

Understanding Autism

First things first...

Autism (Autism Spectrum Disorder or ASD) is not something “wrong.”
It's a **difference** in how a person's brain works.

It affects how someone:

- learns
- communicates
- socializes
- handles changes
- and experiences the world around them

And here's the most important thing to remember: **Different does NOT mean less.**

Your child is a whole, valuable, wonderful person first, autism is just one part of who they are.

What might autism look like?

Every child with autism is unique, but you might notice some of these differences:

Communication

- May talk a lot, a little, or not yet
- May use gestures, pictures, signs, or devices (AAC)
- May show needs through behavior instead of words

Social Interaction

- Some children love being with others
- Some prefer quiet or alone time
- Some want friends but aren't sure how to connect yet

Routine & Interests

- Likes predictable routines
- May repeat actions or phrases
- May have strong interests in certain topics (trains, letters, animals, maps, etc.)

Sensory Experiences

- Sounds, lights, clothing, or textures may feel **extra intense**
- Or sometimes they may not notice sensations as much as others
- Movement like rocking, spinning, or hand flapping can feel calming or joyful

❤️ Feelings Matter

Children with autism feel **all the same emotions** as everyone else:

- love
- happiness
- excitement
- frustration
- sadness
- loneliness

They may just **show those feelings in their own way**. Behavior is often a form of communication..Sometimes behavior is simply their way of saying:

- “This is too loud”
- “I’m overwhelmed”
- “I need help”
- “I’m excited!”
- “I don’t know how to say this yet”

🌟 A Helpful Way to Think About Autism

Instead of asking:

❌ “How do we fix this?”

Try asking:

✅ “How can we understand and support my child?”

When we:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| ✓ provide structure | ✓ build skills step-by-step |
| ✓ teach communication | ✓ follow their interests |
| ✓ use visuals | ✓ and celebrate strengths |

Children grow in amazing ways.

🏠 What helps at home?

Simple things make a big difference:

- ✓ Use pictures or visuals
- ✓ Keep routines predictable
- ✓ Give extra time to respond
- ✓ Model simple language
- ✓ Follow your child’s interests
- ✓ Celebrate small wins
- ✓ Focus on connection first

You are your child’s best teacher. ❤️