

Celebrating Autism

Recommended Book List

Picture Books

It Was Supposed to Be Sunny - Samantha Cotterill

Changes in routine can be hard for any kid, but especially for kids on the autism spectrum. Samantha Cotterill's fourth book in the Little Senses series provides gentle guidance along with adorable illustrations to help every kid navigate schedule changes and overwhelming social situations.

A Day with No Words - Tiffany Hammond

A Day With No Words is a colorful and engaging picture book for young readers shares what life can look like for families who use nonverbal communication, utilizing tools to embrace their unique method of "speaking." The story highlights the bond between mother and child and follows them on a day where they use a tablet to communicate with others.

The Autistic Boy in the Unruly Body: Autism and I Series - Gregory Tino

The Autistic Boy in the Unruly Body takes you on one child's crusade to discard his own body in search of a better one. His pilgrimage teaches him persistence and self-acceptance, and he learns to see the good in his beautiful, autistic body. The author, Gregory C Tino, knows this journey all too well. He has spent the last 27 years finding a way to work with, instead of against, his unruly body.

Bitsy Bat, School Star - Kaz Windness

Bitsy is a little bat with big star dreams of making friends at her new school. But when she arrives, Bitsy doesn't feel like she fits in. The other kids sit on their chairs, but sitting upright makes Bitsy dizzy. The other kids paint with their fingers, but Bitsy would rather use her toes. Everyone tells Bitsy she's doing things wrong-wrong-wrong, so she tries harder...and ends up having a five-star meltdown. Now Bitsy feels like a very small star and doesn't want to go back to school. But with help from her family, Bitsy musters her courage, comes up with a new plan, and discovers that being a good friend is just one of the ways she shines bright! (

Some Brains: A Book Celebrating Neurodiversity - Nelly Thomas

Some Brains encourages us all look for our strengths and to understand that brains are like fingerprints - uniquely, wonderfully ours.

Benji, the Bad Day, and Me - Sally J Pla

In this tender story about siblings, author Sally J. Pla shares her experience of raising sons with different personality traits and needs. Benji, the Bad Day, and Me embraces the philosophy that we are all part of a wide spectrum of neurodiversity. And on those really bad, rotten days, you can always count on family to be there for you.

Just Right for You: A Story about Autism - Melanie Heyworth

From the moment you began to grow, I knew that you would be just right ... Just Right for You offers a warm, optimistic way of introducing Autism to your child and embracing their differences.

My Autistic Mama - Kati Hirschy*

My Autistic Mama is a children's book about autism written by an autistic author. It is a story that discusses autistic traits from a positive and joyful perspective. The story gives autistic children representation that they can be proud of.

Too Sticky! Sensory Issues with Autism - Jen Malia

Holly loves doing experiments and learning new things in science class! But when she finds out the next experiment is making slime, she's worried. Slime is made with glue, and glue is sticky. Holly has sensory issues because of her autism and doesn't like anything sticky! With help from family and her teacher, Holly receives the accommodations and encouragement she needs to give slime a try.

Remarkable Remy - Melanie Heyworth

Remarkable Remy is a warm and optimistic story that introduces an Autistic character to a young audience. The story helps explain the Autistic brain - how it works a little differently and how unique it is - and how our neurodivergent friends make the world remarkable!

Juan has the Jitters - Aneta Cruz

A story about inclusion, diversity, and the power of math to help one boy with autism thrive among his peers. Juan claps his hands to get his Jitters out. They make his tummy swoosh and swirl. His Jitters happen when there are too many people, too much noise, or too many changes to his day. Juan doesn't like surprises.

Picture Books– Continued

Sensory Seeking Sebastian - Christia DeShields

This book is perfect for families who want to equip their sensory seeker to navigate the challenges of ADHD, Autism, and SPD.

Wiggles, Stomps, and Squeezes Calm My Jitters Down - Lindsey Rowe Parker

This is a story about sensory differences and how some children experience their world, told from a child's perspective. The vibration in her feet when she runs, the tap-tap-tap of her fork on the table at mealtime, the trickle of cool water running over her hands—these are the things that calm her jitters down. This book is for anyone who has ever felt the need for a wiggle, stomp, or squeeze!

Young Readers and Middle Grades

Trouble at Table Five (a series) - Tom Watson

Molly gets things stuck in her head sometimes. When she sees a jar of candy on Principal Shelton's desk, she absolutely needs to know how many candies are in that jar! Luckily, her two best friends, Simon and Rosie, are ready to help her find the answer—even if it means detention for all of them!

A Different Kind of Normal: My Real-Life COMPLETELY True Story About Being Unique - Abigail Balfe

In this joyfully illustrated memoir, Abigail Balfe recounts her journey growing up autistic and the challenges of navigating the “normal” world around her. This is a perfect book for both neurodivergent and neurotypical kids to learn more about neurodiversity. When Abigail was growing up, she was missing Very Important Information about herself. The information? That Abigail is autistic! In fact, Abigail didn't know she was autistic until she was (kind of) an adult. This is Abigail's story about what it was like growing up autistic in a confusing “normal” world. With entertaining anecdotes and funny accompanying illustrations, Abigail details her experiences and explains some Very Crucial Information about autism. And about neurodiversity too— a word that celebrates the importance of all brain types!

A Boy Called Bat - Elana K. Arnold

The first book in a funny, heartfelt, and irresistible young middle grade series starring an unforgettable young boy on the autism spectrum. For Bixby Alexander Tam (nicknamed Bat), life tends to be full of surprises—some of them good, some not so good. Today, though, is a good-surprise day. Bat's mom, a veterinarian, has brought home a baby skunk, which she needs to take care of until she can hand him over to a wild-animal shelter. But the minute Bat meets the kit, he knows they belong together. And he's got one month to show his mom that a baby skunk might just make a pretty terrific pet.

Anybody Here Seen Frenchie? - Leslie Connor

A big-hearted, beautiful, and funny novel told from multiple viewpoints about neurodiversity, friendship, and community. At the heart of this story is the friendship between hyper-talkative Aurora and nonvocal Frenchie. Conflict arises when Aurora is better able to expand her social abilities and finds new friends. When Frenchie goes missing, Aurora must figure out how to use her voice to help find him, and lift him up when he is found.

The Many Mysteries of the Finkel Family - Sarah Kapit

Fans of the Penderwicks and the Vanderbeekers, meet the Finkel family in this middle grade novel about two autistic sisters, their detective agency, and life's most consequential mysteries. When twelve-year-old Lara Finkel starts her very own detective agency, FIASSCO (Finkel Investigation Agency Solving Consequential Crimes Only), she does not want her sister, Caroline, involved. She and Caroline don't have to do everything together. But Caroline won't give up, and when she brings Lara the firm's first mystery, Lara relents, and the questions start piling up.

Get a Grip, Vivy Cohen - Sarah Kapit

In this perfectly pitched novel-in-letters, autistic eleven-year-old Vivy Cohen won't let anything stop her from playing baseball--not when she has a major-league star as her pen pal. Vivy Cohen is determined. She's had enough of playing catch in the park. She's ready to pitch for a real baseball team. But Vivy's mom is worried about Vivy being the only girl on the team, and the only autistic kid. She wants Vivy to forget about pitching, but Vivy won't give up. When her social skills teacher makes her write a letter to someone, Vivy knows exactly who to choose: her hero, Major League pitcher VJ Capello. Then two amazing things happen: A coach sees Vivy's amazing knuckleball and invites her to join his team. And VJ starts writing back! Now Vivy is a full-fledged pitcher, with a catcher as a new best friend and a steady stream of advice from VJ. But when a big accident puts her back on the bench, Vivy has to fight to stay on the team.

Can You See Me? (Series) - Libby Scott and Rebecca Westcott

Tally isn't ashamed of being autistic -- even if it complicates life sometimes, it's part of who she is. But this is her first year at Kingswood Academy, and her best friend, Layla, is the only one who knows. And while a lot of other people are uncomfortable around Tally, Layla has never been one of them . . . until now. Something is different about sixth grade, and Tally now feels like she has to act "normal." But as Tally hides her true self, she starts to wonder what "normal" means after all and whether fitting in is really what matters most. Inspired by young coauthor Libby Scott's own experiences with autism, this is an honest and moving middle-school story of friends, family, and finding one's place.

Teens and Young Adult Novels

***I Never Get Lost in the Woods* - Aaron Jepson**

I Never Get Lost in the Woods is a story of resilience, courage, and the unquenchable desire of a young woman to overcome the labels and barriers of her disability and assume control of her own destiny.

***This is the Way the World Ends* - Jen Wilde**

As an autistic scholarship student at the prestigious Webber Academy in New York City, Waverly is used to masking to fit in—in more ways than one. While her classmates are the children of the one percent, Waverly is getting by on tutoring gigs and the generosity of the school's charming and enigmatic dean. So when her tutoring student and resident "it girl" asks Waverly to attend the school's annual fundraising Masquerade disguised as her, Waverly jumps at the chance—especially once she finds out that Ash, the dean's daughter and her secret ex-girlfriend, will be there.

***The State of Grace* - Rachael Lucas**

"Sometimes I feel like everyone else was handed a copy of the rules for life and mine got lost."

Grace is autistic and has her own way of looking at the world. She's got a horse and a best friend who understand her, and that's pretty much all she needs. But when Grace kisses Gabe and things start to change at home, the world doesn't make much sense to her any more. Suddenly everything threatens to fall apart, and it's up to Grace to fix it on her own.

***Afrotistic* - Kala Allen Omeiza**

Noa Ohunene Jenkins doesn't feel Black enough. Or autistic enough. Or cool enough. In her new town, the fifteen-year-old strives to make Dean's Merit Society, an elite honor society that she sees as her ticket to success. To make the society, she needs leadership experience, but there's one problem: Noa struggles to socialize appropriately. Desperate to make it in the society, she creates her own group consisting of autistic students from her school district and names it the "Roaring Pebbles". With the assistance of the Roaring Pebbles, a robot toy invention, her nonspeaking brother, and a bit of classical Mozart along the way, Noa clings to her chance to make the society. And to one day, finally feel enough.

***The Awesome Autistic Go-To Guide: A Practical Handbook for Autistic Teens and Tweens* - Yenn Purkis and Tanya Masterman**

This book explores what it feels like to be a young person on the autism spectrum and looks at all the brilliant things people on the autism spectrum can do. Full of insights about being awesome and autistic, this book celebrates the strengths of understanding the world in a different way. It looks at all the reasons being you and thinking differently can be totally awesome! It also has tips for managing tricky situations such as meltdowns, sensory differences and anxiety. It includes fun activities and diary pages where you can write your thoughts and feelings to help you concentrate on your strengths and work on your challenges. This book helps you develop the confidence to be who you are and help you live life with as little stress and anxiety as possible.

Books for Parents, Caregivers, and Educators

***Uniquely Human; A Different Way of Seeing Autism* - Barry Prizant PhD**

Autism therapy typically focuses on ridding individuals of "autistic" symptoms such as difficulties interacting socially, communication problems, sensory challenges, and repetitive behavior patterns. *Uniquely Human* tackles new language such as shifting from "person-first language" to "identity-first language," diversity of identity in the autism sphere, and the future of autistic advocacy by amplifying the voices of autistic and neurodivergent individuals.

***Sincerely, Your Autistic Child* - Autistic Women and Nonbinary Network**

A diverse collection of autistic voices that highlights how parents can avoid common mistakes and misconceptions, and make their child feel truly accepted, valued, and celebrated for who they are.

***Connecting With The Autism Spectrum: How To Talk, How To Listen, And Why You Shouldn't Call It "High-Functioning"* - Casey "Remrov" Vormer**

For a friend, family member, or coworker with autism, communication can be challenging. But *Connecting with the Autism Spectrum* can help you find common ground with expert tips and helpful insights about talking (and listening) to neurodiverse adults so you can make your interactions more transparent, meaningful, and rewarding for all.

***NeuroTribes: The Legacy of Autism and the Future of Neurodiversity* - Steve Silberman**

What is autism? A lifelong disability, or a naturally occurring form of cognitive difference akin to certain forms of genius? In truth, it is all of these things and more—and the future of our society depends on our understanding it. *Wired* reporter Steve Silberman unearths the secret history of autism, long suppressed by the same clinicians who became famous for discovering it, and finds surprising answers to the crucial question of why the number of diagnoses has soared in recent years.

***Beyond Behaviors: Using Brain Science and Compassion to Understand and Solve Children's Behavioral Challenges* - Mona Delahooke**

In *Beyond Behaviors*, internationally known pediatric psychologist, Dr. Mona Delahooke describes behaviors as the tip of the iceberg, important signals that we should address by seeking to understand a child's individual differences in the context of relational safety.

***We're Not Broken: Changing the Autism Conversation* - Eric Garcia**

In *We're Not Broken*, Garcia uses his own life as a springboard to discuss the social and policy gaps that exist in supporting those on the spectrum. From education to healthcare, he explores how autistic people wrestle with systems that were not built with them in mind.