

Autism and Sensory Processing Disorder Resources

Library Services to Underserved Children & Their Caregivers

August 2020

About this population

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication, and behavioral challenges. Autism affects the way that people may communicate, interact, behave, learn, and sense their world. An ASD diagnosis includes several conditions, including autistic disorder, pervasive developmental disorder, and Asperger syndrome. Current estimates by the [Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network](#) indicate that about 1 in 54 children have been identified with ASD.

A diagnosis of ASD is not always immediately apparent or noticeable. It is especially important for library staff to keep in mind that some people with whom they interact may have this diagnosis. By recognizing that children with ASD experience the world in different ways, we can create programs and services that are welcoming and accessible to all.

Recommended read alouds

Recommended apps

Materials for the children's room

Materials for programming

Publishers and vendors

Professional resources

Community resources

Successful library programs

Recommended read alouds

Bailey, Jenn. [*A Friend for Henry*](#). San Francisco, Chronicle Books, 2019.

With insight and warmth, this heartfelt story from the perspective of a boy on the autism spectrum celebrates the everyday magic of friendship.

Bronstein, Christine. [*Stewie Boom! And Princess Penelope*](#). Greenbrae, Nothing but the Truth, 2018.

Stewie and Penelope's adventures on a play-date reveal the profound joy and benefits afforded by providing the means for children with ALL kinds of minds to socialize and play.

Malia, Jen. [*Too Sticky!*](#) Chicago, Albert Whitman & Company, 2020.

Holly has sensory issues because of her autism and doesn't like anything sticky! With help from her family and her teacher, Holly receives the accommodation and encouragement she needs to give slime a try.

Peete, Holly Robinson. [*My Brother Charlie*](#). New York, Scholastic, 2010.

In this story, told from a sister's point of view, we meet a family whose oldest son teaches them important lessons about togetherness, hope, tolerance, and love.

Pla, Sally J. [*Benji, the Bad Day, and Me*](#). New York, Lee & Low, 2018.

In this tender story about siblings, author Sally J. Pla shares her experience of raising sons with different personality traits and needs. *Benji, the Bad Day, and Me* embraces the philosophy that we are all part of a wide spectrum of neurodiversity.

Robbins, Rose. [*Me and My Sister*](#). Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2020.

Getting along with your sister is never easy - especially if your brain works in different ways.

Based on the author's childhood, *Me and My Sister* is a gentle exploration of growing up with an autistic sibling.

Rudolph, Shaina and Danielle Royer. [*All My Stripes: A Story for Children with Autism*](#). Washington, DC, Magination Press, 2015.

Zane the Zebra feels different from the rest of his classmates. He worries that all they will notice about him is his "autism stripe."

Recommended apps

[Autism Acceptance Apps](#)

A curated list from the App Store, featuring apps for communication, life skills, games, and even tools for Apple Watch

[Best Autism Apps, 2020](#)

Available on iOS and Android, the list features apps for toddlers to adults and cover topics like education apps, speech and communication, functional skills, autism support groups, and more

[SEED Autism Center: Our Favorite Apps](#)

Apps recommended for clients with autism and other sensory processing disorders, including brief descriptions and us

Materials for the children's room

[Edushape See-Me Sensory Balls](#)

[Fidget Toy](#)

[Gonge Riverstones](#)

[Hedstrom Sensory Shapes](#)

[Sensory Star Beanbags](#)

[Silly Shapes Sensory Mats](#)

[TANGLE Fidget Toy](#)

Materials for programming

Social stories: Created specifically for your library, these allow children to familiarize themselves with the library before their visit. Options include video tours and printed guides.

[Haggard Library \(Plano, TX\) video tour](#)

[Haggard Library \(Plano, TX\) social story](#)

[Davis Library \(Plano, TX\) video tour](#)

[Davis Library \(Plano, TX\) social story](#)

Visual schedules: These may be created for programming or collections, and show children what to expect next.

[Resources from the ALSC blog](#)

Publishers and vendors

[AAPC Publishing](#)

[Brookes Publishing](#)

[Different Roads](#)

[Future Horizons](#)

[Woodbine House](#)

Professional resources

Books

Feinberg, Sandra, Barbara A. Jordan, Kathleen Deerr, Michelle A. Langa, and Carrie Scott Banks. *Including Families of Children with Special Needs: A How-to-do-it Manual for Librarians*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2014.

Klipper, Barbara. *Programming for Children and Teens with Autism Spectrum Disorder*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2014.

Munro, Lindsay. *Fuzzy Buzzy Groups for Children with Developmental or Sensory Processing Difficulties*. London, Jessica Kinsley, 2010.

Articles and Websites

Akin, Lynn, and Donna MacKinney. "[Autism, Literacy, and Libraries: The 3 Rs = Routine, Repetition, and Redundancy](#)." *Children and Libraries*. Summer/Fall (2004): 35-43.

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. "[Autism \(Autism Spectrum Disorder\)](#)." ASHA, 2020.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "[Autism Spectrum Disorders \(ASD\)](#)." CDCP, August 27, 2019.

Cottrell, Megan. "[Storytime for the Spectrum](#)." March 1, 2016.

Frick, Kaitlin. "[Sensory Storytime: Tips and Tricks for a Successful Program](#)." ALSC Blog, August 10, 2018.

Gluck, Samantha. "[What Is ADD and ADHD? Definitions and Details](#)." HealthyPlace, 2020.

Gluck, Samantha. "[What Is an Intellectual Disability?](#)" HealthyPlace, 2020.

Gluck, Samantha. "[What Is Social \(Pragmatic\) Communication Disorder?](#)" HealthyPlace, 2020.

Grassi, Renee. "[Selecting Books for Special Needs Storytimes.](#)" ALSC Blog, August 8, 2011.

Grassi, Renee. "[Too Many Choices! Books to Read During Sensory Storytimes.](#)" ALSC Blog, September 26, 2013.

Hume, Kara. "[Supporting Individuals with Autism through Uncertain Times.](#)" UNC Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute Autism Team, 2020.

Matusiak, Manar. "[How to Create an Autism-Friendly Environment.](#)" August 29, 2019.

Moberg, Esther. "[Sensory Storytimes.](#)" OLA/WLA Conference, April 25, 2013.

Nagel, KimberLeigh. "[Inclusive Libraries: Supporting the Sensory Needs of Your Students.](#)" *Texas Library Journal* 96, no. 3 (2020): 172-175.

National Autism Center at May Institute. "[Facts about Autism.](#)" 2020.

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. "[Autism Spectrum Disorder Fact Sheet.](#)" U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020.

Simpson, Stephen. "[Checklist for Autism-Friendly Environments \(2016\).](#)" September 2016.

Twarogwoski, Tricia Bohanon. "[Programming for Children with Special Needs, Part One.](#)" ALSC Blog, June 23, 2009.

Waring, Ashley. "[Sensory Storytime: A \(Brief\) How-To Guide.](#)" ALSC Blog, March 14, 2012.

Webinars

[Sensory-Enhanced Storytimes](#), presented by Laura Baldassari-Hackstaff and Laura Olson

[Sensory Storytime: Preschool Programming That Makes Sense for Kids with Autism](#), presented by Barbara Klipper

Community resources

[Autism Research Institute](#)

Resources for individuals and families with autism, including symptoms and treatment, education and support, and continuing education opportunities.

[Autism Speaks](#)

An organization dedicated to promoting solutions for individuals on the spectrum through advocacy, support, and increased understanding. Includes educational resources such as community toolkits and information about autism.

[Autism Society](#)

An organization dedicated to improving the lives of those affected by autism and their families, providing advocacy, education, information and referral, and support. Includes a variety of educational and community support resources.

[Center for Autism & Related Disorders](#)

A variety of resources, including information about ASD, activities and games, a media library, and research.

[Libraries and Autism: We're Connected](#)

A comprehensive resource to support autism awareness and education, library programming, and services to families with children on the spectrum. Includes video resources, customizable tools, programming ideas and resources, and resources to expand your knowledge and skills.

[National Autism Association](#)

Tools, training, webinars, and other resources related to autism.

[US Autism Association](#)

A collection of resources, including online links, videos, and interventions and therapies.

Successful library programs

[Autism Resource Center at Lancaster \(PA\) Public Library](#)

Providing print, audio, and video materials on autism for use in the library and at home, as well as a dedicated space supporting the unique needs of individuals with ASD.

[Bloomfield Township Library Accessibility Services](#)

A variety of accessible services, including social stories and special collections for children and adults

Sensory Backpacks

Based on specific topics, each backpack include a parent resource book, 2-3 children's books, 2-3 manipulatives, and a DVD if available

[Sample backpack from Plano \(TX\) Public Library](#)

Sensory Storytime

An interactive, inclusive storytime ideal for children with special needs such as autism spectrum disorders, sensory integration challenges, or short attention spans.

[Sample outline from Plano \(TX\) Public Library](#)