



# ◆ Note to Parents ◆



- Don't be scare-mongered into the horror story of Autism. Other people's stories are not your child's.
- Throw any development charts away, your child will sing to her own beat.
- Occupational therapy and speech therapy are great, but they can't speed up what isn't ready.
- Learn that there is so much more to communication than simply the voice.
- Learn about sensory issues, meltdowns, shutdowns and the need for structure from other Autistics.
- Plan ahead, at least 2 years ahead, about potential schooling and other teaching methods. Accept you will have a fight ahead, keep all professional reports. Be prepared to homeschool if no other option is available. Your child's health and happiness is the priority.
- Remember your child is very different from you; your dreams are not theirs, they are not here to fulfill your preconceived expectations. No child is.
- Learn about their social differences. Do they desire a close friend? Do they want that birthday party? Do they prefer to play alone? Are these desires yours? Or theirs? Ask the question, are they happy? Yes? Leave them be.
- Autistic traits, unless self-harming, are natural. If you are embarrassed, re-address your priorities. Teaching your child to repress traits can do more harm than good mental health wise. Celebrate Differences.
- Respect your child's autonomy and privacy. Sarah down the road doesn't need to know Johnny isn't toilet trained and shouldn't read about it on facebook. However, closed or secret groups with parents and/or autistic adults will be a treasure trove of information.
- Learn the difference between Autism and co-morbid conditions. Any challenges could be learning difficulties, anxiety, depression, OCD, sensory issues, many different aspects. Simply yelling about 'hating autism,' creates more stigma and doesn't help your child to accept their neurology. Also, it makes doctors, and other professionals put issues down to 'Autism,' without addressing ways to help co-morbid conditions individually.
- Life may be tougher for you parenting-wise, but remember every family has their struggles. A sociable, independent child who goes to 5 different after-school classes a week, achieving high grades isn't necessarily happier and certainly isn't any better than yours. Explore your own privileges and prestige issues if this concept is difficult for you.
- Stop worrying about what will happen when your child is an adult. They aren't. Enjoy their childhood. That's why you had them in the first place.
- Let your kid be free to be themselves.
- If in doubt ask, but ask the right people, preferably Autistic Adults.

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