



Top 10 Terrific Traits of Autistic People

If you're sick of hearing about all the "deficits" challenging people on the autism spectrum, join the club! But for every down side to autism, there seems to be a positive -- an unusual trait that rarely appears among the "typical" community, but shines out among autistic folk. These plusses are well worth celebrating!

1) Autistic People Rarely Lie

We all claim to value the truth, but almost all of us tell little white lies. All, that is, except people on the autism spectrum. To them, truth is truth -- and a good word from a person on the spectrum is the real deal.

2) People on the Autism Spectrum Live in the Moment

How often do typical people fail to notice what's in front of their eyes because they're distracted by social cues or random chitchat? People on the autism spectrum truly attend to the sensory input that surrounds them. Many have achieved the ideal of mindfulness.

3) People with Autism Rarely Judge Others

Who's fatter? Richer? Smarter? For people on the autism spectrum, these distinctions hold much less importance than for typical folks. In fact, people on the spectrum often see through such surface appearances to discover the real person.

4) Autistic People are Passionate

Of course, not all autistic people are alike. But many are truly passionate about the things, ideas and people in their lives. How many "typical" people can say the same?

5) People with Autism Are Not Tied to Social Expectations

If you've ever bought a car, played a game or joined a club to fit in, you know how hard it is to be true to yourself. But for people with autism, social expectations can be honestly irrelevant. What matters is true liking, interest and passion -- not keeping up with the Joneses.

6) People with Autism Have Terrific Memories

How often do typical people forget directions, or fail to take note of colors, names, and other details? People on the autism spectrum are often much more tuned in to details. They may have a much better memory than their typical peers for all kind of critical details.

7) Autistic People Are Less Materialistic

Of course, this is not universally true -- but in general, people with autism are far less concerned with outward appearance than their typical peers. As a result, they worry less about brand names, hairstyles and other expensive but unimportant externals than most people do.

Top 10 Terrific Traits of Autistic People (continued.....)

8) Autistic People Play Fewer Head Games

Who was that woman, and why were you looking at her? I know I TOLD you I didn't mind if you went out, but why did you believe me? Most autistic people don't play games like these -- and they assume that you won't either. It's a refreshing and wonderful change from the Peyton Place emotional roller coaster that mars too many typical relationships!

9) Autistic People Have Fewer Hidden Agendas

Most of the time, if a person on the autism spectrum tells you what he wants -- he is telling you what he wants. No need to beat around the bush, second guess, and hope you're reading between the lines!

10) People with Autism Open New Doors for Neurotypicals

For some of us neurotypicals, having an autistic person in our lives has had a profound positive impact on our perceptions, beliefs and expectations. For me, at least, being the mom of a son on the autism spectrum has released me from a lifetime of "should" -- and offered me a new world of "is."

From Lisa Jo Rudy, Lisa Jo Rudy is the mother of Tommy, age 9, diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. Tom, a sweet and wonderful boy with a terrific sense of humor, has had a profound impact on Lisa's world -- almost entirely for the better. Since 1992, Lisa has developed hands-on, interactive educational materials for clients including The National Science Foundation, The National Geographic Society, Scholastic Publishing, and Time, Inc. In 2003, Lisa spearheaded the creation of a summer camp program for children on the autism spectrum in collaboration with the Philadelphia Area YMCA. Her article "Launching Camp Outlook" appeared in *The Autism Perspective*, a national publication for the Autism community. **For more articles like this please visit www.positivelyautism.com**

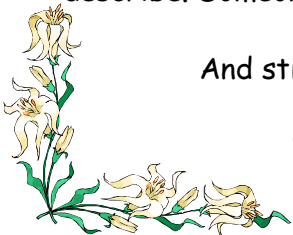
Someone I Love

By Lori Hickman

Someone I love relies on me in ways you will never understand. Someone I love endures pain and challenges that break my heart and renew my spirit at the same time. Someone I love is unable to advocate for themselves for things that most of us take for granted. Someone I love will never have the opportunities that every child should have. Someone I love will need unconditional love and support after I am gone - this frightens me to the core. Someone I love encounters pity, stereotyping responses, and prejudice at every turn, because they look, act, and/or learn differently than others. Someone I love has needs that require me to allow "outsiders" to have power and input in areas that should be mine alone to meet. Someone I love will continue to look to me for everything in life long after other children are able to assume a place as part of the world. Someone I love has needs that require more time and energy than I have to give. Someone I love has needs that mean I am not able to meet basic needs of my own. Someone I love has needs that have become the driving force behind major decisions my family makes. Someone I love has changed me in ways I will never be able to describe. Someone I love has taught me about love and about the really important things in life...

And still others don't understand what it is to be me.. they aren't living in my skin.

© Copyright 2000 Lori Hickman. Originally published as the dedication to *Living in My Skin, The Insider's View of Life With a Special Needs Child* by Lori Hickman.



Sensory Solutions

Tactile

By Brenda Witherspoon

Many children with tactile defensiveness will only use their fingertips (if they even DO touch certain things) when playing with sand, glue, paint, play-doh, food etc. Children may become fearful, avoid activities, withdraw, or act out as their body responds with a "fight-or-flight" response. WHY does this happen? It's all about the way in which one's nervous system interprets touch sensations and stimulation. You may react with a "fight back" or "flee" response if any of the above listed items to YOU felt like sandpaper rubbing against your skin or 10 spiders crawling up your arm that you can't get off. It is NOT the child's fault! It is absolutely 100% about the WAY in which their nervous system interprets a tactile stimulus. Tactile experiences should be introduced slowly and gradually as the child is ready to experience them. A child with tactile defensiveness should **never be forced** to touch anything they do not want to, as this will cause further apprehension and avoidance. It is up to the adult to encourage, explain, understand and communicate with the child as they attempt to introduce touch sensations to them in a safe and non-threatening way.

Make your own Sensory Gel Pack

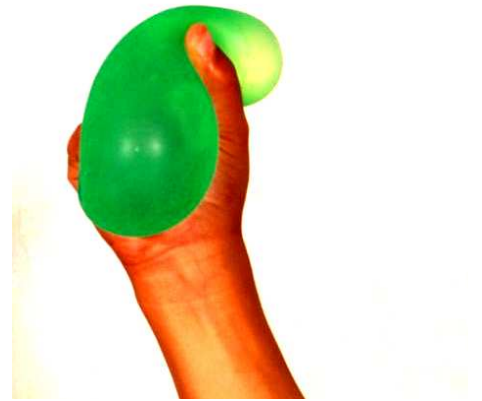
- Excellent for providing tactile and visual stimulation and relaxation

Materials

- Clear plastic Ziploc freezer bags
- Light corn syrup or hair gel
- Assorted sequins, metallic confetti, glitter, soft sponge shapes etc
- Food coloring
- Bristol board backing
- Clear duct tape

Instructions

1. Fill the Ziploc bag with hair gel or corn syrup
2. Add a few drops of food coloring
3. Add a small handful of glitter etc.
4. Seal the bag and lay flat
5. Fold bag to desired size and adhere to Bristol board backing with glue
6. Cover the Gel Pack with duct tape twice



BALLOON PLANTS

GREAT WAY TO START PLANTS INDOORS. WATCH THEM GROW!!

1. Hold a balloon firmly by the neck. The neck is the long part. Use a funnel, and pour 1/2 cup of dirt into the balloon. Don't turn the balloon over. (Try to find clear balloons to use.)
2. Keep holding the balloon by the neck. Add about 1/4 cup of water through the funnel. Be sure the soil in the balloon is wet. It shouldn't be soggy, though.
3. Use the funnel to drop the seeds into the balloon. Don't turn the balloon over.
4. If the balloon is dirty, wipe it carefully with a washcloth.
5. Now you're ready to blow up your balloon! Keep holding it gently by the neck. Now carefully blow air into the balloon. You need to keep the balloon from tipping.
6. Tie a knot in the neck to keep the air in the balloon. Tie a ribbon around the knot.
7. Tie the balloon to a hook or other place near a window. The neck should be the top.
8. Your balloon plant is ready to begin growing!



**Craft
Corner**

Butterfly Thoughts

THE BEATITUDES -For Friends of Exceptional Children

Blessed are you who take time to listen to difficult speech:

For you help us to know that if we persevere,
We can be understood.

Blessed are you who walk with us in public places,
And ignore the stares of strangers,
For in your companionship,
We find havens of peace.

Blessed are you who never bid us to "hurry up",
And more blessed are you
Who do not snatch tasks from our hands to do them for us,

For often we need time rather than help.

Blessed are you who stand beside us
As we enter new and untried ventures,
For our failures will be outweighed
By the times we surprise ourselves and you.

Blessed are you who ask for our help,
For our greatest need is to be needed.

Blessed are you when you assure us,
That the one thing that makes us individuals
Is not in our peculiar muscles,

Nor in our wounded nervous systems,
Nor in our difficulties in learning,
Nor any exterior difference.

But is in our inner, personal, individual self
Which no infirmity can diminish or erase.

"Expect people to be better than they are,
It helps them to become better.

But don't be disappointed when they are not;
It helps them to keep trying."

--- Merry Browne

Announcements

Craft & Social Group Schedule for March

March 6 - bowling 4:00—5:30 p.m.

March 13 - swimming 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

March 27 - Movie FACS 4:00—5:30 p.m.

If you would like to sign your
child up for these activities
please call Debra at 274-7787
ext 229. Ages 6-15.



Children's Disabilities
Information

www.childrensdisabilities.info

Are you aware that Family and Children's services offer a variety of voluntary services within the Rainy River District? These services include:

Children's Mental Health Services – Assisting children, adolescence and their families who may be experiencing emotional, social, and/or psychological problems in their school, family, and/or community life. Services are provided free of charge, for a wide range of difficulties from mild adjustment reactions to severe psychiatric problems in children ranging in age from birth up to 18 years.

Infant & Child Development – Servicing children 0 – 6 years of age who are at risk for a delay, or children with a diagnosed physical, developmental or sensory disability. Some of the services provided include early intervention programs, developmental screening and assessments, assistance with transition to school for special needs children, and parenting programs on a group or individual basis.

Community Integration – servicing children with a physical or developmental disability 6 years – 18 years and up to 21 years as long as they are in school. The primary focus of this program is to facilitate integration into the community. Some of the services provided include developmental assessments, advocacy in relation to other agencies, linkages to health, financial, and educational resources in the community.

Family Relief – a program that provides families a respite period from the responsibility of the daily care of an individual with a physical and/or developmental disability. The three options to services include In-home respite – provided in the family home, Out-of-home respite – provided in the approved worker's home, and community participation – The individual is accompanied by their Family Relief Worker into the community to participate in community events or activities.

For more information about the above voluntary services please contact

Family and Children's Services
For Fort Frances call (807) 274-7787 or 1-800-465-7764 (Toll Free), for Atikokan call 597-2700, and for Rainy River call 852-3387.

To make a referral for service, please call Integrated Services Northwest, The Integrated Services for Northern Children Program for Single Point of access. For Fort Frances, Rainy River and area call 274-9797, for Atikokan area call 807-597-4528

Do you have something to Share? Please phone Debra Bruyere at 274-7787 ext. 229 or email dbruyere@facsrr.ca