



# ROD Autism Team Newsletter



## IN THIS ISSUE

**Will My Teen with Autism Live on their Own?**

**Autism Siblings – The Unsung Heroes**

**BREATHING TECHNIQUES FOR ANXIETY:  
10 CALMING ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS**

**SENSORY INTEGRATION AT SCHOOL:  
21 SENSORY BREAK ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS**

**SOCIAL STORIES FOR KIDS WITH AUTISM:  
21 SOCIAL STORY TEMPLATES & APPS**

**Grant Funding Opportunities:  
For Families and Professionals**

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by [Sara](#) | Mar 22, 2018 |



## Will My Teen with Autism Live on their Own?

This is a question we ask ourselves for our own family, but I hear this question all of the time as an occupational therapist, from parents of teens and children with autism. We hear you and we understand the anxiety, fear, and uncertainty that you are feeling. We are constantly thinking about the future and we try to picture what that future may look for my teenage brother. Our minds are thinking and turning and trying our best to predict the future for him, but in reality we cannot figure out what the future will hold. We never know what the future will bring, but we are trying our best to help prepare him. We are trying to guess if he will be able to live on his own. The autism spectrum is extremely variable and every person has unique strengths. Every person is unique and it is impossible to determine what the future will hold for any person. We take it day by day and help my brother learn valuable skills each day.

## Parents, you are doing the best that you can

Here are 5 statements to remember each day, especially when you are feeling overwhelmed.

### 1. Remember to Breathe

When you are feeling overwhelmed and anxious remember to take a step back and breathe. You may not know the answers, but you won't be better at figuring out a solution when you are all worked up and anxious.

### 2. Let go of what you can't control

There are so many things in our lives that we cannot control. I know I am someone that tries to control as much as I can, but I realize that I need to let go and trust the process.

### 3. Seek out help when you need it

You can't do it all on your own. Seek our help from family, friends, or professionals to help provide you with support and resources to help your family.

### 4. Love your Child/Teenager

Never forget what is most important in your life. Enjoy the moment now with your teen. Don't get caught up thinking so much about the future that you forget to savor the moment you are in now. This is still a great time in their life and you want to be able to present now as well. Love your teenager for who they are.

### 5. Remember to take care of yourself

If you are overworked and overwhelmed constantly, you won't be able to provide the best care for your teen. Find ways to take time for yourself and find activities that you enjoy and can recharge your own energy. The better we feel, the more we can do for our family.

## We Never Know what the Future will be like for our Teens

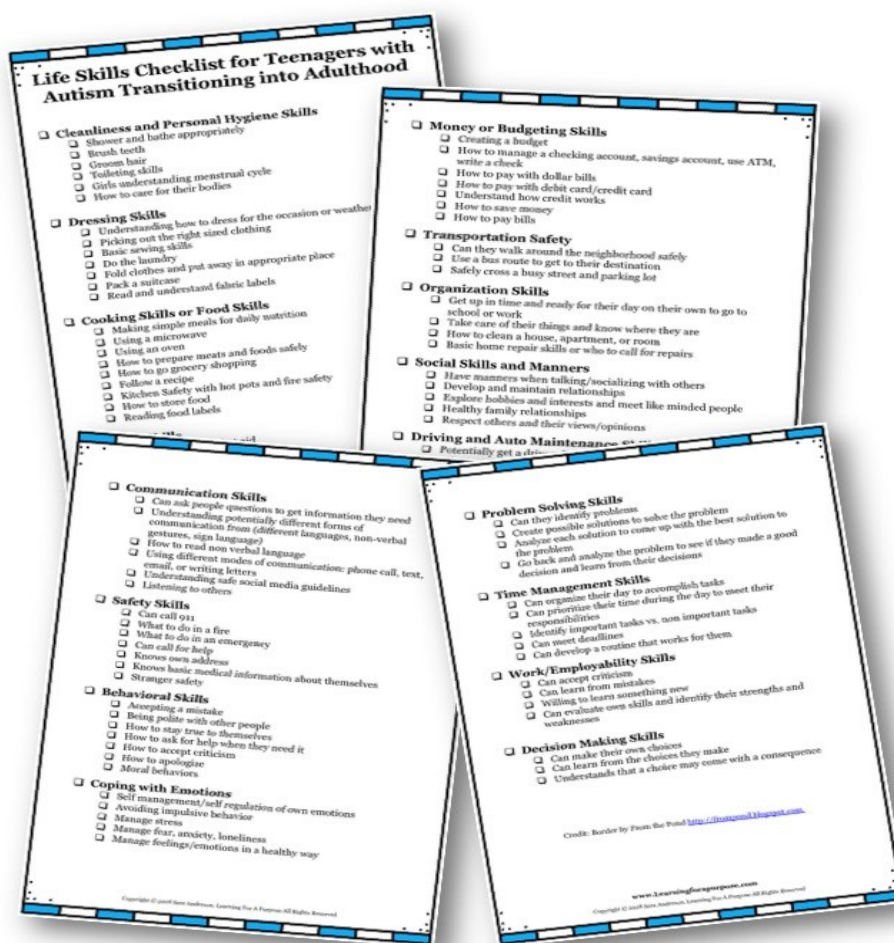
We cannot predict the future, but we can take steps each day to help our loved one learn valuable skills. We can also be present with them and love them for who they are. I don't want you to get so caught up with wanting to "change" your teen or make them conform to what society tells us is "normal". Embrace your teen for who they are and help embrace their strengths. Find out what motivates them and what makes them happy. We can do so much for our teens if we can help guide them to find their passions.

## Finding their Passions can help guide them into their future as an adult.

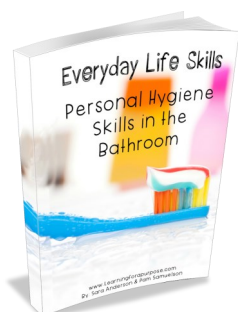
Every person seeks out to find their passions and what brings them purpose in life. I want to be able to wake up every day and be happy with who I am as a person and do meaningful work each day. This idea looks so different for each of us. Helping your teen to find what makes them happy and what brings them meaning can help them as they transition into adulthood.

I would love to hear what your passions are in the comments below. What are things that make you happy each day?

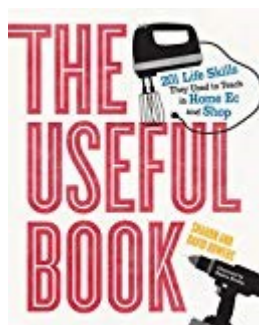
If you are looking for more ideas on specific skills to help your teen as they transition into adulthood check out our list of life skills below.



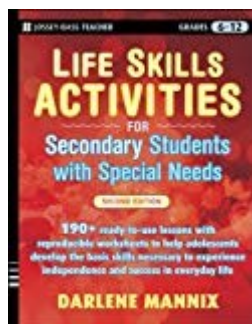
## Other Resources you will LOVE!



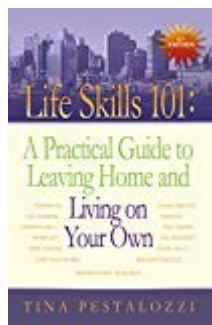
[Everyday Life Skills Personal Hygiene Skills in the Bathroom Ebook](#)



[The Useful Book: 201 Life Skills They Used to Teach in Home Ec and Shop](#)



[Life Skills Activities for Secondary Students with Special Needs](#)



[Life Skills 101: A Practical Guide to Leaving Home and Living on Your Own](#)



Published at <https://itsatinkthing.com/autism-siblings-unsung-heroes/>

# Autism Siblings – The Unsung Heroes

Siblings. If you're lucky enough to have one or more, it can be a blessing – and a curse! If you're the oldest, you go from being the center of your parents' universe, to suddenly finding yourself a little off-center when your younger sibling arrives. Of course, your parents don't love you any less – they just share their love and grow their hearts to accommodate both of you – but to you, the child, it can seem like a bit of a snub! However, having a sibling can be amazing; you'll probably always have someone who has your back, and be a best friend and confidante.

**And then there are 'autism siblings'.**



Brothers and sisters of children with autism are a *very* special breed of sibling. They have to be. Sometimes they grumble about it (or throw an all-out strop!) and I'm sure there are many times when life just doesn't seem fair. But, then they forget their grumbles and get on with the very important business of being siblings to children who can find relationships tough – and that's an incredible skill to have.

I know that H struggles with Tink's autism a lot of the time. I remember when she was born (H was four-and-a-half) and he asked when she'd be talking and when she would play with him. It's taken the best part of six years, but we're almost there. It's been a long wait for him, and he's not known for his incredible patience! He does get frustrated that she can't do some things he wants her to, or that she screams at him when he gets too close ("she only screams at me – never anyone else!"). And I know for a fact that he feels she gets a disproportionate amount of our attention. I know, because he's told me:

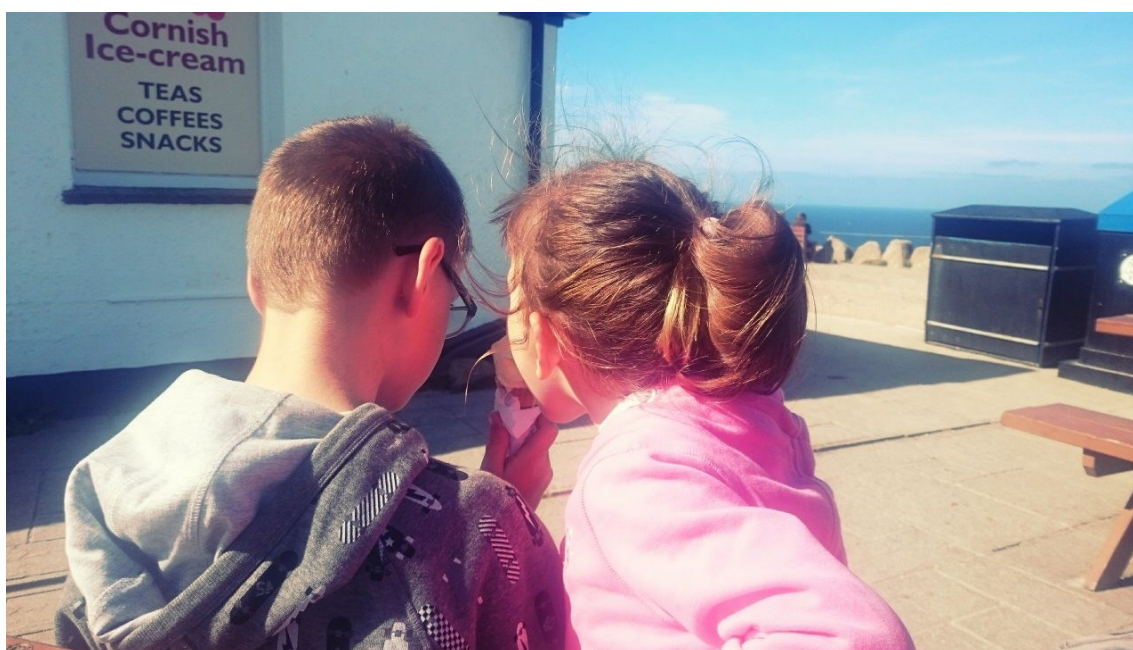
*"When Tink arrived, in 2012, you and Daddy loved her more and gave her all the attention, and I didn't feel that I got any."*

Ouch. Of course, I explained that we didn't love him any less, but we loved them both the same. I also told him that he'll always be my special boy, being my firstborn, and that he gets me all to himself now he's home educated, so he can't really complain now!



But, for all the struggles he has with his sister, H is the most amazing brother to her. He is very protective of her, and hates to see her mistreated in any way. He watches out for her when she's doing something potentially dangerous and he will try to calm her when she's upset, distressed, or heading for a meltdown. He persists in trying to play with her, and it's paying off; yesterday, they spent ages in the garden kicking a ball to each other, throwing a frisbee and generally having a lot of fun.

How things will pan out in the future with their relationship remains to be seen, but I'm sure H will always look out for Tink and be one of her loudest advocates. It's clear to see that although she hasn't quite turned out to be the little sister he was hoping for when she was growing in my tummy, she's not all that bad really and he adores her. She loves him too, even though he gets too close sometimes! I asked him what he loves about Tink, and he replied, "Everything. Her talking is amazing now!"



**Kelly**

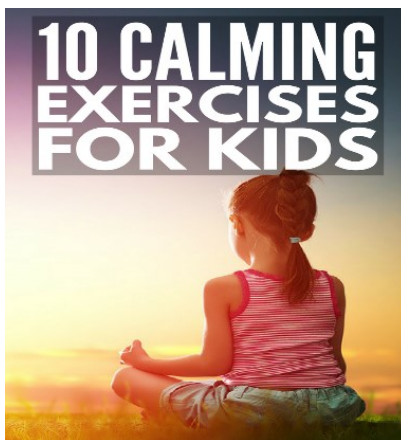
Kelly is a mother of two – her son H and daughter Tink. H is home educated, Tink is autistic. Kelly is a self-employed Virtual Assistant... Life is busy!

<https://itsatinkthing.com>



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## BREATHING TECHNIQUES FOR ANXIETY: 10 CALMING ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS



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Anxiety in children is not a new phenomenon, but it is definitely gaining a new understanding from modern parents who are recognizing the signs much earlier. When you think about it, childhood is full of so many new experiences that it is completely normal for kids to have some trepidation. But if your child is exhibiting signs of truly anxious behavior, it might be time to learn some breathing techniques for anxiety, as well as some calming activities that will help them to cope through stressful situations.

### How Can I Tell If My Child Has Anxiety?

Your best move if you think your child may have anxiety is to visit your pediatrician or a trained mental health professional to get a diagnosis. However, it can be helpful for you to understand exactly what the professionals are looking for when they examine your child. Some common signs of anxiety in kids include physical responses – like headaches or stomachaches that have no medical cause; emotional responses – like crying or getting overly upset about minor issues; thought responses – like worrying excessively for no reason; and behavioral responses – like acting out beyond what you might expect from a situation.

Any of these signs once in a while is normal in children. They can come from a lack of sleep, hunger or stress. But if they are continual and do not get better over time, it's worth having them evaluated.

## Is Anxiety Curable?

Anxiety isn't a disease that can be cured easily. Instead, with anxiety, we try to manage symptoms and learn ways to cope. This is where breathing techniques for anxiety are so useful. Mindful breathing is one of the most calming activities for kids, as it allows them to be proactive in managing their anxiety. The goal is not to eliminate anxiety but to help the child self-manage it.

## What is Mindful Breathing?

Mindful breathing is a breathing technique for anxiety that teaches your child to slow down their breathing when feeling anxious or stressed out. When anxiety hits, a child's breathing pattern will change. Often they will take short, fast, shallow breaths, which can even lead to hyperventilation and passing out. This type of breathing makes anxiety much worse. Mindful breathing helps your child to focus on their breathing technique to make anxiety better. Mindful breathing is the perfect tool because it is portable and can be used anywhere at any time your child needs it. This is especially important when you can't be there with your child to help.

## How Do I Teach My Child Breathing Techniques for Anxiety?

First, explain the concept of mindful breathing. Let them know that they can use this as a tool to control their anxiety any time and anywhere. Then, teach them the mindful breathing technique. While there are many variations you can choose from, the basic premise of mindful breathing is to take a slow breath in through the nose, hold the breath for a few seconds and then exhale slowly through the mouth. It should be repeated several times until the child is calm. Once they have mastered the basics, you can then encourage them to learn the different variations of mindful breathing.

## What Are the Different Breathing Techniques for Anxiety?

There are many examples of mindful breathing you can look up online, but here are some of the favorites that are suitable for younger children and all the way up into their teenage years.

### Bubble Blowing

The Bubble Blowing Technique is one of the best for very young children, as it allows them to learn through play. To make it work, give them a small **toy soap bubble** container and wand to practice blowing bubbles. They will learn quickly that if they blow too hard or too fast, the bubble will burst before it has time to take shape. But by blowing slowly and with purpose, they can blow a perfect bubble. Have them practice the technique with real bubbles before removing the soap and letting them use only their imaginations.

## **Deep Belly Breathing**

The Belly Breathing Exercise is another good one that requires imagination. Using the basic mindful breathing technique described above, have your child take in deep breaths through their nose, while imagining that there is a balloon in their stomach. Their belly should inflate as they breathe in and deflate as they breathe out.

## **Elephant Breaths**

This is a good one for waking up a sluggish child. Have them stand with their feet shoulder-width apart, arms dangling in front of them like an elephant's trunk. As they take a deep breath in through their nose, have them raise their arms high above their head like an elephant raising its face. As they breathe out through the mouth, the arms can go back down. Repeat a few times to get them laughing.

## **Bumble Bee Breaths**

This is a well-known breathing technique for those who have done yoga. It involves sitting comfortably on the floor with legs crossed. Have the child close their eyes, place their fingers in their ears, breathe in slowly through the nose and then hum out the exhalation. This is a very comforting and calming technique that kids often really enjoy.

## **Flower Breaths**

Flower breaths are as simple as telling your child to imagine smelling a beautiful flower. Breathe in the scent through their nose and release it through their mouth. They can practice this as you are out and about by stopping to smell the different flowers they see.

## **Hissing Breaths**

Similar to the Bumble Bee Breaths, Hissing Breath involves breathing in through the nose and releasing the breath with a long hissing sound through the mouth. Teach kids to try and let the hissing last as long as they can, as the longer it lasts the better they are controlling their breathing.

## **Bear Breaths**

This is a great one for just before nap time or any activity that requires calm. The child should imagine a bear hibernating. The idea is to be restful and almost lazy. Breathe in for four seconds, pause for two seconds and breathe out for four seconds. Pause for two seconds and repeat.

## Bunny Breaths

Bunny Breaths are often a favorite for kids, as they just love the idea of pretending to be little bunnies. It involves three quick sniffs through the nose and one long exhale through the nose. Kids can choose to act like bunnies, hopping around, sniffing the air, looking for carrots or even burrowing into the ground. This is a great one for when a child is extremely upset and starting to hyperventilate. If they have practiced it enough in a fun way, when it comes time to use it, they will find it very helpful.

## Hot Air Balloon

Have your child sit on the floor with legs crossed, cupping hands around their mouth. Have them take a deep breath in through the nose and then slowly blow out through the mouth, moving hands and arms outward with the exhale as if blowing up a hot air balloon. Once the balloon is as big as they can make it, have them breathe normally, swaying side to side as they watch the hot air balloon fly high. The exhale on this breathing technique is very relaxing for children and makes great use of their imaginations.

## Dragon Fire Breaths

Have your child place their hands under their chin, interlacing fingers. As they inhale, have them lift their elbows upward around their head, and as they exhale, have them lift their heads up and give a whispered roar into the sky, pretending to be a dragon breathing fire. As they exhale, their arms should fall down toward their sides one more. This is great for raising energy, and it's perfect for when a child feels nervous or scared.

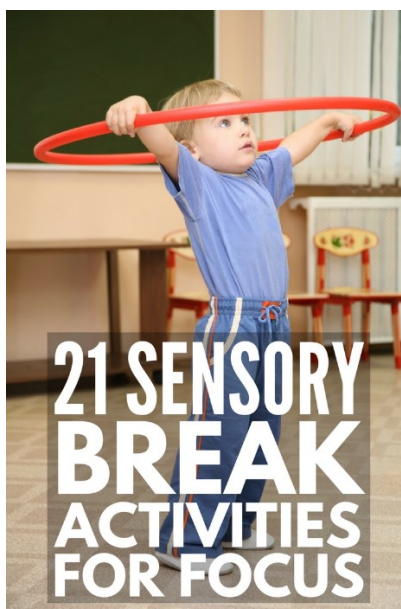
There are many games and toys you can try out with children to help them learn these breathing techniques for anxiety. Besides the aforementioned bubbles, you can also try giving your child a **small pin-wheel** to blow as they practice each breathing type. Not only will it help them to learn the techniques, but it has an added bonus of giving them something to focus on to help calm down. Another great toy for them is a **hoberman sphere**, which is perfect for the belly breathing and the hot air balloon. It helps them to visualize filling something up, as they open the sphere. The bright colors may also help to cheer them up!

Having easy calming activities for kids on hand will give you the tools you need to help your child through any issues they may face due to their anxiety.

## Katie

Katie is the voice behind popular mom blog, It's a Mother Thing. She's a 30-something mother of three boys and is addicted to coffee, bullet journaling and Instagram. She lives in Salt Lake City, Utah, where she has perfected the art of not swearing in front of her Mormon in-laws. She can recite every line from Mean Girls.

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## SENSORY INTEGRATION AT SCHOOL: 21 SENSORY BREAK ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS

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If your child has been diagnosed with ADD, ADHD, sensory processing disorder, autism, or any other developmental delay or challenge, you or your child's teacher may be on the hunt for classroom-appropriate sensory break activities you can include in his or her IEP, and we're sharing 21 simple ideas you can start using TODAY to help restore a sense of calm to help your little one focus and learn.

### **What is a sensory break?**

Also known as a 'brain break', sensory breaks are designed to provide calming or active input to help a child concentrate. Whether your little one gets distracted easily, appears hyperactive, or struggles with impulse control, or appears tired, disinterested, or lost in his or her own world, engaging in regular sensory break activities throughout the day will help him or her gain the sensory input needed to stay alert and focused both in the classroom and at home.



## What are the benefits of brain breaks for kids?

While sensory breaks are especially important for children who struggle with challenges like ADD, ADHD, sensory processing disorder, and autism, scheduling regular movement breaks throughout the day can benefit all children. By giving their brains a rest and allowing them to engage in a few minutes of physical activity to get their wiggles out, teachers may notice:

- Improved attention and focus
- Increased retention of material being taught
- Improved emotional regulation
- Reduced behavioral problems
- Improved gross motor skills
- Increased motivation
- Inclusion and cooperation

## How often should children engage in sensory break activities?

For younger kids, sensory break activities should occur more frequently than is realistic in a classroom setting, but based on the literature I've read online, a good rule of thumb seems to be every 1-2 hours. Another great option is to set-up a sensory station in the classroom where kids can go if they are having trouble concentrating in between movement breaks. This may require a little prompting from teachers at first, but over time kids can learn to recognize when their attention is fading so they can proactively seek the sensory input they need to boost their energy.

## 11 classroom-appropriate sensory break activities

While there's no denying regular movement breaks can have positive impacts on kids and adults alike, finding classroom-appropriate sensory break activities can be challenging. In a classroom filled with desks and chairs, it's not practical (or safe) to engage the entire classroom in elaborate activities that require a lot of room. Here are 11 fun ideas that work well in small spaces!

1. **Animal Walks.** Write a bunch of different animals on different pieces of paper, throw them into a hat, have each student choose one, and then have him or her walk across the classroom while pretending to walk like the chosen animal and see how long it takes the rest of the students to figure out what the animal is.
2. **Bounce on an exercise ball.**
3. **Dance!** Turn on some tunes and ask the whole class to get up and get their wiggles out.
4. **Planks.** While boring on its own, engaging in a contest to see who can hold a plank the longest can make this core strengthening exercise a little more exciting!
5. **Jumping jacks.** Set a timer and see who can do the most jumping jacks without stopping.
6. **Wall squats.** Have each student stand with their backs against the wall with their feet a foot or so in front of them, and have them slowly slide down the wall so they're 'sitting' without a chair beneath their bums. See who can hold the position the longest!
7. **Jog in place.**

8. **Leg lifts.** Leg lifts are a great classroom exercise for restless kids! Have each child stand sideways behind a chair and, using the chair for support, have them lift their legs up with their knees at a 90-degree angle. Try varying the length of time it takes her to raise and lower their legs (5 counts up, 5 counts down), and then see if they can balance for a count of 10 without holding onto the chair.
9. **Simon Says.** Kids love this game, and you can make it extra motivating by choosing different students to be ‘Simon’ each day as a reward for good behavior, helping around the classroom, completing school work, etc.
10. **Listening to music.** Create a calming playlist and an upbeat playlist on an inexpensive **MP3 player**, connect a pair of **volume-limiting headphones** to the player, and allow your students to take a 5-minute time out to listen to the music of their choice when needed.
11. **Spontaneous recess!** On days when your classroom is extra rowdy (i.e. Friday afternoons, the day before a big holiday, etc.), surprise them with an extra recess, walk around the neighborhood, or other outdoor activity to get them away from their desks.

## 10 sensory break activities to enjoy at home

Brain breaks for kids aren’t just beneficial in the classroom. They can also help at home when kids are struggling to concentrate on homework and school projects, or when bad weather or illnesses force them to spend large blocks of time cooped up indoors. These sensory break activities require a bit more space, and most can be enjoyed by the whole family!

1. **Chi Flow & Phreeze Yoga Game Card Deck.** It’s a combination of yoga and Twister, and your kids will love it!
2. **Fun with pillows.** You can create a lot of sensory break activities with pillows! If you have a couch with big pillows, set them up on the floor and ask your child to turn them over as many times in a row as she can. You can also have her drag them from one end of your living room to the next and place a couple of toys on top along the way to see how long she can go without dropping them! Don’t have large couch pillows? No problem! Grab a couple from your bed and have your child walk up and down the stairs while holding the pillows in her arms.
3. **Square scooters.** **Square scooters** aren’t just fun – they also help create a ton of different core exercises for kids, which double as great sensory break activities! For example, you can have your child lay with her tummy on the scooter, and then ask her to navigate around your living room using only her feet while she picks up various objects off the ground with her hands. Another idea is to have her sit cross-legged on the scooter and then move herself around the room using a broom while singing, ‘Row Row Row Your Boat’!
4. **Have a hula hooping competition!**
5. **Leg kicks with an exercise ball.** Have your child lie on her back with her hands at her side and her knees tucked into her chest. On the count of three, gently throw an **exercise ball** toward her, and have her straighten her legs in front of her so she can kick the ball back to you with her feet. It’s challenging to get the hang of, but it can be lots of fun!
6. **DIY crash mat.** Getting your child to walk across a crash mat can be a lot of fun, and it’s easy to make your own one at home. All you need to do is place a bunch of pillows on the floor and throw a few blankets overtop. BOOM! It’s that easy. Play around with the height and number of pillows to make it more challenging!
7. **Ball exercises.** An **exercise ball** offers countless sensory break activities for kids! Ask your child to lie on her tummy on the ball and sort objects from one container to another, have her sit on the ball and then lie backwards and reach her arms above her head so she can retrieve objects off of the floor, see how many times she can crawl over the ball, ask her to give you a ‘massage’ by lying on the floor while she rolls the ball up and down your back, get her to push the ball up a flight of stairs...the possibilities really are endless!

8. **Balloon Tennis.** Grab a couple of [fly swatters](#) and blow up some [balloons](#) and then check out [this fun balloon tennis activity](#) over on Little Bins for Little Hands!
9. **Tightrope Walking.** All you need is a bit of [masking tape](#) and a little imagination, and you can make all kinds of tightrope obstacle courses using your child's favorite toys. A simple example is to have her walk from one end of the room to another with an object in each of her hands, and then have her stand on a [step stool](#) at the end of the 'tightrope' and bend over to place each object into a bucket. Simple, easy, and effective!
10. **Fun at the park.** If your little one struggles to concentrate, visiting your local park before and/or after school can help shed some energy to help with concentration at school and while doing homework.

Whether you're the teacher or parent of a child with ADD, ADHD, sensory processing disorder, autism, or another developmental delay or challenge, these sensory break activities for kids are designed to provide children the sensory stimuli their bodies need so they can focus and learn. Perfect for use at school or at home, these movement break ideas are also great for improving gross motor skills, emotional regulation, and overall behavior while also encouraging cooperation and inclusion within the classroom.

## Dani



Dani is a 30-something freelance writer and social media consultant who has an unhealthy love for makeup, hair, and fashion. She lives with her husband and 6-year-old daughter in Toronto, Canada and hopes to move to a warmer climate someday. Preferably tomorrow.

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## SOCIAL STORIES FOR KIDS WITH AUTISM: 21 SOCIAL STORY TEMPLATES & APPS



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If you're the parent, caregiver, or teacher of a child with autism spectrum disorder, you are well aware of the social challenges kids with autism face, and if you're looking for Social Stories for kids with autism, you've come to the right place.

While it has been said that no two individuals with autism are the same, social challenges are one of the hallmark symptoms of autism. A child with ASD may seem emotionally detached, have difficulty interpreting the thoughts and feelings of others, and struggle to see things from someone else's perspective.

They may also have difficulty regulating their emotions and behaviors.

**But there is hope.**

With autism diagnoses being handed out as frequently as they are, the internet is full of autism resources, and there are heaps of Social Stories for kids with autism that help teach basic life skills. From potty training and tooth brushing to learning not to hit and bite and simple self-regulation strategies, we've got 21 social story templates and apps to help your child with autism.

Let's start with the basics...

## *What is a Social Story?*

Created by Carol Gray, Social Stories are written descriptions of everyday situations and events told from a child's perspective. The intention behind Social Stories is to give a child something to rehearse so that she's prepared once the situation described actually takes place. This can be an excellent strategy to prepare your child for toilet training, to help encourage her to try new foods, to teach her what is (and is not) appropriate behavior, to help her understand important safety issues, and to teach her other life skills.

Check out the book [The New Social Story Book](#) by Carol Gray for more details on how to use Social Stories to teach social skills to kids with autism.

## *How to Write a Social Story*

While there are tons of free Social Stories available online as well as printable Social Stories you can download for a minimum fee, customized Social Stories tend to do best as they can speak to your child's individual needs and include real life photos of the people and places related to the skill you are trying to teach.

Social Stories can be as simple or complex as you want to make them – don't let the gorgeous videography and photography of others scare you off! You don't need a degree in computer programming, nor do you need to be a renowned photographer to learn how to write a Social Story. All you need is a little creativity to find ways to explain life skills to your child.

**Here are some basic tips on how to write a Social Story to get you started:**

- 1. Start with a goal.** What is it you are trying to teach your child? You should only have one goal per Social Story, and it should be very clear.
- 2. Be a detective.** Gather all of the information you need to write your Social Story. What skills does your child need in order to master the skill you are trying to teach? What obstacles do you foresee hindering your child's ability to learn this skill? What tools and props can you use to facilitate openness to learning this skill?



3. **Use the right language.** Social Stories should be written in the first person from the child's point of view. Remember to use simple, positive, age-appropriate language and to incorporate descriptive sentences (the Who, What, When, Where, and Why of your story), offer perspective (how will the child react and feel?), and give clear direction (what is expected of the child?).
4. **Provide simple steps.** When providing direction, break the skill or situation down into simple steps your child can follow. Remember that kids on the autism spectrum are very literal, so don't skip the steps your feel are implied as your child may not pick up on these nuances.
5. **Include social scripts.** If there is a verbal component to the skill you are trying to teach, make sure it is clearly outlined with a social script your child can follow.
6. **Appeal to special interests.** If your child loves a certain TV character or has another special interest, use that to your advantage!
7. **Include photos.** Children with autism are often visual learners, so try to incorporate visuals wherever possible. Ideally, you should use real-life photos of people, events, and places to make the Social Story as real as possible.
8. **Practice.** Read the story with your child on multiple occasions and provide opportunities for her to practice the skill you are trying to teach. Have her read the story with others, and consider creating additional practice cards when teaching complex skills.

### *Social Story Examples*

We have tons of great Social Stories app recommendations and Social Story templates below, but before we get to that, I wanted to share a couple of Social Story examples to help put you in the right mindset so you understand what they are all about.

I found a ton of **No Hitting Social Story examples** online, and they offer the perfect example of how simple or complex you can make them depending on your needs and how creative you are. Here are my favorites:

#### **Free Download:**

The **I Will Not Hit Social Story** by Boardmarker is a very basic example of a Social Story that can be created on a computer with clip art. [Click here to access.](#)

#### **Paid Download (\$4) with Additional Tools:**

The **No Hitting Social Story for Children** by Teachers Pay Teachers comes with a color copy of a story available for download as well as downloadable desk cards for visual reminders. [Click here to access.](#)

#### **Free YouTube Clip:**

<https://youtu.be/8iTPPh1d2j8>

If you do a quick search on YouTube, you find a ton of social stories about common topics. I particularly love the WonderGroveKids channel ([subscribe for free here](#)) and this clip offers a fun way to teach kids why they should keep their hands to themselves.

## [Social Stories App Recommendations](#)

If you want to make your own Social Stories but aren't really the writing type, there are a lot of fabulous Social Stories apps you can download to your smartphone or tablet. Here are a few of my favorites!

### [StoryMaker™ for Social Stories App by Handhold Adaptive, LLC](#)

If you're going to purchase software to create your own Social Stories, this is the app I recommend. It includes exclusive content by Carol Gray (creator of the Social Stories methodology) and it allows you to create your own Social Stories using pictures, text, and audio. What I love most about this app is the fact that you can email and print your creations, making it a HUGE time-saver for busy parents, teachers, and therapists! If StoryMarker™ for Social Stories is too pricey for you, here are 3 other less expensive options I like:

### [Social Stories Creator & Library App by Touch Autism](#)

This is a free app with social stories for purchase as well as the ability to create your own social story by uploading your own photos, recording your own voice, and more.

### [Stories2Learn App by MDR](#)

This is a step above the Social Stories Creator & Library app in that it has 12 social narratives and the ability to create customized narratives with photos, text, and audio recording. It's a paid app, and can be used to create visual schedules as well.

### [Autism Toolbox Bundle App by I Get It LLC](#)

This is another wonderful tool to help you inexpensively create customized stories for your child with your own photos, text, and audio files, and you can email them to yourself in PDF format so you can print off a hard copy.

## [Social Story Templates](#)

While customized Social Stories are more effective and children enjoy using their tablets for learning, time is a luxury most of us don't have. Thankfully, there are heaps of generous parents and therapists out there who offer Social Story templates and activities for download. I often find free Social Stories are way too basic, but a site called Teachers Pay Teachers offers fabulous printable social stories with activities at an affordable price. Here are some of my favorites, all of which are under \$5!

[Going Potty](#)

[I Can Calm Myself Down](#)

[Respecting Personal Space Is Really Important!](#)

[Classroom Rules](#)

[Not Yelling or Crying in Class](#)

[Inside Out Feelings](#)

[I Can Brush My Teeth](#)

[Table Manners](#)

[No Screaming](#)

[No Hitting with Social Skill Activities](#)

[Sometimes I Get Angry](#)

[It's Okay to Ask for Help](#)

[Lining Up](#)

[The Fire Drill](#)

[No Swearing](#)

[Hygiene Set](#)

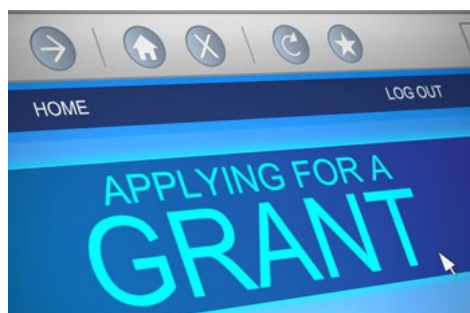
[Fidget Social Story](#)



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Published online at: <https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/grant-funding-opportunities>

## Grant Funding Opportunities: For Families and Professionals



Updated by  
Melissa Dubie, MS and Marci Wheeler, MSW  
February 2019

### Overview

Staff of the Indiana Resource Center for Autism receive numerous requests each year from organizations, professionals, and families to fund a host of things, including iPads and other technology, training, services, and resources. This article outlines grants available nationally, statewide, and through private local community organizations for families, educators, and professional organizations in Indiana. If you take the time to fill out the applications and follow the specific guidelines each funding organization requires, there are dollars available. To facilitate your search for grant funding, we've identified and targeted four specific areas of need: Crisis & Health Services, Therapy or Educational Services & Related Products, Technology, and Training.

Writing a grant may seem overwhelming, but it can be done! Start by reading through, gathering, and organizing all the information needed to submit the grant. An application typically asks applicants for the goals, outcomes, objectives, measures, and evaluations of the project or services the grant will help fund. A detailed projected budget is usually very important, and in some cases, a family may need to provide their tax return to prove eligibility.

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Dubie, M. & Wheeler, M. (2019). Grant funding opportunities: For families and professionals. Retrieved from <https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/grant-funding-opportunities> .

## National

### Autism Care Today SOS Program:

What grant covers: Program for those on the autism spectrum in immediate personal danger or harm if treatment is not found.

Who qualifies: Family income must be below \$45,000/year. Applicant may not have received support from ACT Today! within the past 12 months of applying.

Award amounts: As funds permit. Maximum amount \$5,000.

How grant is paid: Directly to pre-approved treatment providers, assessors, or materials vendors.

How do I apply: <http://www.act-today.org/our-funds/autism-care-today-sos/> If no email access call their office at 1-877-9-ACT-TODAY (1-877-922-8863).

Deadline: Ongoing.

### Autism Escapes:

What grant covers: Its primary purpose is to arrange air travel on private jets for families of children with autism in need of medical care for their children.

Who qualifies: Individuals impacted by an Autism Spectrum Disorder who have co-occurring medical problems such as seizures and gastrointestinal disorders and who for whatever reason cannot use commercial flights.

Award amounts: Flights on private aircraft are provided free of charge.

How grant is paid: Free flights for medical appointments.

How to apply: Download and complete application: <http://www.autismescapes.org/pdf/Autism%20Escapes%20Application.pdf>

Deadline: Ongoing.

### Autism Speaks Cares:

What grant covers: The grant program helps families to cover critical expenses related to the welfare of the family member with autism on a case-by-case basis. DOES NOT fund reoccurring monthly expenses such as rent, mortgage, utility, or car payments.

Who qualifies: Support for families affected by autism during natural disasters and other tragic life events.

Award amounts: Determined on a case-by-case basis.

How grant is paid: Directly to the vendor.

How to apply: Families must first speak with a representative from the Autism Response Team by calling 888-288-4762, or in Español 888-772-9050; an Autism Response Team member may also be contacted at: [familyservices@autismspeaks.org](mailto:familyservices@autismspeaks.org) Deadline: Ongoing.

**First Hand Foundation:**

What grant covers: Expenses for medical equipment or assistive technology, medical expenses for therapy, etc., that are not covered by insurance, and transportation expenses.

Who qualifies: Families of children 18 years of age or younger (ages 19–21 may be considered in special circumstances) with no existing insurance coverage for the requested expenses and who meet income requirements. .

Award amounts: Not stated. One request per year, per child for a maximum of three times in a child's lifetime.

How grant is paid: Directly to the provider within three weeks of approval.

How do I apply: <https://www.firsthandfoundation.org/request-funding/>.

Deadline: Ongoing.

**Generation Rescue Family Grant Program:**

What grant covers: Provides financial support for dietary intervention training, dietary supplements, two doctor visits, and lab testing.

Who qualifies: Family member of any age may qualify if family meets income guidelines and family member with ASD has never seen a MAPS or DAN! doctor, and has had limited or no biomedical testing or treatments as stated in the program guidelines.

Award amounts: Refer to program guidelines on website.

How grant is paid: Payment is made directly to vendors; a deposit is required of all grant recipients—please refer to information on website provided below.

How to apply: Follow guidelines on website: <https://www.generationrescue.org/member-log-in/join-grant/>

Deadline: Check website for current grant cycle.

**The Lili Claire Foundation, Inc.:**

What grant covers: Financial assistance in extraordinary circumstances to cover medical bills and related care and support.

Who qualifies: Families of individuals with ASD, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Williams Syndrome, or other neuro genetic conditions in need of financial support.

Award amounts: Varies.

How grant is paid: Not stated.

How do I apply: <http://www.liliclaire.org/programs/emergency-family-fund> or email: <http://www.liliclaire.org/contact/>

Deadline: Varies.



**MyGOAL Autism (Family Grant Award Program):**

What grant covers: Non-reimbursable medical expenses, including first-time visit to a biomedical doctor or other autism-related specialist; purchase of vitamins or other nutritional supplements that are specifically designed for children with ASD; and personal needs for the individual with ASD.

Who qualifies: Individuals with ASD who are legal tax dependents.

Award amounts: \$1,000.

How grant is paid: To caregiver with the understanding that the grant will be used to benefit the individual(s) with ASD to meet medical, nutritional or personal needs.

How do I apply: Check webpage, updated each year: <http://mygoalautism.org/mygoal-resources/>.

Deadline: April 30, 2019.

**United Healthcare Children's Foundation:**

What grant covers: Health related grant to help support families with serious financial burden from medical expenses.

Who qualifies: Must be 16 years old or younger and live in the United States. Applicant must be covered by a commercial health insurance plan and limits for requested services are either exceeded or no coverage is available, and/or the costs are a serious financial burden on the family. Awards will be granted only to families that meet the Adjusted Gross income scale.

Award amounts: \$5,000 per year. A child's lifetime the limit is \$10,000 and this is per child in their family.

How grant is paid: To the health care professional directly.

How do I apply: <http://www.uhccf.org/apply/>

Deadline: On-going prior to child's 17th birthday

**Therapy or Educational Services and/or Related Products****Autism Care Today Treatment Grant:**

What grant covers: Their mission is to fund effective treatments, assessments, and needed life supports for military and non-military families.

Who qualifies: Incomes below \$100,000 and families with multiple children with ASD will be reviewed first..

Award amounts: Typically \$100 to \$5,000.

How grant is paid: Directly to pre-approved treatment providers, assessors, or materials vendors.

How do I apply: <http://www.act-today.org/apply-for-grant/>

Deadline: Quarterly application periods: January 1–31; April 1 – 30; July 1 – 31; October 1 - 31.

**Different Needz Foundation:**

What grant covers: Therapy and/or equipment such as OT, PT, speech therapy, adaptive bicycles/strollers/car seats, specialized summer camps and other necessary items but will not cover iPads or comparable electronic tablet/device, service dogs or service dog training, emotional support animals or motor vehicles or adaptations to a motor vehicle.

Who qualifies: Individuals with developmental disabilities including autism.

Award amounts: Not specified.

How grant is paid: Payment for medical services or equipment paid directly to the provider.

How do I apply: <http://www.differentneedzfoundation.org/grants/>

Deadline: See website: March 1, 2019 at 11:59 pm EST.

**Hannah & Friends:**

What grant covers: You may apply to use the money for anything that improves the life of your family member with special needs. There are also separate Summer Grants to be used specifically for attending camp..

Who qualifies: Must have a child or adult that lives in Indiana (including the greater Michiana area), Florida, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey, with special needs and meet financial guidelines (low or moderate income family).

Award amounts: \$100- \$1,000.

How grant is paid: To guardian.

How do I apply: <http://www.hannahandfriends.org/programs-grants/hannahs-helping-hands-grants/> For questions regarding the grant application itself, please email [grants@hannahandfriends.org](mailto:grants@hannahandfriends.org) or call 574-217-7860.

Deadline: Annually April 15th for summer camp grants and June 1st for grant applications.

**Maggie Welby Foundation Grant:**

Who qualifies: Students in grades K-12 whose family is in need of help with bills, athletic opportunities, medical needs, or an opportunity for the child for which financial means are not available. Does not accept applications for iPads.

Award amounts: Not specified.

How grant is paid: Paid directly to the service or vendor. Grants must indicate a third party payee; a grant cannot be paid to a private individual.

How do I apply: Online only. Grant applications found on website <http://maggiewelby.org/Grants.html>

Deadline: Awards grants twice per year. See website for deadlines.

**My Gym Challenged America Foundation:**

What grant covers: May include but not limited to rehabilitative therapy, assistive devices, medical equipment and sensory items.

Who qualifies: Children under the age of 18 with physical, cognitive or developmental disabilities

Award amounts: Up to \$500.

How grant is paid: MGCA directly purchases all equipment and services.

How do I apply: Complete and submit application on website: <https://www.challengedamerica.com/apply-for-a-gift/>.

Deadline: Ongoing

**Small Steps in Speech:**

What grant covers: Speech therapy and/or assistive technology device. Note: Applications are not accepted for ABA therapy or iPads.

Who qualifies: Individuals age 3 to 22 who are U.S. citizens and living in the states. Many guidelines, please see <http://www.smallstepsinspeech.org/grant-application/individuals/>.

Award amounts: Not specified.

How grant is paid: Funds dispersed to professional service providers or vendors.

How do I apply: Need documentation of need and treatment details. See <http://www.smallstepsinspeech.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/01-2019-Revised-Individual-Application.pdf>.

Deadline: February 1, May 1, August 1, November 1.

**State****Anna's Celebration of Life Foundation:**

What grant covers: Therapy item or device, or something that directly enhances the life of the child.

Who qualifies: Children under the age of 18 with special needs (or up to age 22 if still in high school) who live and/or are receiving medical treatment in Indiana.

Award amounts: No cap; decisions are made on the amount available and requests received; sometimes pay partial amount toward item requested.

How grant is paid: Directly to vendor for item purchase, then item or service is delivered to the child.

How do I apply: <https://annascelebrationoflife.org/>. Go to website and completely fill out the Application form; you will be contacted to provide a third-party (doctor, nurse, therapist, or other professional) for verification of diagnosis and confirmation that the item requested is safe and will benefit the child.

**Helping Challenged Children, Inc.:**

What grant covers: Durable medical equipment (i.e., wheelchair, communication device, insulin pump, hearing aid, therapy equipment, etc.).

Who qualifies: Must be 18 years old or younger and live in Indiana. The gift must enhance the quality of life for the child. All possible resources for funding must have been exhausted.

Nominations must be prepared and submitted by a third party health care professional (i.e., doctor, nurse, physical, therapist, social worker) who has verified the diagnosis and recommended need.

Award amounts: Typically \$50 to \$750.

How grant is paid: Only submitted directly to the supplier of the requested item.

How do I apply: See website for grant application: <http://helpingchallengedchildren.org/>

Deadline: On-going.

**Technology (iPad, iOS devices, and communication devices)****National****Conover Company:**

What grant covers: Will receive either an iPod or an iPad with all Conover Company Functional Skills System videos to assist individuals in developing freedom and independence.

Who qualifies: Individuals, parents, caretakers, teachers, counselors, private organizations in the United States.

Award amounts: Product with Conover software only.

How grant is paid: iPad sent to individual.

How do I apply: <https://www.conovercompany.com/grants/>

Deadline: Ongoing (1/29/19: Program is temporarily not accepting applications: keep checking their website for updates).

**Danny's Wish Foundation:**

What grant covers: iPad to be used solely as a communication device for recipient.

Who qualifies: Nonverbal or minimally verbal children with autism who are residents of the USA, age 3 or older and have financial need. Gross income not more than \$75,000 (proof required).

Have access to a computer and iTunes account.

Award amounts: iPad shipped to recipient.

How grant is paid: iPad shipped to recipient.

How to apply: Fill out the iPads for Autism Application on the website: <https://www.dannyswish.org>

Deadline: As available (current cycle September 1–December 31).

**iTaalk Autism Foundation:**

What grant covers: Provides iOS devices.

Who qualifies: Individual must have a medical or academic diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (must provide documentation) and be non-verbal or minimally verbal child birth-21 years old. Note: Parent/Guardian must agree to an iOS educational training requirement.

Award amounts: Devices are available as their funds allow.

How grant is paid: Device provided to individual.

How do I apply: <http://www.itaalk.org/#!grantapplication/c19r1> or contact at 567-377-5710.

Deadline: Usually March of year.

**National Autism Association's Give a Voice Program:**

What grant covers: An assistive communication device including: A 32GB Apple® iPad® Newest Generation (WiFi version) with AppleCare+ Protection Plan, a Protective Case, and Avatalker AAC Augmentative and Alternative Communication Software app.

Who qualifies: Individuals with ASD who are non-verbal/minimally verbal and whose communication weaknesses put them at risk for harm. Program is for families who are financially unable to fund a communication device..

Award amounts: See what grant covers above.

How grant is paid: Directly to recipient.

How to apply: <http://nationalautismassociation.org/family-support/programs/naas-give-a-voice-program/>

Deadline: Ongoing as their resources permit.

**Varghese Summersett PLLC Autism Scholarship:**

What grant covers: Specific need such as iPad, summer camp experience, or other educational or recreational opportunities.

Who qualifies: Children 15 years old and younger with autism.

Award amounts: \$500.

How grant is paid: Not specified.

How to apply: Letter or video stating how the financial aid will benefit child with autism. Submit all materials to Melody Lanier at [melody@versustexas.com](mailto:melody@versustexas.com). See <https://www.versustexas.com/scholarships/>.

Deadline: April 1, 2019