



How to be Autism Friendly

- **Be informed.** Take time to learn about autism and how it can affect individuals on the autism spectrum and their families. Every person with autism is unique – and so are their challenges.
- **Be accepting.** When talking to other people, a person with autism may not make eye contact. This doesn't mean they are rude or not interested, just uncomfortable in social situations. Accept that people with autism may process information differently or have trouble engaging in back-and-forth conversation.
- **Be concrete.** When speaking to someone with autism, be direct and avoid using figurative language (such as “cost an arm and a leg” or “barking up the wrong tree”). People with autism often have difficulty understanding body language, social cues, or sarcasm.
- **Be aware.** Sometimes people with autism are sensitive to light, sound, smell, taste or touch. Avoid speaking too loudly and don't touch them unexpectedly or without their permission.
- **Be understanding.** Some people with autism make repetitive movements like rocking, flapping their hands or tapping their head or chest to cope with stressful situations. Children with autism, especially those who are nonverbal, may communicate distress through their behaviors. As long as a child is not hurting themselves or another person, it is best to let them work through the behavior and not interfere.
- **Be kind.** This is the most important thing you can do. Being kind means that you don't judge, make critical remarks or express disapproval toward the person with autism in any way.



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