

10 things every child with autism wishes you knew

10 Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew

10 things every child with autism wishes you knew are not just facts or statistics—they are heartfelt truths that can transform the way we understand, support, and connect with these incredible individuals. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) manifests uniquely in every child, shaping the way they experience the world, communicate, and express themselves. Yet, many people still hold misconceptions or overlook the deeper needs and perspectives of children with autism. By tuning into these ten insights, we can foster empathy, patience, and acceptance that truly make a difference.

1. Communication Isn't Always Verbal

One of the key things every child with autism wishes you knew is that communication comes in many forms. Not all children with autism speak, and some may have delayed speech or use alternative methods like sign language, picture exchange systems, or assistive technology. It's important to recognize and respect these different ways of expressing thoughts and feelings. Rather than assuming silence means a lack of understanding, try to observe nonverbal cues such as gestures, eye contact, or behaviors. Being patient and offering multiple ways to communicate can empower these children and lessen frustration.

2. Sensory Sensitivities Are Real and Overwhelming

Sensory processing challenges are common in children with autism. Everyday sounds, lights, textures, or smells that most people barely notice can be overwhelming or even painful. For example, a loud vacuum cleaner, the bright fluorescent lights in a classroom, or scratchy clothing tags might trigger distress. Understanding this sensory overload is crucial. It's not about being picky or difficult, but about genuine discomfort. Offering quiet spaces, soft lighting, or sensory-friendly clothing can provide comfort and help children feel safe and focused.

3. Routine and Predictability Provide Security

Many children on the autism spectrum thrive on routine. Sudden changes or surprises can cause anxiety or confusion. Having a predictable daily schedule helps them feel secure and in control of their environment. This doesn't mean they can't handle any change, but transitions are easier when they're prepared. Visual schedules, countdown timers, or

advance warnings about upcoming events can support smoother adjustments. Recognizing the importance of routine is one of the most compassionate things you can do to ease their world.

4. Behavior Is Communication

When a child with autism exhibits challenging behaviors—such as meltdowns, repetitive movements, or withdrawal—it's often a way of communicating unmet needs or overwhelming emotions. These behaviors aren't just "acting out" but signals that something is wrong or difficult to handle. Instead of punishment or frustration, try to understand the root cause. Are they feeling anxious, tired, hungry, or overstimulated? Responding with empathy and problem-solving rather than judgment can build trust and help them develop healthier coping mechanisms.

5. Every Child with Autism Has Unique Strengths

It's easy to focus solely on challenges, but every child with autism has talents and passions that make them shine. Some have exceptional memory skills, artistic talents, deep focus on interests, or extraordinary empathy in their way. Recognizing and nurturing these strengths not only boosts self-esteem but also enriches the community. Celebrate what makes them unique instead of comparing them to typical developmental milestones.

6. Social Interaction Can Be Complex and Exhausting

Socializing is not always intuitive for children with autism. They might struggle with reading facial expressions, understanding sarcasm, or knowing how to start and maintain conversations. This doesn't mean they don't want friends or connection—they often do—but social settings can be confusing or draining. Giving them space to recharge, teaching social skills gently, and accepting their way of interacting without forcing conformity shows respect for their individuality.

7. Patience and Understanding Go a Long Way

One of the most impactful things every child with autism wishes you knew is the power of patience. Learning new skills, adapting to environments, or managing emotions may take longer, and setbacks are normal. Responding with frustration or impatience can shut down their willingness to try. Instead, offering calm encouragement, breaking tasks into manageable steps, and celebrating small victories creates a positive, supportive atmosphere where growth is possible.

8. Autism Is Part of Their Identity, Not a Problem to Fix

It's important to understand that autism is not an illness or something that needs to be "cured." For many children, autism is a core part of who they are—shaping their perspective, creativity, and experiences. Acceptance and inclusivity matter far more than trying to make them fit a neurotypical mold. Encouraging self-advocacy and embracing neurodiversity helps children develop confidence and a strong sense of self-worth.

9. Sensory Breaks and Special Interests Are Essential

Children with autism often benefit from sensory breaks—short periods where they can engage in calming activities or focus on their favorite interests. These breaks help regulate emotions and provide a mental reset. Special interests, which might seem intense or unusual to others, are actually valuable outlets for learning and joy. Supporting these passions can improve motivation, social connections, and overall well-being.

10. Inclusion and Acceptance Make All the Difference

Perhaps the most profound thing every child with autism wishes you knew is the importance of belonging. Inclusion means more than physical presence—it's about genuine acceptance, respect, and opportunities to participate fully in family, school, and community life. When children with autism feel valued and understood, their confidence and happiness soar. Small acts of kindness, listening, and open-mindedness can create a world where they truly thrive.

Understanding these ten things every child with autism wishes you knew helps break down barriers and build bridges of empathy. Each child's journey is unique, and embracing their individuality with compassion enriches everyone's lives. By learning, listening, and adapting, we create a more inclusive world—one where every child, regardless of how their brain works, can feel seen, heard, and loved.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are some common sensory sensitivities children with autism experience?

Children with autism often have heightened sensitivities to sounds, lights, textures, and smells, which can make everyday environments overwhelming or uncomfortable for them.

Why is routine important for children with autism?

Routine provides predictability and security, helping children with autism reduce anxiety and navigate their day more comfortably by knowing what to expect.

How can communication challenges affect children with autism?

Many children with autism have difficulties with verbal and non-verbal communication, which can lead to frustration or misunderstandings if others do not recognize or accommodate their unique ways of expressing themselves.

What does a child with autism wish you understood about their social interactions?

They may want you to know that social cues and interactions can be confusing or exhausting, and that their different ways of engaging are not intentional rudeness but part of their neurodiversity.

Why is it important to focus on a child's strengths rather than just their challenges?

Focusing on strengths helps build confidence and self-esteem in children with autism, encouraging their development and showing them that they are valued for who they are.

How can patience and empathy improve interactions with children with autism?

Patience and empathy create a supportive environment where children with autism feel understood and accepted, which can significantly enhance their comfort, learning, and social experiences.

Additional Resources

10 Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew

10 things every child with autism wishes you knew highlight the essential insights that can bridge understanding and foster supportive environments. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) affects approximately 1 in 36 children in the United States, according to the CDC's 2023 data, making it a prevalent neurodevelopmental condition that demands nuanced awareness. Yet, misconceptions and stereotypes persist, often obscuring the authentic experiences of children on the spectrum. This article delves into the nuanced realities of children with autism, unraveling the 10 things they wish the world understood, while integrating relevant research and expert perspectives.

Understanding Autism Beyond the Label

Autism is a spectrum, encompassing a wide range of abilities, challenges, and behaviors. The phrase “10 things every child with autism wishes you knew” encapsulates a diversity of experiences that are often homogenized in public discourse. It is crucial to recognize that autism manifests uniquely in each individual, ranging from nonverbal children to those with advanced verbal skills, and from those requiring substantial support to those who thrive independently.

1. Communication Is More Than Words

One of the most significant points children with autism want others to understand is that communication extends beyond verbal language. Many children with autism use alternative communication methods such as sign language, picture exchange communication systems (PECS), or assistive technology. The inability to speak does not equate to an inability to communicate or understand. Recognizing and respecting different communication styles is fundamental to meaningful interaction.

2. Sensory Sensitivities Are Real and Impact Daily Life

Sensory processing differences are a hallmark of autism. Children on the spectrum often experience hypersensitivity or hyposensitivity to stimuli such as sounds, lights, textures, or smells. For instance, the hum of fluorescent lights or the texture of certain clothing can be distressing. These sensory challenges are not mere preferences but neurological differences that can affect behavior and emotional regulation. Awareness of these sensitivities can foster empathy and reduce unnecessary stress for the child.

3. Routine and Predictability Provide Comfort

Many children with autism thrive on routine and find comfort in predictability. Sudden changes or disruptions can provoke anxiety or meltdowns. It is essential for caregivers, educators, and peers to understand the value of structured environments and to prepare children in advance for any alterations to their daily schedule. This understanding can significantly improve the child’s ability to cope and participate effectively.

4. Interests and Strengths Are Often Deep and Specialized

Children with autism frequently develop intense interests in specific subjects, sometimes referred to as “special interests.” These passions can be a source of joy, expertise, and social connection. Rather than dismissing these interests as obsessions, recognizing and encouraging them can boost self-esteem and provide pathways for learning and interaction.

5. Behavior Is a Form of Communication

When a child with autism exhibits challenging behaviors—such as repetitive movements, outbursts, or withdrawal—it is often a form of communication. These behaviors can signal discomfort, frustration, sensory overload, or unmet needs. Interpreting behavior through a compassionate lens rather than punitive measures can lead to more effective support and intervention.

6. Social Interaction May Be Different, Not Deficient

Social difficulties are common in autism, but it is important to distinguish difference from deficiency. Children with autism may struggle with conventional social cues or norms, but many desire relationships and connection. Understanding their unique social perspective and providing explicit guidance on social skills can facilitate meaningful friendships.

7. Inclusion Matters but Requires Support

Inclusive education and social environments have been shown to benefit children with autism, promoting acceptance and skill development. However, inclusion must be accompanied by appropriate supports such as individualized education plans (IEPs), sensory accommodations, and trained staff. Simply placing a child in a mainstream setting without supports can be counterproductive.

8. Anxiety and Mental Health Concerns Are Prevalent

Children with autism are at increased risk for anxiety disorders, depression, and other mental health challenges. These issues can exacerbate difficulties in communication and behavior. Awareness and early intervention for mental health concerns are part of comprehensive autism care, underscoring the need for holistic approaches.

9. Every Child Deserves Respect and Autonomy

Respecting a child with autism as an individual with rights, preferences, and autonomy is fundamental. This includes listening to their perspectives, involving them in decision-making, and honoring their privacy and dignity. Empowerment fosters confidence and self-advocacy, which are critical for long-term well-being.

10. Support Systems Are Vital for Families and Children

Finally, children with autism rely on robust support systems including family, educators, therapists, and community resources. These networks provide stability, interventions, and

advocacy that help children reach their potential. Promoting awareness of available services and reducing stigma around seeking help strengthens these essential supports.

Implications for Educators and Caregivers

Understanding the 10 things every child with autism wishes you knew is not merely an academic exercise; it has practical implications for how adults approach education, caregiving, and community inclusion. Tailoring communication strategies, designing sensory-friendly environments, and fostering predictable routines can transform the daily experiences of autistic children. Evidence-based interventions—such as Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), speech therapy, and occupational therapy—are most effective when they respect the child's individuality and preferences.

Moreover, professional training for teachers and caregivers about autism spectrum disorder can reduce misconceptions and improve outcomes. Studies indicate that schools with autism-specific training programs report higher satisfaction among parents and better academic progress among students with autism.

Bridging the Gap Through Awareness and Advocacy

Promoting societal acceptance of autism requires disseminating authentic narratives that reflect the 10 things every child with autism wishes you knew. Media representations, policy frameworks, and community initiatives play critical roles in shaping public perception. For example, advocacy groups emphasize neurodiversity—a concept that celebrates neurological differences rather than viewing autism as a disorder to be “fixed.” This perspective aligns with many individuals' lived experiences and promotes dignity and inclusion.

In practical terms, employers, educators, and policymakers can facilitate inclusion by implementing accommodations such as flexible work or learning schedules, sensory-friendly spaces, and clear communication protocols. These measures not only benefit autistic individuals but also create more accessible environments for everyone.

The journey toward comprehensive understanding is ongoing, but listening to and amplifying the voices of children with autism remains a foundational step. Their unique perspectives illuminate the path toward empathy, respect, and meaningful inclusion in a diverse society.

[10 Things Every Child With Autism Wishes You Knew](#)

10 things every child with autism wishes you knew: *Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew* Ellen Notbohm, 2019-06-01 Winner of the IPBA Gold Medal for Nonfiction Series

(with *Ten Things Your Student with Autism Wishes You Knew*) and Winner of the Grand Prize for Instruction and Insight and First Place in Psychology, Chanticleer International Book Awards. One of the autism community's most beloved classics, *Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew* has informed, delighted, and guided millions of families and professionals the world over since its first edition was published in 2005. A child's voice leads into each chapter, offering a one-of-a-kind exploration into how ten core characteristics of autism affect our children's perceptions and reactions to the surrounding physical, sensory and social environments. This revised and updated third edition sharpens the focus on these basic aspects while expanding on how our own perspectives shape the life of our child and ourselves, today, tomorrow, and for years to come. An all-new section illuminates the surprising breadth of our power of choice and outlines potent strategies for strong decision-making in every situation. Every parent, teacher, social worker, therapist, and physician should have this succinct and informative book in their back pocket. Framed with both humor and compassion, the book lists the top ten characteristics that help illuminate—not define—children with autism. Ellen's personal experiences as a parent, an autism columnist, and a contributor to numerous parenting magazines coalesce to create this guide for anyone with someone on the autism spectrum in their life. There is also an edition of this book available in Spanish. Other awards include: Grand Prize Short List, Eric Hoffer Book Awards First place in Psychology, Chanticleer International Instruction and Insight Awards First Runner-up - Health, Eric Hoffer Book Awards Montaigne Medal finalist, Eric Hoffer Book Awards American Book Fest Best Book Awards finalist National Indie Excellence Book Awards finalist Da Vinci Eye Award finalist, Eric Hoffer Book Awards Wishing Shelf Book Awards (UK) finalist

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10 things every child with autism wishes you knew: Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew Ellen Notbohm, 2012 By simply defining autistic children's minds and hearts, this iParenting Media Award-winning guide is written for everyone who is not autistic but comes in contact with a child who is.

10 things every child with autism wishes you knew: Ten Things Your Student with Autism Wishes You Knew Ellen Notbohm, 2006 The author's first book, *Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew*, was a shot heard throughout the worldwide autism community, branded by readers as required reading for all social service workers, teachers and relatives of children with autism. Now, for the teacher in all of us comes this second work. The unique perspective of a child's voice is back to help us understand the thinking patterns that guide their actions, shape an environment conducive to their learning style, and communicate with them in meaningful ways. This book affirms that autism imposes no inherent upper limits on achievement, that both teacher and child can do it. It is the game plan every educator, parent, or family member needs to make the most of every teaching moment in the life of these children we love. -- From publisher

10 things every child with autism wishes you knew: Summary of Ellen Notbohm's Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew Everest Media,, 2022-04-15T22:59:00Z Please note: This is a companion version & not the original book. Sample Book Insights: #1 Perspective is everything when it comes to autism. When people who don't have autism frame its challenges only through the lens of their own experiences, they unwittingly close the door to alternative thinking that could help those with autism or Asperger's syndrome overcome their obstacles. #2 Your child's autism does not mean that they will not be able to live full, joyous, and meaningful lives. You may be scared, but you must believe that your child's quality of life is at stake if you don't do everything within your power to help them. #3 Autism is complex, but its primary elements are sensory processing challenges, communication delays, elusive social thinking and interaction skills, and whole child/self-esteem issues. #4 The four elements of social, cognitive, and physical learning are common to many children with autism, but every child with autism is different, and each parent, teacher, and caregiver will be at a different point on the spectrum.

10 things every child with autism wishes you knew: Library Services for Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders Lesley S. J. Farmer, 2013-05-10 Autism is now the second most commonly diagnosed serious developmental disability, and the number of children identified as autistic continues to grow. Introducing what autism spectrum disorders are, and identifying the great need to build and manage programs for different youth with these disorders, Farmer offers librarians in or outside a school environment all the information they need to build a library literacy program geared towards these children. Designed to both awaken sensitivities of library staff and address the questions of those who are already aware of the issue, this book Shows how children with this diagnosis are increasingly mainstreamed into traditional library and school programs and identifies the special needs and issues they face in a library setting Equips readers to meet the needs of young library users who are autistic with practical tools for training library staff, teachers, and volunteers Explains hyperlexia, the main barrier to the development of literacy among these children, and how programs using sensory experiences can strengthen both literacy skills and socialization Proposes strategies for using library design to ensure that materials and resources are accessible to all patrons Including a glossary of terms and bibliography of additional resources, Farmer's book is an important tool for raising awareness and supporting literacy development for children with these disorders in the library setting.

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10 things every child with autism wishes you knew: *Autismology: An Autism Dictionary* Tosha Rollins, 2022-12-13 Autismology is a great source for special needs educators, public school teachers, occupational therapists, ABA therapists, psychologists, mental health counselors, autistic adults, and parents with children on the autism spectrum. Tosha Rollins states, "As a mother of two young adults on the autism spectrum, I wish I had been better educated about autism. My children inspired my becoming a licensed professional counselor. She started the Autism in Action podcast and has created resources like Autismology for families like hers.

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10 things every child with autism wishes you knew: *The Routledge International Handbook of Learning* Peter Jarvis, Mary H. Watts, 2012 As our understanding of learning focuses on the whole person rather than individual aspects of learning, so the process of learning is beginning to be studied from a wide variety of perspectives and disciplines. This handbook presents a comprehensive overview of the contemporary research into learning: it brings together a diverse range of specialities with chapters written by leading scholars throughout the world from a wide variety of different approaches. The International Handbook of Learning captures the complexities of the learning process in seven major parts. Its 54 chapters are sub-divided in seven parts: Learning and the person: senses, cognitions, emotions, personality traits and learning styles Learning across the lifespan Life-wide learning Learning across the disciplines: covering everything from anthropology to neuroscience Meaning systemse(tm) interpretation Learning and disability Historical and contemporary learning theorists. Written by international experts, this book is the first comprehensive multi-disciplinary analysis of learning, packing a diverse collection of research into one accessible volume.

10 things every child with autism wishes you knew: An Early Start for Your Child with

Autism Sally J. Rogers, Geraldine Dawson, Laurie A. Vismara, 2012-05-15 Cutting-edge research reveals that parents can play a huge role in helping toddlers and preschoolers with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) connect with others and live up to their potential. This encouraging guide from the developers of a groundbreaking early intervention program provides doable, practical strategies you can use every day. Nearly all young kids—including those with ASD—have an amazing capacity to learn. Drs. Sally Rogers, Geraldine Dawson, and Laurie Vismara make it surprisingly simple to turn daily routines like breakfast or bath time into fun and rewarding learning experiences that target crucial developmental skills. Vivid examples illustrate proven techniques for promoting play, language, and engagement. Get an early start—and give your child the tools to explore and enjoy the world. Winner--American Journal of Nursing Book of the Year Award Mental health professionals, see also the authors' related intervention manual, Early Start Denver Model for Young Children with Autism, as well as the Early Start Denver Model Curriculum Checklist for Young Children with Autism (sold in sets of 15).

10 things every child with autism wishes you knew: Top Ten Tips Teresa A. Cardon, 2008 This book is meant to be a quick and helpful tool for navigating your way through everyday activities and occurrences when you live with a child with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

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10 things every child with autism wishes you knew: Children's Nursing Case Book Tony Long, 2016-08-16 Nursing children and young people is increasingly complex requiring nurses to apply their knowledge and skills to a wide scope of illnesses and situations. The challenges to nurses to analyse, reflect on different perspectives and then adapt practices to the benefit of service users are reflected in this book. Each scenario in this text is created based on real life cases and practice. The 23 cases connect knowledge with practice and guide you through the anatomy and physiology and the physical and psychological responses to stressors, which are then linked to intervention decisions. Cases include:

- Providing care for children and young people with life-limiting conditions
- Acutely ill children including those with asthma, and an infant with pyrexia and febrile convulsions
- Long term conditions including diabetes, renal disease and the transfer to adult services
- Those who are critically ill such as a child with typhoid fever and a toddler with a head injury
- Supporting emotional and mental health in anorexia and autistic spectrum disorder
- Promoting healthy lifestyles, considering obesity and risky behaviour
- Care for children with trauma, including a child with a learning disability

Remaining vigilant for indicators of safeguarding concern, encouraging self-care, and promoting mental resilience are all incorporated, with examples from a range of care environments. Calculation exercises are interspersed to keep these skills sharp. This Case Book is an ideal learning resource, tailored to help nurses learn in a focused way about practice and excel, whether on placements, in academic work, or in professional practice. Developed from a partnership between a University Research Group and an NHS Trust, this practical children's nursing case textbook bridges theory and practice by presenting 23 case scenarios on complex, sensitive and difficult to manage clinical situations in an accessible and user-friendly manner. The inbuilt

activities, calculation exercises, question and answer format and extra resources make this an excellent interactive resource for nurses to engage in critical thinking and reflection about each case. Dr. Veronica Lambert, Senior Lecturer Children's Nursing, Dublin City University, Ireland This book will be useful for nurses in the UK who work with children and families in a variety of settings. Its format based on case studies and 'what would you do' and 'what do you need to do' scenarios will make it a useful tool for teaching clinical care for children and families. Professor Linda Shields, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Indigenous Health, Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, Australia What Tony Long has achieved is to produce a textbook with contributions from esteemed practicing children's nurses which gives enhanced credibility to each of the case studies. Tony and his colleagues have created these case studies to help children's and young people's nurses fully understand the complexities of the needs of both children and their families or carers during their healthcare trajectory. This new book crucially never forgets the primary mission of the children's nurse which is to uphold their mantra of 'the child first and always'. Alan Glasper, Emeritus Professor of children's and young people's nursing at the University of Southampton, UK

10 things every child with autism wishes you knew: Teaching with Harry Potter Valerie Estelle Frankel, 2013-03-07 The Harry Potter phenomenon created a surge in reading with a lasting effect on all areas of culture, especially education. Today, teachers across the world are harnessing the power of the series to teach history, gender studies, chemistry, religion, philosophy, sociology, architecture, Latin, medieval studies, astronomy, SAT skills, and much more. These essays discuss the diverse educational possibilities of J.K. Rowling's books. Teachers of younger students use Harry and Hermione to encourage kids with disabilities or show girls the power of being brainy scientists. Students are reading fanfiction, splicing video clips, or exploring Rowling's new website, Pottermore. Harry Potter continues to open new doors to learning.

10 things every child with autism wishes you knew: The Autism Trail Guide Ellen Notbohm, 2007 Ellen offers advice on concrete issues such as math homework, video games, and tricky behaviour, and also tackles the more abstract concepts of parenting: trusting parental instincts, when to take risks, how to hang on, and when to let go. -- Back cover.

10 things every child with autism wishes you knew: Teach Me With Pictures Linda Hodgdon, Ruth Harris, Simone Griffin, 2013-07-28 An easy-to-use resource for professionals and parents, this book is full of fun and practical ideas to help motivate and extend communication and play skills in children with autism with the support of pictures. It contains 40 visual scripts across a range of different activities such as drawing, cooking, imaginative play, and life skills.

10 things every child with autism wishes you knew: Empowered Autism Parenting William Stillman, 2009-08-17 How parents can appreciate their autistic children prevent them from being pathologized, over-medicated, and marginalized In this groundbreaking book, William Stillman, an expert and passionate advocate on behalf of those with autism, offers a commonsense guide for parenting children with autism. He gives mothers and fathers, caregivers, and teachers the information they need to recognize the child with autism's unique personality, passions, and intellect and therefore liberate them from today's culture of fear. He shows why the current conventional incentive and reward systems send the wrong message to kids with autism and just don't work. This book offers a sensible ten-step guide for enriching relationships with kids with autism through a belief in their essential competence. Includes information that liberates parents from the culture of fear surrounding autism Explains how kids with autism are intelligent but may have unconventional methods of communication that need to be understood and appreciated Shows why your child doesn't need traditional therapy or medication to treat autism Written by an acclaimed expert on the topic of autism, who is himself an adult with Asperger's Syndrome

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