

# KIDS BOOKLET ON AUTISM

With Tips for Parents and Teachers



**Autism**<sup>TM</sup>  
NEW JERSEY

Hi! This booklet is just for you--Kids in kindergarten through 5th grade! It has information about kids and grown ups with autism and fun activities, too.

We hope that this booklet answers some of your questions about what autism is. If you have any questions or feelings you need to talk about when you're finished, be sure to talk to a parent, teacher, or another grown-up.

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Illustrations by Emily Quast

My little sister, Sarah, has been an inspiration to me ever since we were very young. Having autism, she faces many difficulties such as making friends and socializing with others her age. Despite the setbacks with her peers, Sarah always remains positive and her smile shines brightly. Sarah makes the most with what she is given--she is unique, loving and determined, and puts other's needs before her own. Seeing her grow up and overcome her obstacles made me realize that anything is possible with the right attitude and I have her to thank for that.

*~ Emily*



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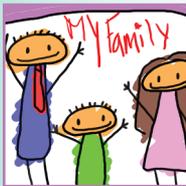
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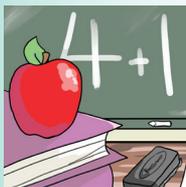
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# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT AUTISM

**What is autism?** Autism affects how the brain works and might make it hard to talk, understand other people and learn new things.

## **How do you get autism?**

You are born with autism just as some people are born with brown hair and some people are born with freckles. Scientists are trying to figure out exactly how autism happens and how to best teach children with autism.

## **How do people with autism talk?**

Many people with autism have a hard time using words and may even say the same word or sentence over and over. Some people don't talk, but instead use their hands, pictures or even an iPad. Then, there are other people with autism who can talk just like you.

## **Do kids with autism have**

**tantrums?** Some kids with autism might be happy and then become sad or mad. They might even have a tantrum. It might be because they have a hard time telling people what they need and want.



**How do kids with autism play?** Children with autism might play in a different way than other kids. They may like to stare at something for a long time, twirl a piece of string, or spin a toy car around and around. Kids with autism may play by themselves because they don't know how to play with other kids. They might need to learn how to play. If you know someone with autism, how does he or she play?

**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 in the world is unique in his or her own special way. How are you special? If you know someone with autism, how is he or she special?

**What are people with autism like when they grow up?** People with autism can learn to do all sorts of things when they grow up. They might have a job at a store, as an artist, or working on a computer. Many people with autism learn to make friends and have a job. Others will need a lot of help throughout their whole lives.

**How should I act around someone with autism?** Great question, and there's an easy answer! You should always try to be a caring person. Act like you usually would. If you are not sure how to hang out with a kid with autism, maybe a grown-up could show you how to get his/her attention. Even if kids with autism act differently than you, they still have feelings and can care about you. So just be yourself when you are with someone with autism. You may make a new friend!



# BROTHERS & SISTERS

Many children with autism have brothers and sisters who love them. Check out some feelings that brothers and sisters wrote to us about...

## Here are some questions that brothers and sisters ask...

### **Why does my brother or sister need so much special time with teachers?**

Everybody needs some time with teachers to learn new things. Just think of something you learned and how you needed someone to teach it to you. Kids with autism need to see and do things many, many times to learn them well. So, they need a lot of time with teachers to do the things that you do.

### **Why do my parents pay more attention to my brother even when he is bad? Do they like him more than me?**

Just like kids with autism may need more time with teachers to learn new things, kids with autism may also need more time with your parents to learn how to behave. Sometimes it may seem like your parents don't have time for you. You could show them this page and ask for some time alone with them. What would you like to do with them? All parents love their kids very much because all kids are special!





I felt **HAPPY** when my brother learned how to play with me. Now, he can take turns sharing his toy cars with me. Sometimes he still needs reminders from my mom or I have to give the red car back to him pretty quick. I like playing with my brother.



I felt **PROUD** when my brother was at the playground and he waved to another kid. Usually he ignores other kids, but this time he stopped and waved to say hello. I was really proud of him because it took him a long time to learn that.



I felt **EMBARRASSED** when my brother had a tantrum in the grocery store. I felt like everyone was staring at us. I knew my brother wasn't going to calm down. We had to leave the store before we were done shopping. It felt weird with everyone waiting for us to leave.



I felt **FRUSTRATED** when my brother wrecked my model airplane that I spent a whole weekend building. I really liked that airplane and wanted to hang it from my ceiling. But when my brother took it and threw it on the floor, it broke into so many pieces. I wish I had that airplane back.



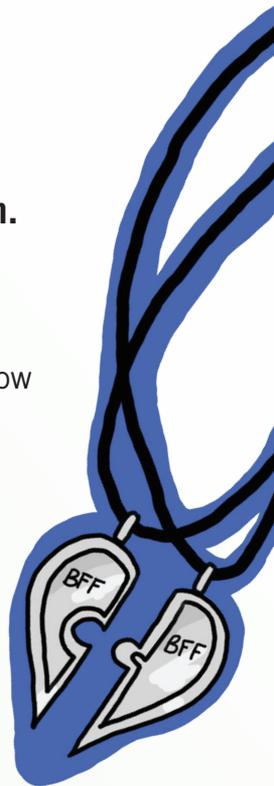
I felt **SAD** when my sister had to go to the doctor in another town. She and my mom had to stay overnight far away and I missed them.

# FRIENDS & CLASSMATES

**One of the kids in my neighborhood has autism. Is it okay to laugh if he does something that looks funny to me?**

Since you asked that question, you already may know that it's not nice to laugh at someone. It's okay to laugh if he is telling you a joke or doing something funny to make you laugh. But it is not okay to laugh if he is just being himself and doing things you don't understand.

Maybe he is excited about something that you don't know about. Instead of laughing, you could ask him to play with you. It may be easy or hard to play with him. Remember, you can always ask a grown-up for help. Be a good neighbor and a good friend, and you'll both be happier!



**How can I help a boy or girl with autism in my class?**

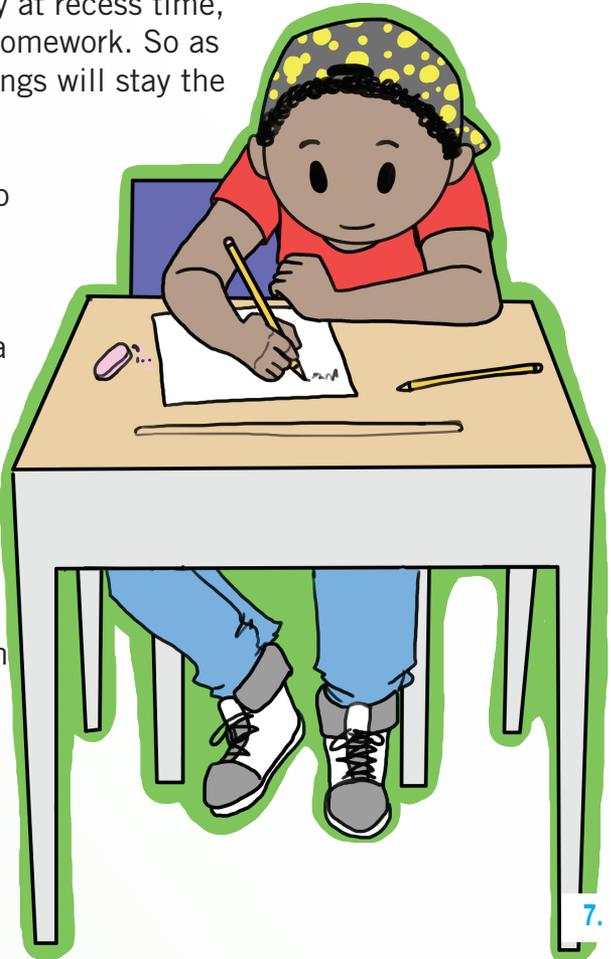
Make sure to always be nice and try to make children with autism feel comfortable. Always try to include them in the activities that you and your friends are doing. Use toys that they like, and talk to them about things that they want to talk about. You and your friends can also teach them how to play games on the playground. If they are being made fun of by another classmate, help them by inviting them to walk away and play with you instead. You can always ask your teacher for more ideas on how to help! Remember...being a friend to someone with special needs makes you feel special, too!



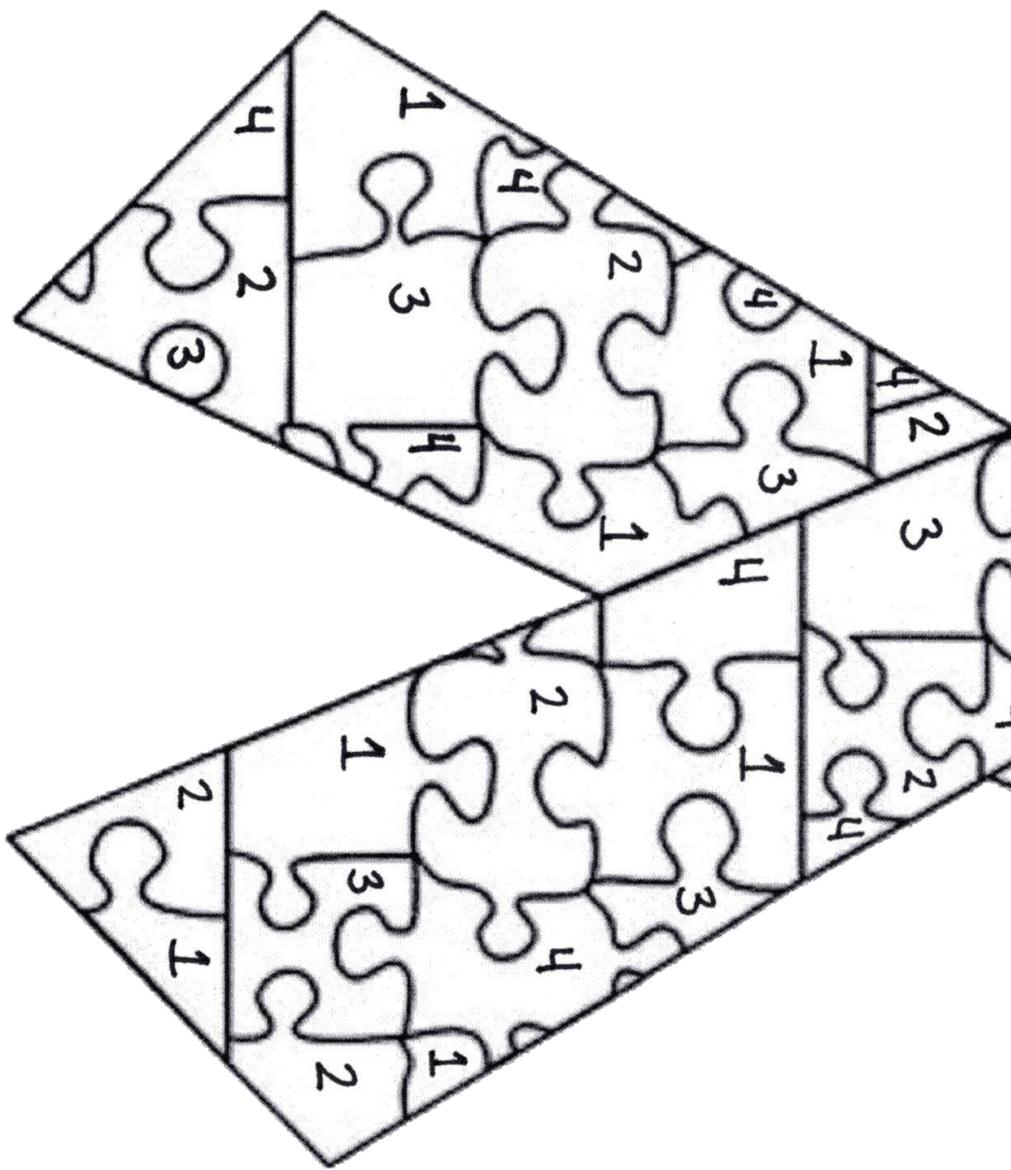
**We just got a new kid with autism in our class. The teacher said that he needs more help from teachers and from us. Why are the teachers and other kids more interested in him?**

It can be a little scary when things in your class change. It's good to know that your classroom will stay almost the same. The teacher will teach you things, your friends will be there, you will play at recess time, and you'll still have homework. So as you can see, most things will stay the same.

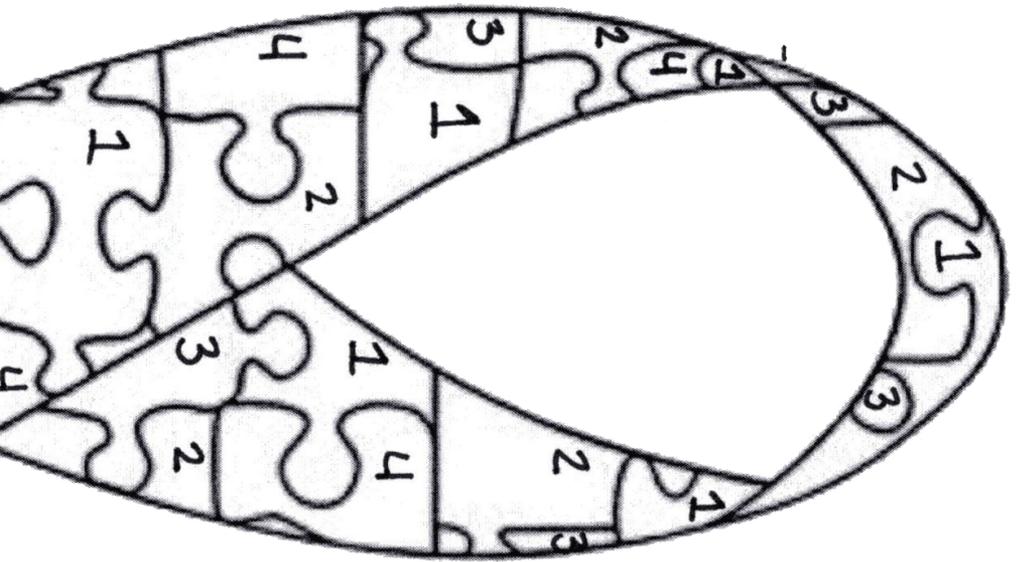
All students need help learning new things. Sometimes you need a lot of help, and sometimes you need a little bit of help. Kids with autism usually need more help than you do to learn something. That's why they might need more attention from the teachers – to learn the lesson. Teachers know how to make all of their students learn and feel good about themselves. All students are special!



# AWARENESS RIBBON!



Copy this page and share it with friends and classmates.  
Ask your teacher if you can hang it on a bulletin board  
with an autism fact to help spread awareness.



## COLOR KEY

- 1 = Red
- 2 = Dark Blue
- 3 = Yellow
- 4 = Light Blue

# PARENTS' CORNER

## Siblings and the whole family benefit when:

- ✓ They have a safe place to express all of their feelings on a regular basis with someone they trust.
- ✓ They receive accurate information about autism in a way that they can understand.
- ✓ They discuss problems and try different solutions.
- ✓ They have good friends.
- ✓ They watch adults who are both optimistic and realistic.
- ✓ They watch adults who solve problems in a way that is respectful to all involved.



As parents, we love our children and want what is best for them. When one child has autism, it is common to worry that your other children may be deprived in some way. While you may want to spend more time thinking about your other children's needs, the needs of your child with autism can be urgent and intense.

Here's some good news. Most siblings of children with autism are as well-adjusted as other children and continue to do well into adulthood. Many siblings become especially compassionate adults. Some go on to have a career in a helping profession.



Remember:  
Autism New Jersey is  
always ready to provide  
you with assistance to  
help your family. Call  
800.4.AUTISM or visit  
[www.autismnj.org](http://www.autismnj.org)

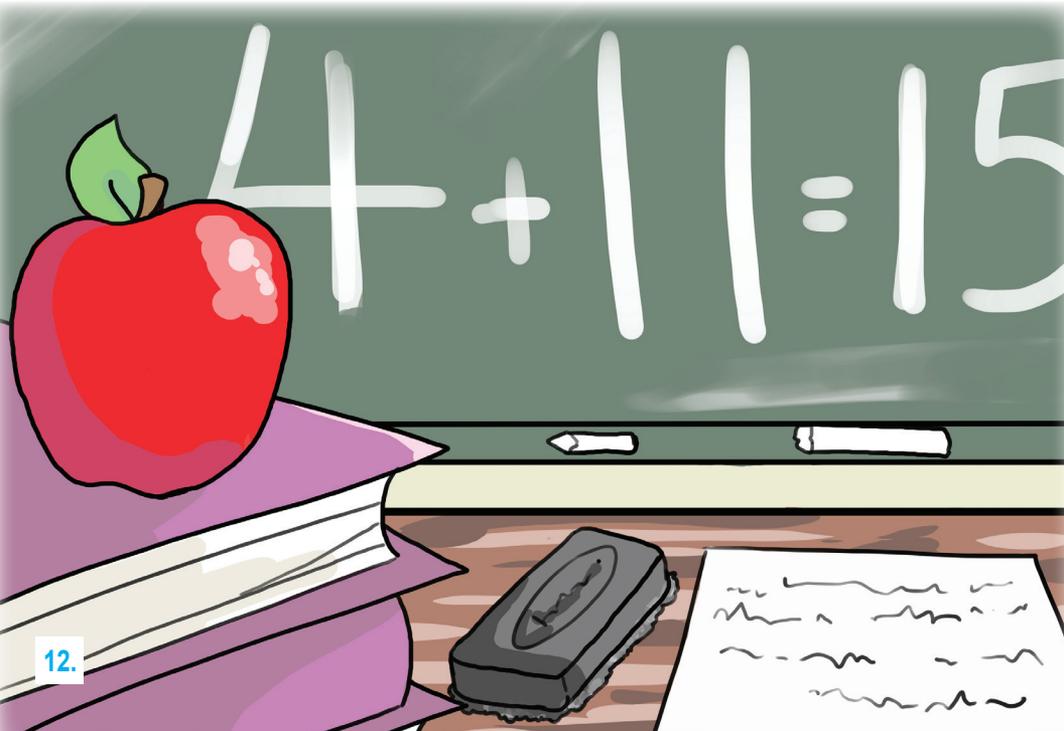
# TEACHERS' CORNER

As teachers, we care about our students and want what is best for them. When students with autism are educated with their peers, there are opportunities to enjoy and challenges to face.

No two students with autism are alike. It is important to individualize not only the educational programs but also the strategies you use to ensure that all of your students are getting along positively and successfully.

If the class knows about a student's disability, it is important to give children accurate information about the disability. Always check with the parents to see how they would like this approached, if at all.

- Read this booklet in class to provide accurate information in a kid-friendly way.
- Incorporate themes such as strengths and weaknesses. Everyone has something they are good at and something they struggle with. This idea may help your students become more compassionate about their classmates' challenges and more aware of what s/he can do well.



For kid-friendly presentations and lesson plans, go to our Autism Ambassador Hub, [www.autismnjambassador.org](http://www.autismnjambassador.org).

Registration for our Autism Ambassador Program opens every December. You will receive a free kit full of information and tools to help you spread autism awareness. We even have a section just for educators!



Remember Autism New Jersey is always ready to provide you with additional help and assistance. Call 800.4.AUTISM or visit [www.autismnj.org](http://www.autismnj.org)

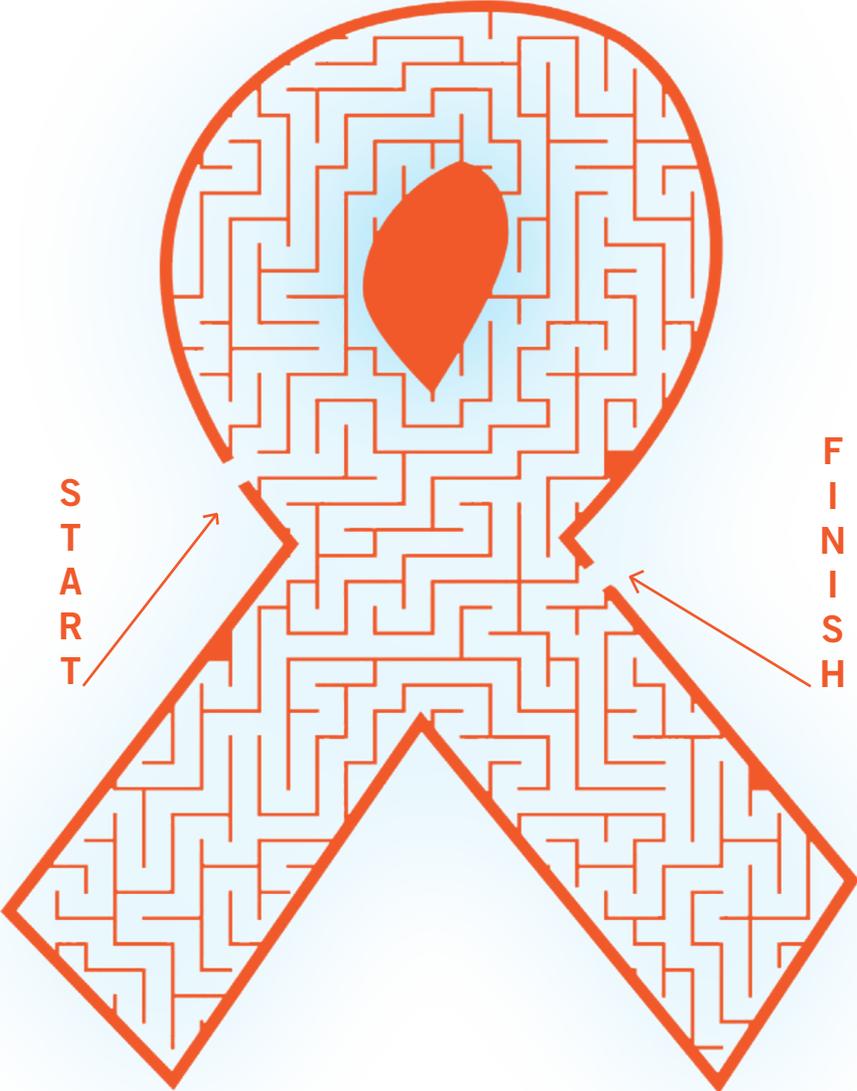


### Help Prevent Bullying

Create an understanding of diversity among all students. Help students to understand ways in which we all are different and that having a disability is simply one of these differences.

Establishing peer support programs and activities will help promote friendships and lead to less bullying.

# CAN YOU FIND YOUR WAY THROUGH THIS WINDING MAZE?



Copy this page and have a challenge with your friends and classmates to see who can get to the finish first.

B I N D G V M M O I E R M J Y  
 O L P O W N N A P E L Z Z U P  
 H T X U A L K M Q M W S S E Z  
 D Q I U A X S F S A K W F S G  
 O U A C L A S S R O O M R U C  
 I S G N I L E E F I N H E H N  
 Q I R G W N I O A O E V V M X  
 V Y G X E O K Q B U B N B D O  
 V U V R T P S B P L T R D P M  
 O E A N F L I L A Y I I M S I  
 K W G R S R V D M K A G S W E  
 A C O N N E C T U W J C F M B  
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 V A P C C L E Y D U U Y J V K  
 C H I L D R E N K C J Z Q T D

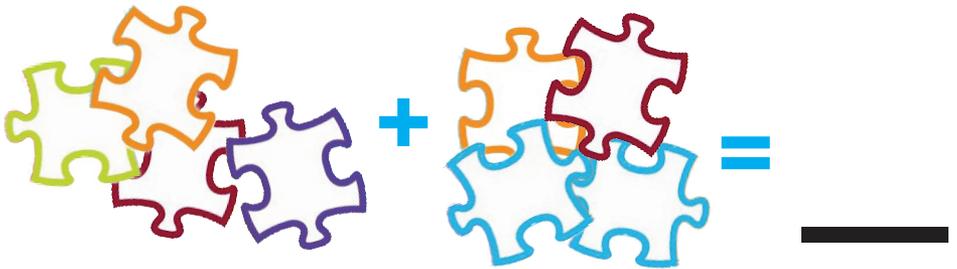
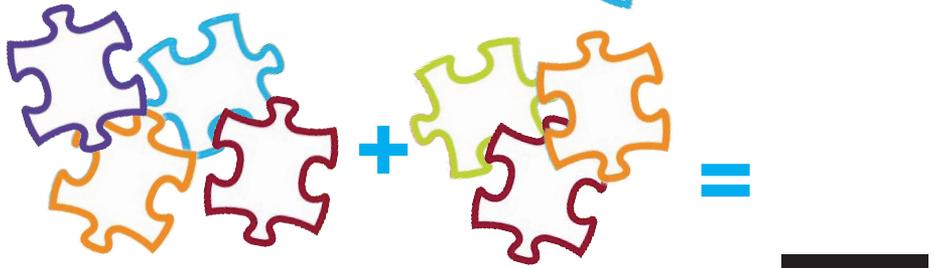
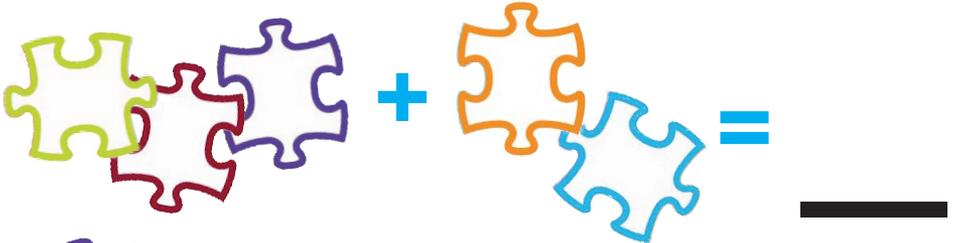
# WORD FIND

The words listed below are hidden in the word find.  
Can you find them all?

PUZZLE  
 CONNECT  
 RIBBON  
 AUTISM  
 CHILDREN

CLASSROOM  
 FRIENDS  
 AWARENESS  
 FUN  
 FEELINGS

ADD THE PUZZLE PIECES  
IN EACH ROW AND WRITE THE  
NUMBER IN THE BLANK SPACE:



# WORD Scramble

Can you rearrange the letters to spell words about autism?

T U A I M S      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

R E L A N      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

O N T N C E C      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

P Z Z U E L      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

I P C E E S      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

B O B I R N      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

I F E N R D S      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_



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