

CREATE A WORLD OF UNDERSTANDING THIS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

*Strategies, Tips & Resources
For School & Home*



CREATE A WORLD OF UNDERSTANDING THIS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

Contents

- Contents

See P.g. 1

- The 8 Key Strategies to Embrace Difference

See P.g. 2

- Picture Books to Educate the Whole Community

See P.g. 3 - 4

- Promoting Understanding in the Classroom

See P.g. 5

- Sharing Diagnosis
 - Why should I tell my child?
 - What age should I tell my child?

See P.g. 6- 7

- Books for Teaching About Emotions

See P.g. 8 - 9

- Resources for Autism Awareness
 - Podcasts
 - Toys
 - Books

See P.g. 10-13



8 Key Strategies to Embrace Difference

April 2nd is Autism Awareness Day and a wonderful opportunity to raise understanding of ASD within the classroom/school

These 8 Key Tips to promote understanding might give you some ideas on what to do in your school or preschool!

1. Conduct the 'My Life in a Box' activity. This is a fantastic activity for the whole school. Each child brings in a box with objects that tell us about themselves e.g. favourite book, places they have been on holidays, sports, pets, etc. If the child has ASD or has a sibling with ASD they can include a book about ASD to read to the class. It is VERY important they talk about all the other interests first and then say "I have Autism/Aspergers" or "My brother/sister/cousin etc." Encourage ALL students to bring in epi-pens, asthma puffers, cultural objects or family traditions so everyone has something 'different'.
2. Explain AS at the right level for the class. (I highly recommend *All Cats are on The Autism Spectrum** - early years to secondary love this book. *see next page for info
3. Give real life explanations about sensory issues that student experience such as touch, movement, smell etc. "*When Johnny walks out the door at lunchtime he finds it hard when people touch him as he moves. When he is bumped accidentally he may push you away*"
4. Read stories to the class and explain the issues discussed in the book and relate them to what the students see in the student with AS (I highly recommend *Can I Tell You About ... Aspergers/ADHD/Autism*)
5. Explain how and why the child may play differently to other children. Give children some strategies to encourage someone with AS play with them.

***Make sure you have permission from parents to discuss a particular child's ASD in the classroom ***

6. Explain how children with ASD *need* sensory tools in the classroom.
7. Explain *how* to be a friend to someone with ASD
8. Write a letter to the school from your family explaining AS, and some strategies you have worked out.

Promoting autism awareness within the school can have a far-reaching impact:

My son (8 years) wrote a book titled 'My Aspergers'. He read it to the class. The school library published it, and it is still on the shelf today. An amazing and supportive school community' - Charmaine



This is a great video example of sharing a diagnosis
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wR2yReRVI_U



My Friend with Autism
By Beverly Bishop

Can I Tell You About Autism
By Jude Welton
(more books from series on the website)

All Cats Are On the Autism Spectrum
By Kathy Hoopman

BEAUTIFUL PICTURE BOOKS: EDUCATE THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

GIVE THE GIFT OF ACCEPTANCE & UNDERSTANDING

There are wonderful picture books to explain ASD, ADHD, etc to children. PLEASE consider giving a Picture Book to Cousins, Neighbours, Family or Friends to help people understand ASD. Here are 2 of my favourites but more on website.



1



INSIDE ASPERGER'S LOOKING OUT

Through engaging text and full-colour photographs, this book shows neurotypicals how Aspies see and experience the world. Each page brings to light traits that many Aspies have in common, from sensitive hearing and an aversion to bright lights and strong smells, to literal thinking and difficulty understanding social rules and reading body language and facial expressions. At the same time, the book highlights and celebrates the unique characteristics that make those with Asperger's Syndrome special.

ALL CATS ARE ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

This book takes a playful look at Asperger Syndrome (AS), drawing inspiration from the feline world in a way that will strike a chord with all those who are familiar with AS. This engaging book is an ideal, gentle introduction to the world of Asperger Syndrome.



2

3



ALL DOGS HAVE ADHD

All Dogs Have ADHD takes an inspiring and affectionate look at Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), using images and ideas from the canine world to explore a variety of traits that will be instantly recognisable to those who are familiar with ADHD.

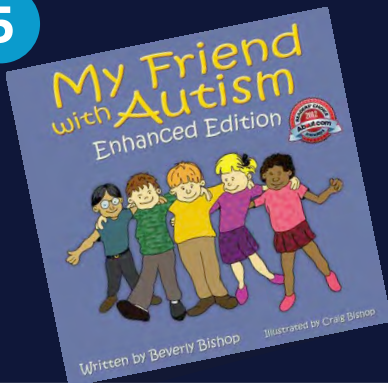
GUS THE ASPARAGUS

Meet Gus! Gus might be the only asparagus in his family, but he is happy. However, when he goes to school he starts to realise that he doesn't always 'fit in'. Gus is here to help kids understand that it's okay to be different. He will soon become a favourite with anyone who has ever felt a little bit out of place, kids and adults alike.



4

5



MY FRIEND WITH AUTISM

With vivid illustrations and a charming storyline this book will foster tolerance and understanding among peers. A peer narrator explains that his friend with autism is good at some things and not so good at others – just like everyone else. In an informative, positive tone, he addresses issues such as sensory sensitivity, communication differences, unique ways of playing and insistence on routine.

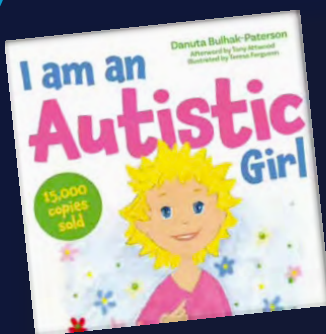
ALL BIRDS HAVE ANXIETY

All Birds Have Anxiety explores the symptoms of anxiety disorder and their impact on day-to-day life through colourful images of life as a bird. Its humorous yet gentle approach recognises the stress that anxiety can cause, helping people to better understand how it feels to have anxiety.



6

7



I AM AN AUTISTIC GIRL

Lizzie is an Aspie Girl – she has Asperger Syndrome, which means that her brain works differently to her friends and even to boys with Asperger Syndrome. In this book, Lizzie explains what it's like to be an Aspie Girl, including how she has a special talent for blending in with her friends, how she gets really tired after being at school all day, how she worries about making mistakes, and how she finds it hard to understand how she is feeling.



Promoting Understanding in the Classroom

Just as children learn about racism, cultural differences, and allergies etc teaching understanding of AS and ADHD is just another diversity topic and part of the educational landscape. If you are going to share the individual child's diagnosis you must get parent permission to do this, and also check if they want their child to be part of the discussion.

Ideas to try:

- Focus on the student's strengths.
- Focus on accepting that everyone is different and that we need to accept these differences.
- Explain why the child has difficulties in certain situations or act in certain ways; for example flapping hands, making noises, asking questions repetitively, fidgeting, calling out, etc.
- Allow the children to ask questions (often once they have had this chance to ask, the everyday questions, such as "why do they do that, get that?" will stop).
- If the student has support staff in the classroom, or is withdrawn from class, or has partial attendance, it is very important to let the children know why this happens, as they naturally wonder where the student is or why someone is working with them.

Important Note:

If the child's behaviour interferes with other students learning outcomes then they need to be informed on successful strategies in dealing with the child with the diagnosis. This may include teaching to ignore, move away, tell an adult etc.

There are some wonderful resources to explain AS and ADHD. These can be used for children with AS, ADHD, other children and family and are great starting points for discussion for everyone.

"Not being able to tune in naturally to other people can make it difficult for me to take turns, or to play cooperatively. If I feel confused about what people are doing, or what I am expected to do, I might be afraid to join in with games even if I do want to be friendly..."

I might only want to play if I decide on the game, and choose the rules. This isn't me being bossy. It's because I feel safer and less confused if I make the rules.

You can help me by gently reminding me about taking turns and taking a bit of extra time to explain the rules of the games you are playing.

Excerpt from 'Can I tell you about Asperger's Syndrome?'



I sometimes find it difficult to play games with other children

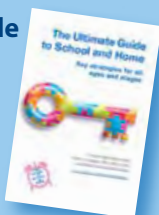
"Embrace Difference to Make a Difference"



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

The Ultimate Guide to School and Home

By Sue Larkey and Anna Tullemans



Teacher Assistants Big Blue Book of Ideas

By Sue Larkey and Anna Tullemans



Inside Aspergers Looking Out

By Kathy Hoopman



WHY SHOULD I TELL MY CHILD?

Why should I tell my child?

Often families worry about impact of their child knowing about their diagnosis, but in actual fact telling the child has been found to be extremely positive and beneficial.

Being on the Autism Spectrum affects all areas of your child's life. Sharing diagnosis allows your child to understand themselves, which is crucial all throughout school, social situations and the workforce. In the wonderful book, *Very Late Diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome* by Philip Wylie he states that, "Now I understood why I could not survive in an office environment for long, and why so many people misunderstood me. But, on the bright side, I had found the key to my life." This shows how in knowing diagnosis individuals are empowered to understand how being on the Autism Spectrum affects their engagement with the world.

Often people on the Autism Spectrum notice their differences, and without knowing their diagnosis begin to label themselves negatively, believing that there is something wrong with them. This can be encapsulated in Yenn Purkis' blog where she recounts that at school, "[She] tried all sorts of strategies to appear more 'normal,' but none of them worked." This reflects the experience of many individuals on the Autism Spectrum who receive their diagnosis later in life. It explains why so many people on the Autism Spectrum are so relieved when they receive diagnosis as it explains their experience.

What age should I tell my child?

It is recommended you start this conversation from around seven years of age. As this age tends to be where children begin to struggle socially and notice their differences. **This is because developmentally at 7 years of age, children tend to start forming groups and often begin isolating and disengaging from your child due to their struggles with social skills.**

However, as much as you want a clear-cut answer on what age to share, it really does depend on your child. The most important part of sharing diagnosis is not age but framing their diagnosis as a positive aspect of themselves.

Should I wait until my child asks?

Your child won't directly ask you, "Do I have autism?" Instead questions that may arise are, "Why won't anyone play with me?" "Why do I have no friends?" or their anxiety may show up. **I think you should tell the child before this occurs because you don't want them to build up anxiety towards socialisation.** Rather, you want them to understand themselves and their differences.

Facebook Q

What if I'm nervous to tell my child? What if I get it wrong?

It is totally normal to worry. Just like with all parts of parenting there isn't a right or wrong way. The fact you are reading this book already tells me you are an amazing parent/carer.

Autism Spectrum can be difficult concept to explain because you love and accept your child for who they are. It makes sense you don't want them to feel that their difference changes how they feel about themselves.

This is why I truly believe you must always come from a place of love and positivity when discussing diagnosis. If you take this approach and be open to your child taking time to process what that means, asking on-going questions as their understanding grows - then you have nothing to worry about.

It is totally normal to worry about sharing diagnosis.

**There isn't
a right
or wrong
way.**

What if my child has a few different diagnosis? Should I tell them all at once?

For me it would depend on the child's age and maturity. But as a general rule, I'd start with the diagnosis that impacts them the most. Consider the one that you talk to teachers, family and friends about the most (Yes - they do listen to what you say, be aware!)

Ultimately we want them to know about all their diagnosis but it may be overwhelming to disclose all at once.

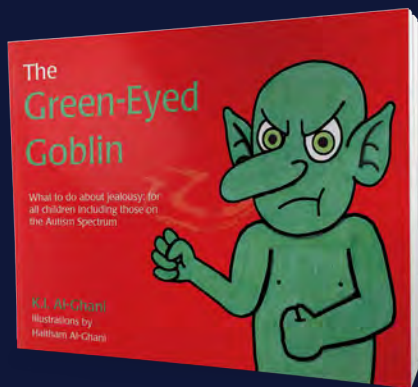
Ensure you tell them that majority of people on the Autism Spectrum have multiple diagnosis. Roughly 2/3 people with an ADHD or ADD diagnosis have at least one other co-existing condition; this would be something I would share with kids who like numbers to appeal to their understanding of the world. This can help your child see there isn't 'more wrong with them,' but it is actually very common.

BEAUTIFUL BOOKS FOR TEACHING ABOUT EMOTIONS

WHAT IS FEELS LIKE & WHAT TO DO!

more titles available
suelarkey.com.au

1



The Green-Eyed Goblin: By K.I. Al-Ghani

Green Eyed Goblin = JEALOUSY

This illustrated storybook explains jealousy through the story of Theo and his Green-Eyed Goblin. It will encourage children to talk about their feelings and learn how to subdue their own Green-Eyed Goblin for good. A section of tried and tested techniques for using with children, and a helpful introduction for parents and carers is included.

CODE B156

2

The Red Beast: By K.I. Al-Ghani

The Red Beast = ANGER

This vibrant, fully illustrated children's storybook is written for children aged 5+, and is an accessible, fun way to talk about anger, with useful tips about how to 'tame the red beast' and guidance for parents on how anger affects children with Asperger's Syndrome.

CODE B38



3

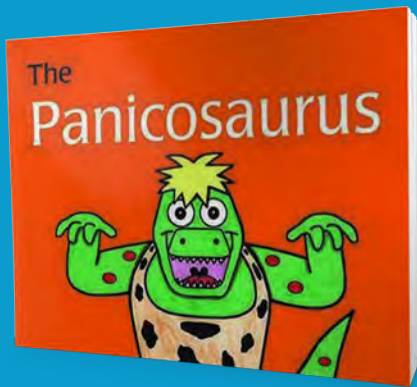
The Panicosaurus:

By K.I. Al-Ghani

Panicosaurus = ANXIETY

This fun, easy-to-read and fully illustrated storybook will inspire children who experience anxiety, and encourage them to banish their own Panicosauruses with help from Mabel's strategies. Parents and carers will like the helpful introduction, explaining anxiety in children, and the list of techniques for lessening anxiety at the end of the book.

CODE B39



4

The Disappointment Dragon:

By K.I. Al-Ghani

DISAPPOINTMENT

The Disappointment Dragon sometimes comes to see us all and, if we let him, he can make us feel sad or angry. The fun characters in this charming, fully illustrated storybook will help children to cope with, and discuss openly, their feelings of disappointment. There are many creative suggestions on how to banish the Disappointment Dragon and an introduction for adults explaining disappointment in children and how they can help.

CODE B41



5

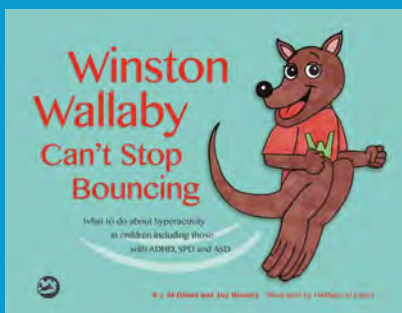
Winston Wallaby Can't Stop Bouncing

By K.I. Al-Ghani and Joy Beane

ADHD

This illustrated storybook explains hyperactivity through the story of Winston Wallaby and his uncontrollable bouncing at school. It allows children with ADHD, SPD and ASD to recognise and support their additional sensory needs. A helpful introduction for parents/carers and appendices with strategies to be used at home and in school are included.

CODE B42





WONDERFUL RESOURCES

I love personal accounts by people with ASD. They provide a wealth of insights, understanding and strategies that helped make a difference for them. **Pretending to be Normal – the updated version BY AUTHOR**, was the first personal account I ever read, and I found it absolutely fascinating.

VERY LATE DIAGNOSIS OF ASPERGERS SYNDROME

This is a fascinating read about the journey of getting a late diagnosis of ASD. How it helped.... make sense of the challenges he faced throughout his life and misunderstandings people had of him, and him of them. Diagnosis = Understanding & Acceptance.



TEMPLE GRANDIN

My Mentor and Hero! I often refer to quotes of hers on my facebook page. The quotes all come from her amazing books.

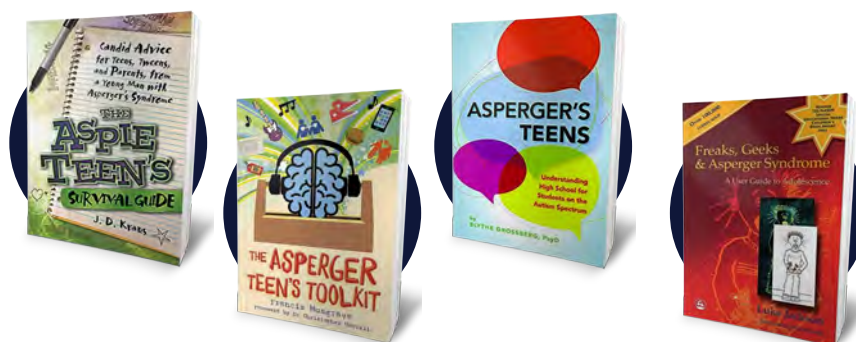
- ▶ The Way I see it
- ▶ Thinking in Pictures
- ▶ Different not Less
- ▶ The Loving Push

TEMPLE GRANDIN Movie (Available on streaming services)

Wonderful Movie for anyone to watch. Make sure you get out your tissues! An accurate portrayal of Temple Grandin's life which chronicles Temple's early diagnosis; her turbulent growth and development during her school years, and illustrates through mentoring and sheer will how a young autistic woman succeeds against the odds. An excellent movie to educate older children (10+), family members and staff on autism.

GREAT BOOKS FOR TEENS

- ▶ The Aspie Teens Survival Guide
- ▶ The Asperger Teen's Toolkit
- ▶ Asperger Teens
- ▶ Freak, Geeks and Asperger Syndrome



THE BENDABLE SMILING MAN KEY CHAIN

The Bendable Smiling Man Key Chain is the perfect addition to the sensory tool box that can be bent, twisted and turned keeping idle hands busy.

The key chain can be utilised on your keys or backpack and is a great fidget toy.

They are a great distraction for fidgety hands or to help you stay calm when feeling stressed.

Add visuals like 'wait' or 'finish' to create a great sensory tool too.



POM-POM KEY CHAIN



LIQUID TIMER KEYCHAIN



PORCUPINE BALL



MORPHS



SPINNING TOPS



PUNKI WRISTBAND



SMILE FACE STRESS BALL



WOODEN MASSAGER

TOKEN SHEET

Token Reward Systems are a great reward system which have great visual impact on a child with an autism spectrum disorder. He/she can immediately see how many tokens have been gained and how many more are needed before the incentive/reward is obtained.

More Great NEW sensory tools available on suelarkey.com.au

MORE TIPS & IDEAS

LISTEN TO MY FREE PODCAST AVAILABLE ON ALL PLATFORMS

Episode 150

Sharing Diagnosis with Family and Friends - Who, Why and How

Episode 228

Depressive Meltdowns - What they are and What to do

Episode 251

How to Share a Diagnosis with an Autistic Child, Peers and Siblings

Episode 256

From Learning to Communicate to Learning to Drive: Mum of Twins with Autism shares her Experiences

Episode 261

How to Create Progress (Not Perfection) for Children with Autism Spectrum (Best Strategy for Every Age and Stage)

Episode 81

How Embracing Autistic Strengths Changed His Life An Interview with Chris Bonello



THE SUE LARKEY PODCAST

Over 1.4 million downloads

250+ episodes to choose from

4 Ways to Learn



Live Virtual Workshop

Learn with Sue Larkey on Zoom from anywhere in the world. Includes interactive chat room plus Q&A with Sue. Recording you can re-watch (available for 3 months). Certificate for 5 Hours.



On-Demand /Online

On Opportunity to learn online, anytime, anywhere with World Experts including Laura Kerbey, Dr. Tony Attwood, Sue Larkey or from Lived Experience Dr Temple Grandin & Dean Beadle

ELEARNING.SUELARKEY.COM.AU



Professional Development at Your School

A range of options available
Contact dearne@suelarkey.com.au

5 HOURS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

JOIN ME FOR A *Face to Face Workshop*



**DATES ON WEBSITE!
SUELARKEY.COM.AU**

**CERTIFICATES
FOR 5 HOUR
COURSE ON
COMPLETION**

Find more at
suelarkey.com.au

**SAME COURSE AVAILABLE
Online, On Demand
ANYWHERE, ANY PLACE, ANYTIME**