

Autism Demonstration Activity

Autism is a developmental disability that usually appears during the first three years of life. The cause is unknown. It affects how a person's brain works, but not all people with autism are affected the same way.

The following activity requires 5 people. Each person has specific instructions as to their role in the demonstration. All participants begin at the same time.

After the activity is complete have each participant debrief about their experience during the activity.

Person #1:

Person with Autism, Listen to person #5 and answer the questions about the information they read to you.

Person #2:

Stand behind person # 1. Rub the edge of an index card against person #1 neck softly and do it over and over.

Person #3: Lean close to person #1 and read the following in a loud voice the entire time.

Autism is a developmental disability that usually appears during the first three years of life. The cause is unknown. It affects how a person's brain works, but not all people with autism are affected the same way. When a person has autism, they may have problems: letting you know what they want; thinking; understanding what other people say or want; ignoring sounds; ignoring things or people that are moving; ignoring lights; being touched; understanding social rules; showing affection; controlling their feelings; knowing how to play with other kids; and dealing with changes. Autism is a "spectrum disorder." That means that not everyone with autism has all the problems. One person may have three of the problems listed while another person has only one. Some people with autism struggle to learn. Other people with autism are very smart and can do complicated math when they are 3 years old. Some people with autism have trouble being touched while others like to hug. Many people with autism like to do things in the same order all the time and have things arranged the same way. This helps them stay calm. Other people with autism have a very hard time ignoring noises, especially if they are upset or in a new situation. They may try to calm themselves by rocking, moaning, talking loudly or even screaming. The moaning, talking or screaming helps them drown out the other noises so they can calm down. They may also try to go under a desk or in a small, dark place where they feel safer. People with autism are often extra sensitive to noise, movement and even things like background noises most of us don't notice. Remember, not everyone with autism has these problems.

Person #4:

Pat person #1 on the head and shoulder the entire time.

Person#5

Read the following paragraph to person #1 then ask them the questions below.

Autism is a developmental disability that usually appears during the first three years of life. The cause is unknown. It affects how a person's brain works, but not all people with autism are affected the same way. When a person has autism, they may have problems: letting you know what they want; thinking; understanding what other people say or want; ignoring sounds; ignoring things or people that are moving; ignoring lights; being touched; understanding social rules; showing affection; controlling their feelings; knowing how to play with other kids; and dealing with changes. Autism is a "spectrum disorder." That means that not everyone with autism has all the problems. One person may have three of the problems listed while another person has only one. Some people with autism struggle to learn. Other people with autism are very smart and can do complicated math when they are 3 years old. Some people with autism have trouble being touched while others like to hug. Many people with autism like to do things in the same order all the time and have things arranged the same way. This helps them stay calm. Other people with autism have a very hard time ignoring noises, especially if they are upset or in a new situation. They may try to calm themselves by rocking, moaning, talking loudly or even screaming. The moaning, talking or screaming helps them drown out the other noises so they can calm down. They may also try to go under a desk or in a small, dark place where they feel safer. People with autism are often extra sensitive to noise, movement and even things like background noises most of us don't notice. Remember, not everyone with autism has these problems.

What is Autism?

At what age does autism appear?

What is the cause of Autism?

How does Autism affect someone?

What does spectrum disorder mean?