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# Words You Need to Know to Befriend Kids with Autism

1

## Ask.

Ask if they want to go to the movies. Ask if they like "Star Wars." Ask if they love pizza. Ask if they eat frozen yogurt. You need to ask in order to know.

2

## Accept.

Accept them just like they are. There may be some things they do or say that might not make sense to you, but, they make sense to them. Accept it. Accept them. And maybe, once again, ask. Ask them why they do what they do, so then it will make sense to you.

3

## Consider.

Consider them. Include them. Think of them. If after school or rehearsal or the football game you are going for pizza or frozen yogurt, even if it seems they prefer to be alone, we all like to be included, we all like to think, "Wow, they thought of me!" Even if they choose not to go, they will remember that you considered them.

4

## Educate.

Educate yourself about autism, but educate yourself about the individual. Inquire why they are so particular about food. Find out why routines are so important to them. Learn why "new" is so difficult.

5

## Forgive.

Like any friend, a person with autism might make a mistake. They might be brutally honest because they don't know any other way to be. The truth might hurt a little, but, honesty is a great quality in a friend.

6

## Ask (again).

They may have said no every single time you asked them to join you, but, keep asking. One time they might just say yes.

7

## Space.

If you do ask them, if you do consider them and if they say yes, they may need a little space after a period of time. They will know when they need that space and when they are ready to join you again.

8

## Time.

It takes time for them to connect, to trust, so you need to give them some time. If you give them their time, I promise they are so worth yours.

9

## Remind.

They may need you to remind them about practice, rehearsal or where you are sitting at the football game (repeatedly). If they forget, again, it's not personal, it's not that they don't value your friendship, they just need another reminder that will help them see that you considered them.

10

## Scripting.

Many kids with autism love to say lines from memes, movies and television shows and use them at just the right time, in just the right way. This might be the way they feel most comfortable communicating. It's not weird, it's just different.

11

## Literal.

They are very literal with language, so sometimes slang, sarcasm and abstract language will "go over their head." If they look confused or don't respond when you ask them, "What's up?" explain what you mean in a literal way, "Hi, what are you doing?" then they will get it — and you.

12

## Individual.

Remember that he or she is an individual not a collective disorder. He/She is (insert name here), not autism.

13

## Respect.

Even after you ask, educate and consider, you still might not "get" them, but, please still respect them. Chances are really good that they don't quite get you either, but, they will always respect you.

14

## Kindness.

Just be kind. Period. The end. Just trying to be their friend, even if you don't get something right, you will never, ever be wrong.



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