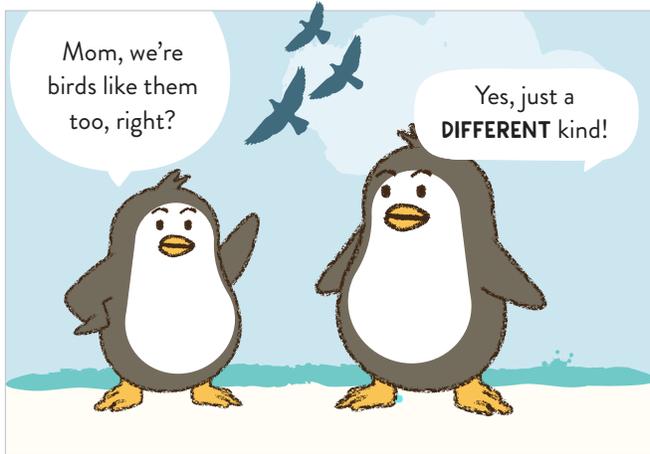
Autism New Jersey Ambassadors, “The Livingston Super 6,” educate their community each year by addressing the Livingston mayor and council about their effort to raise autism awareness to make a positive impact. The group encourages the township to recognize April as Autism Awareness Month.



BEAUTIFULLY DIFFERENT

Are all people with autism the same? **No.**

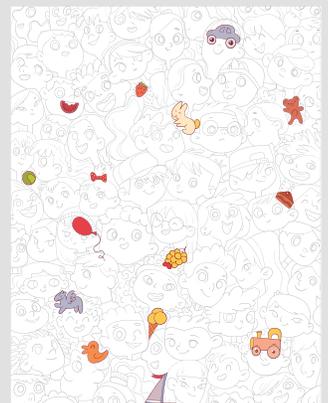
People with autism have many different things that they like to do and are good at. Every person is **unique** in their own special way.



ANSWER KEY



PAGE 4 - SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



PAGE 5 - HIDDEN OBJECTS

Autism is a "spectrum" of different skills, challenges, behaviors, and interests.

EVERY person with autism is different. Learn how YOU are different from your classmates.

1. First, fill in the **ABOUT YOU**.

2. Then, ask **FRIENDS** the same three questions and see how different everyone's answers are!

ABOUT YOU



Name your favorite activity.



What is something you would like to learn?



If you could have a superpower, what would it be?

FRIEND'S NAME:







FRIEND'S NAME:







FRIEND'S NAME:







FRIEND'S NAME:







FRIEND'S NAME:







FRIEND'S NAME:







FRIEND'S NAME:









This book was created to remind us that being different is better than OK. It's what makes us all unique and special. **EVERYONE** has the right to be accepted and deserves true friendship. We can shape the future by how we act **TODAY**.

Sponsored by:



Check out our **free stuff for teachers!**