

**AUTISM ACADEMY**  
for Education & Development

## AUTISM NEWS

February 2023 Edition



### Help Your Child Build Meaningful Friendships

As many as 52% of people with autism spectrum disorder report having few or no friendships. This can lead to lower engagement at school and less satisfaction with their lives overall. So what can we do to help? As it turns out, there are quite a few things that can be done at home and at school to teach social skills and encourage the development of meaningful relationships.

#### 1. Teach your child what a friend is.

While this may sound like a simple concept, people with autism often need to be taught social concepts directly. At school this may mean teaching lessons or having adults assist students when playing together. It can also include role playing activities and video modeling to help students see these situations from the outside. At home, you can talk with your child about friendships and encourage them to interact with other people at the park, the store, or anywhere else you go together.

#### 2. Use social stories.

Schools and therapists often use social stories to teach expected behaviors and social cues. Premade stories are available online or you can easily write your own. But what are they? In short, they are a story that walks you through a specific social scenario and gives clear, concise directions on what words and behaviors are expected. It may also directly state what words and behaviors are not expected. Below are links to some video social stories that you may find helpful.

Playing With a Friend: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zVElv1fA78>

Taking a Break: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DGNlgQkfE\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DGNlgQkfE_0)

Having a Conversation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0iyGLNxI6U>

## Looking for more information?

### "Kids with Autism Need Friends, Too"

-From the Marcus Autism Center in Atlanta:

<https://www.marcus.org/autism-resources/autism-tips-and-resources/helping-kids-with-autism-make-friends>

### "What is a Social Story?"

-From Carol Gray Social Stories:

<https://carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/what-is-it/>

### "Excellent Ways to Help Your ASD Child Make Friends"

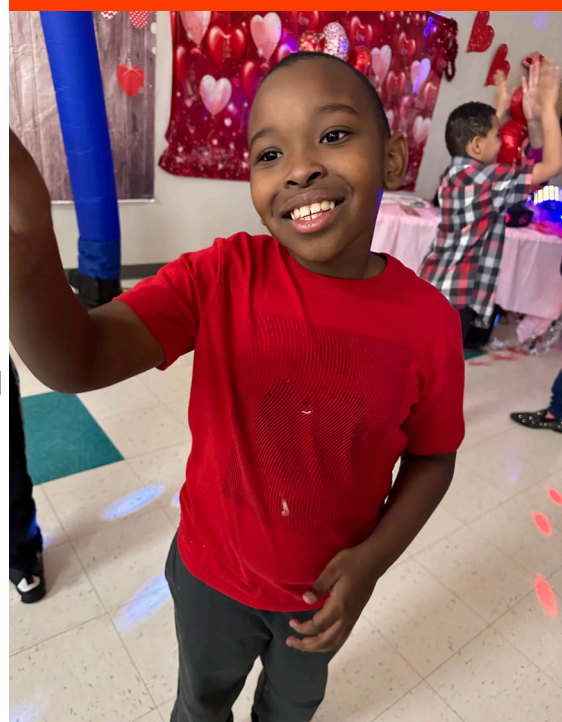
-From Autism Parent Magazine:

[https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/excellent-ways-to-help-asd-child-make-friends/?gclid=19482731721&gclid=Cj0KCQiAorKfBhC0ARIsAHDzsluX9NuGzhMwAuNcQ-L\\_aQqqlmx-hE9hKJ\\_2lrPGSWFY7yy3cRu8gaAgL4EALw\\_wcB](https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/excellent-ways-to-help-asd-child-make-friends/?gclid=19482731721&gclid=Cj0KCQiAorKfBhC0ARIsAHDzsluX9NuGzhMwAuNcQ-L_aQqqlmx-hE9hKJ_2lrPGSWFY7yy3cRu8gaAgL4EALw_wcB)

### "Making Friends: Answers for Kids with Autism"

-From KidsHealth.org:

<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/autism-friends.html>



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### 3. Help your child find others with shared interests.

Making a friend is much easier when you have something in common. You can help your child find friends by enrolling them in a sport or a class that they enjoy. Clubs and classes are often available through your city recreation department for little or no cost. For older children, a local Special Olympics team through your school or city can be a great place to make friends.

### 4. Focus on long-term success.

As with any relationship, friendships have their ups and downs. As a supportive adult, parents and teachers need to encourage children to keep trying. If an interaction doesn't go well, help them think it through and learn from their mistakes. If a friendship ends, help them understand what happened and what they might want to do differently next time.

### 5. Keep practicing and have fun.

Social skills, like other skills, get easier with practice. Practice different aspects of making a friend, like asking questions, answering questions, sharing toys, or suggesting an activity. Have your child practice with siblings, neighbors or similar-age cousins. Select people who are going to be patient and know your child well—you want your child to feel safe while practicing. Make sure to incorporate your child's interests and find activities that everyone can enjoy. This is one time that your "homework" can include playing outside, board games, and video games.

## Transition Corner

**Autism Academy families are invited to a free workshop on 10 basic financial steps for special needs caregivers. Some topics that we will be discussing are:**

- How to begin the planning process and who should be involved
- Government benefit eligibility
- Guardianship and conservatorship

**If you are an AAED parent, please check ParentSquare or your email for information on how to log into this free virtual event.**



### Craft Idea!

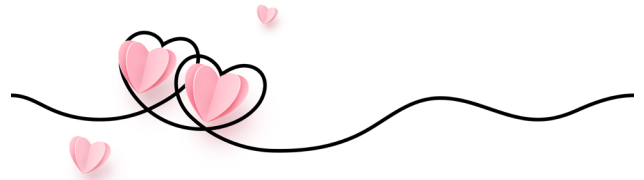
**Kindness Keychains:**  
<https://coffeeandcarpool.com/kindness-keychains/>

### Kindness Keychain FriendShip Craft



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## Parent Partnership Program

P3 is currently running a fundraising raffle. Winners will receive 2 tickets to see Taylor Swift in concert and receive the VIP treatment in a suite that includes complimentary food, beverages, and parking. The concert is on Saturday, March 18th at 7:30pm at Cardinals/State Farm Stadium (Glendale, AZ).

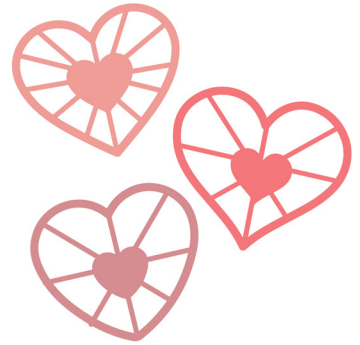
- 2 prizes are being awarded. Each prize includes: 2 Loft/Suite Tickets - Section L338, Preferred Parking Pass, Dinner, and Beverages.
- The value for each prize concert package is \$1,500.
- Electronic concert tickets and parking pass will be transferred to the winners via SeatGeek.
- Autism Academy Parent Partnership Program is a non-profit corporation with 501(c)(3) status from the IRS. Donations made to our organization are tax deductible. AAED P3 will provide you with a donation receipt.

**Raffle tickets are available to purchase now through 3/3/23 at 12pm.**

Winners will be drawn electronically on 3/3/23 at 3pm.

**YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE PRESENT TO WIN**

For more information and to purchase raffle tickets, please use this link:  
<https://go.rallyup.com/p3taylorswift>.



## February Trivia

A small gift will be sent to the first 10 families to send the correct answer to [autismnews@aaed.org](mailto:autismnews@aaed.org).

February Question: Many people with autism use AAC devices to assist with communication. What does AAC stand for?

Thank you to everyone who responded to the January trivia question! Prizes were sent to everyone who responded, so please reach out if you have not yet received it from your student's campus.

**January Answer: January 20, 2023**



### Upcoming Events - ALL CAMPUSES

ALL MONTH - Black History Month!

February 18th - Phoenix Zoo Walk for Autism Research

### Upcoming Events - Valley & Online

February 20th - No School

February 24th, 5:30pm-7:30pm - Tempe Campus Only

Friendship Dance

March 13th - Spring Break Begins

### Upcoming Events - Tucson

February 23rd - 24th - No School

