

THE GUIDE FOR YOUR AUTISM JOURNEY

THE LIST

GEEK
CLUB
BOOKS

Dear Friend:

If you just left the doctor's office and heard the medical mumbo-jumbo, exceptionally long diagnosis essentially saying, "Your child has autism," I know that you are feeling numb—paralyzed with uncertainty, fear, and grief over all of the negative stereotypes you've read about autistic individuals. But I'm here to tell you that my life would have no meaning...no depth...no purpose if it wasn't for autism. And my adult son with Asperger's Syndrome, is THE most amazing, clever, smart, funny, adorable hero I've ever encountered. It's a privilege to be his mom.



I wasn't afraid of the autism diagnosis but I must tell you that my son wasn't diagnosed until he was 13. I knew intuitively when he was two, but no medical professional or therapist ever mentioned or discussed it as a possible explanation for his developmental and social issues. So when he was officially diagnosed, we were already doing what needed to be done to help him grow to his best potential.

You are a warrior parent! I know it because only warrior parents are blessed with special needs children and here's what you'll be able to do to help your child thrive:

You'll become a **foot soldier** with your eyes and ears constantly on the ground to clear your child's path and scout for individuals and organizations who can join your ranks of support. You'll be a covered wagon, **pioneer** blazing a trail into the unknown to create a better life for your child. You'll don your virtual business suit and become **Parent, CEO** to pitch for services and

make sure everyone works together on the business of building your child's self-confidence and skill set. You'll be **Dorothy, Lion, Tin Man, Scarecrow** and the **Wizard of Oz** combined, using all of your powers, influences, creativity, fast-thinking, courage and heart so your child can (and will) thrive.

I've played all of these characters and taken on even more alter-egos from Sherlock to Iron Man—whomever my son needs me to be at any given point in time. Today, he's 29 years old and living independently and working as a professional voice actor. Does he still struggle and need more attention and support than my neurotypical 25 year old daughter? Yes, but every day I see him needing just a little less of my oversight and I just get to sit back and enjoy the incredible man he has become.

So my fellow autism warrior friend, have your moment of sadness and then let go of your pre-determined expectations of your child and set forth on the magical mystery tour of autism. Get ready to cast yourself in whatever roles necessary to be your child's guardian angel and life's coach. You can do it!

With love,

“But I’m here to tell you that my life would have no meaning...no depth...no purpose if it wasn’t for autism. And my adult son with Asperger’s Syndrome, is THE most amazing, clever, smart, funny, adorable hero I’ve ever encountered. It’s a privilege to be his mom.”

MY GOLDEN RULES OF AUTISM PARENTING

I've been an autism parent for almost 30 years. Throughout his growing up, my priority was always focused on my son's well-being—choosing the services, schools, community activities, and professionals who could help him thrive. Here are the 8 parenting rules I live by:

ALWAYS TRUST
YOUR INSTINCTS



I learned to trust my instincts especially when it came to therapies or professional opinions. I have the utmost respect for the medical community but if something didn't 'feel right,' I respectfully declined a recommendation. I came to understand that no one really had the depth of knowledge and understanding that I had about my son so I trusted my instincts first before setting on a course of action.

Unconditional love gives you the strength to go out in the world and take risks because you know that family has your back and will be there with you every step of the way, no matter what. But self-esteem comes from personal achievement...you can praise and pass out certificates and stickers and clap and give your undivided attention, but you cannot "give" someone confidence.

YOU CANNOT
GIVE SOMEONE
CONFIDENCE



TAKE THE RISK FOR
THE OPPORTUNITY
FOR SUCCESS



I am hyper-aware and listen for anything my son talks about as a clue for finding something (anything) he is interested in where his involvement could result in personal achievement. Notice the “could.” No matter what I find, there is a risk that he’ll get frustrated, feel like a failure and want to give up too soon. But I take that risk, so he has many opportunities for success.

PLAY MATCHMAKER
FOR INTERESTS
AND ABILITIES



I am always on the lookout for opportunities for him to share his talents and abilities. I have witnessed time and time again the power that comes from his being able to contribute...and I mean REALLY contribute using his own skill set. Self-confidence just oozes from his pores! And this empowers him in other areas of his life.

THERE'S NO
TIMETABLE FOR
ACHIEVEMENT



I don’t compare him to any of his peers. I don’t ‘expect’ him to be on the same path as anybody else. He’s on his own life’s timetable, and that’s perfect. I don’t pressure him to reach certain milestones—only encourage him to engage in his life and not isolate himself because he’s afraid to fail.

TAKE THE
INITIATIVE OF AN
ENTREPRENEUR



I'm not much of a risk-taker myself, but when it comes to my son—I'm fearless! I'll do whatever it takes so he can flourish—even going way outside my comfort zone and start a company if need be.

CONTINUE TO
INNOVATE



I'll never stop brainstorming and thinking out-of-the-box to help him feel accepted and valued.

LIVE IN POSSIBILITY
NOT DISABILITY



Infinite combinations and diversity make the world beautiful. I just don't see disability, only the capacity in each and every one of us to grow into our best selves. My son is happy and I'm optimistic about his future.



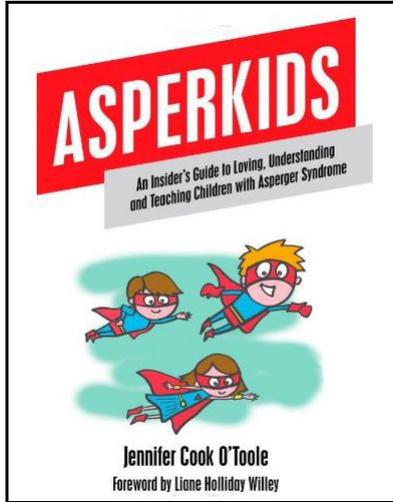
TAKE HEART!

There are so many great people, organizations and resources available to help your family. Here are some of our top picks for our Autism Resource Guide. We tend towards those with positive, optimistic viewpoints and those willing to share their own stories.

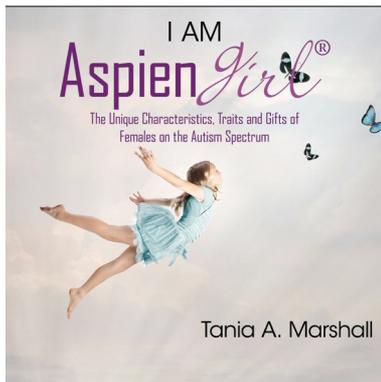
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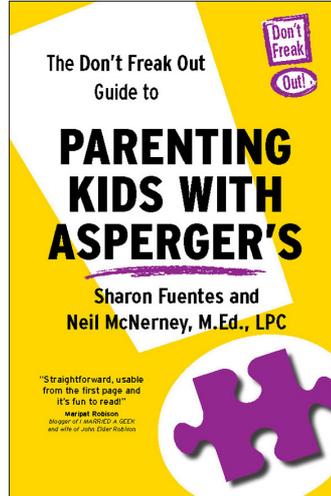
BOOKS



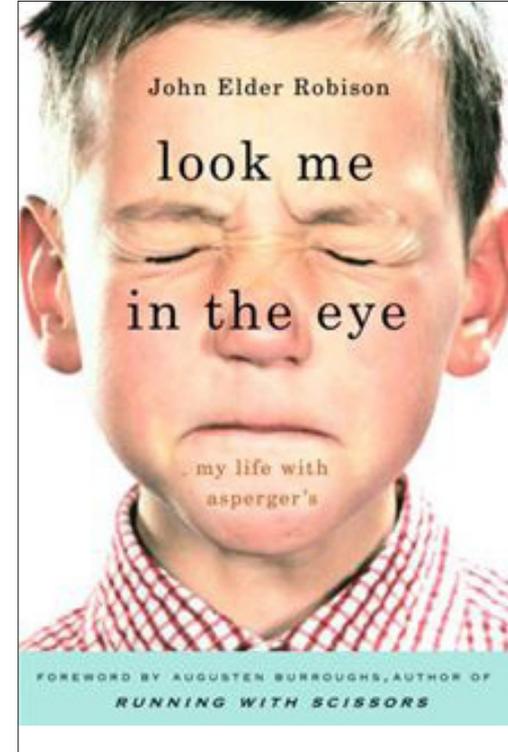
It takes one to know one and author Jennifer Cook O'Toole, an Aspie herself, helps parents understand their Asperkids.



The first in a series of books by best-selling author Tania A. Marshall to help us understand female autism.

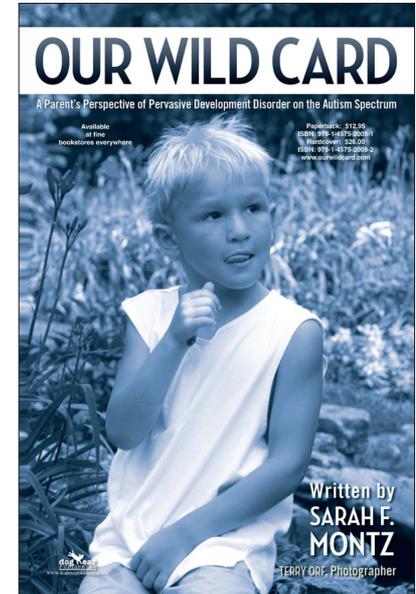
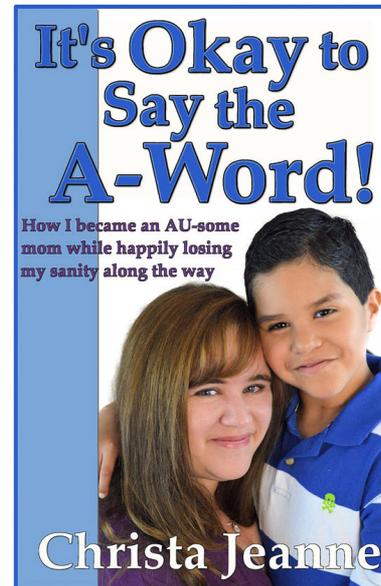


This guide offers practical advice with so many easy-to-implement strategies. Treated with humor and heart! Wish it was on the bookshelves when my son was growing up.



I adore this book! I laughed, I cried, and finished with a new understanding and insights into my son's world through John Robison's own personal life story.

WE ARE ON THIS JOURNEY TOGETHER...

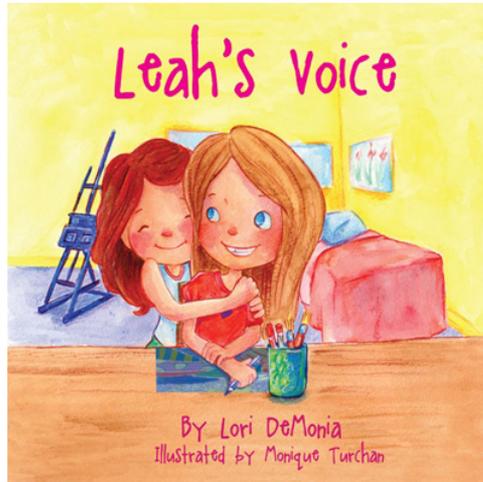


Each of these self-published books are written by moms who wanted to share their stories to let other autism parents know that they are not alone.

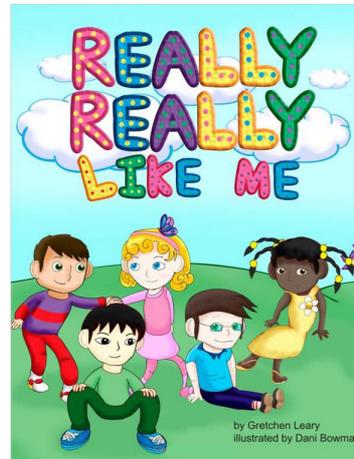
YOU ARE NOT ALONE.



CHILDREN'S BOOKS



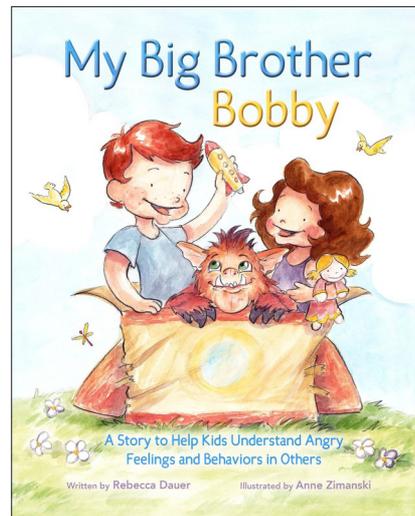
A real tale of two sisters



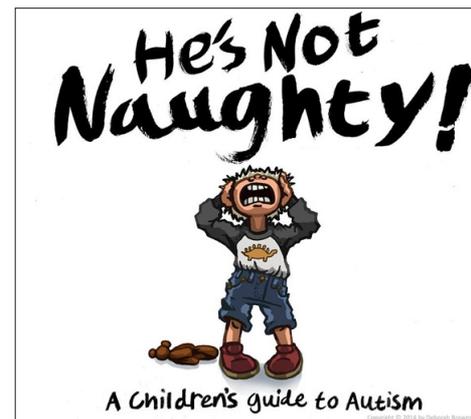
Making friends by an autistic writer and illustrator



Coping with difficult situations

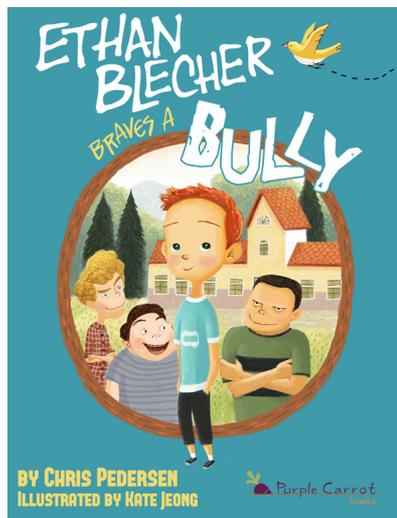
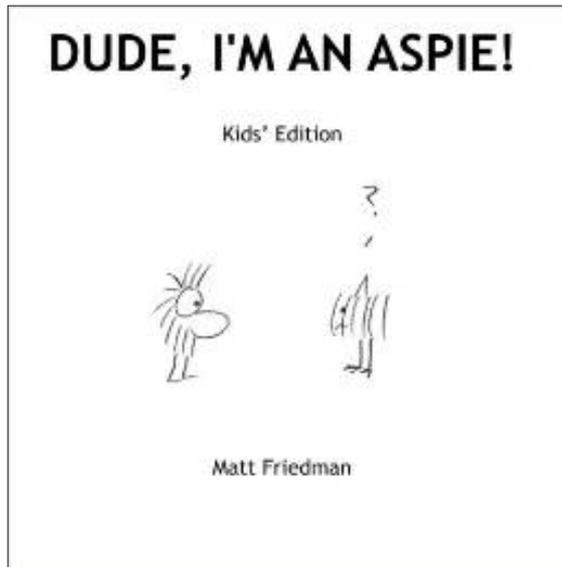


Understanding angry feelings and behaviors in others



Explaining autism to children

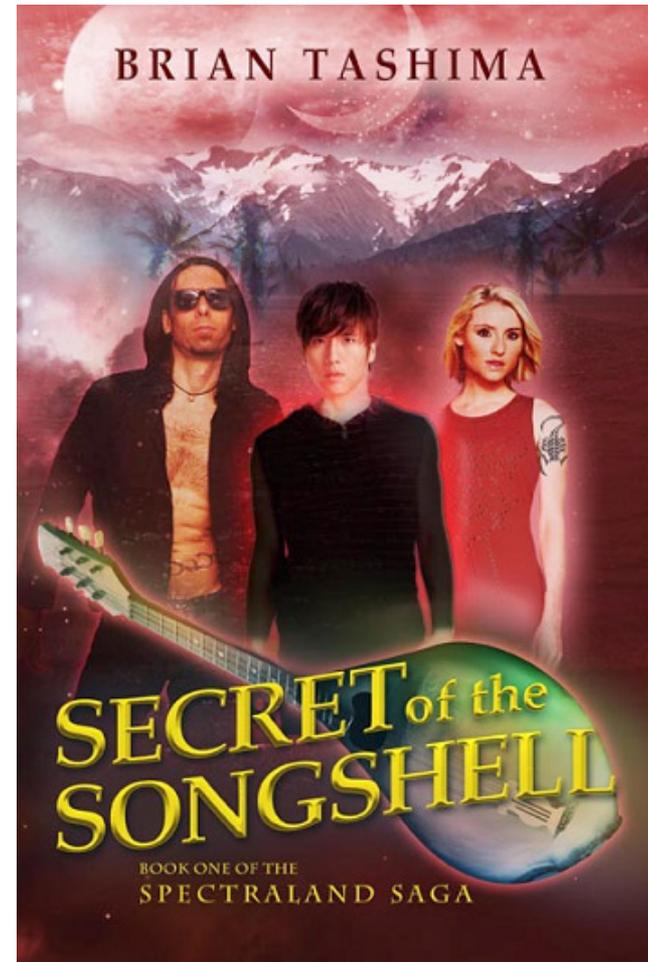
Fun explanations about Aspergers by an Aspergian cartoonist



Early reader with bullying theme



Find more literature featuring protagonists with disabilities



YA SciFi/Fantasy with an Aspergian protagonist



BLOGS WORTH FOLLOWING

Advice and edutainment
from two Aspergians



Mom with a great sense of humor
pens witty and provoking posts.

Paul writing about himself helps
me understand my son at a
deep, emotional level.



Emma is wise and wonderful. Her
mother's essays are always deep
and thoughtful.

**ASPIENAUT - WIRED
DIFFERENTLY**



Conner sees the world through the
magic of Disney. He and his mother
inspire me and I can't get enough
of their postings on their Facebook
page, Conquer for Conner - My
Special Love.

PENFRIEND PROJECT

THE AUTISM BYLINE



Lydia Wayman



Megan Amodeo



James Sullivan

Our autistic columnists share their personal experiences & when we read their stories we discover that there are more similarities than differences. Their unique ‘voices’ are powerful, uplifting and are changing the world’s view of autism.



PODCASTS



Autism Empowerment

Accept, Enrich, Inspire, Empower

Karen Krejcha is an adult on the autism spectrum and also a parent to two autistic children. She hosts the Autism Empowerment show and has co-founded an autism charity under the same name with her husband, John. They are devoted to enriching and empowering the lives of children, teens, adults and families in the Autism and Asperger communities.

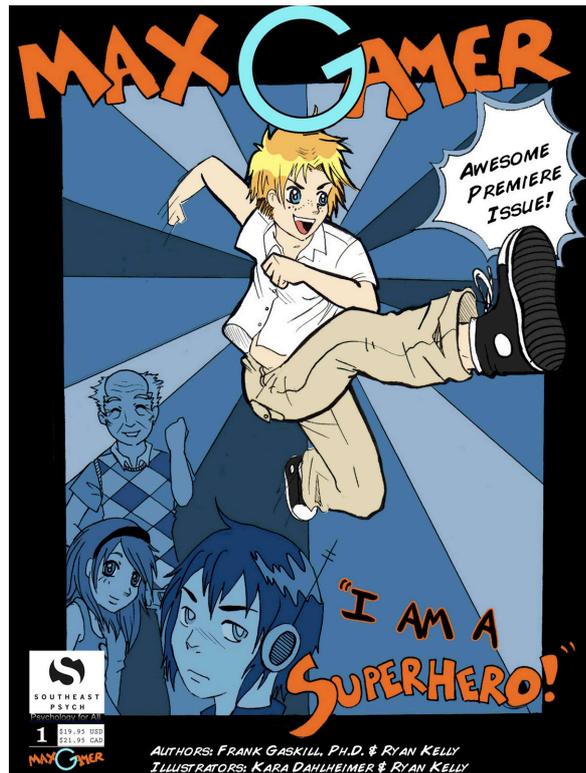
Catherine Pascuas hosts a weekly interview show with top autism experts and changemakers. She is an autism specialist and founder of Edx Autism Consulting.





COMICS

Comic books with autistic protagonists.



Max Gamer by Frank Gaskill, Ph. D.



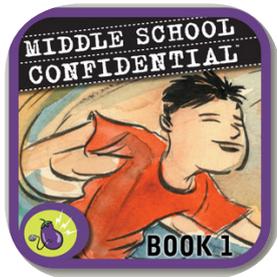
Face Value Comics by Dave and Angela Kot,
Autism At Face Value



APPS



Autism/Special Needs Daily Organiser
created by Australian mum Brooke Howe.



Middle School Confidential
—A great series of apps and books for tweens by Annie and David Fox of Electric Eggplant.



Axel's Chain Reaction—A young boy with ADHD struggles to connect with his classmates and get them to see past the fidgety, distracted, clumsy boy they think he is.



Flummox and Friends is an offbeat, live-action comedy designed to help kids navigate the social and emotional world. Loads of fun! The show is viewable with FlummoxVision™, a free iPad app.

MIGHTY LEAGUE APP SERIES...



Mighty League, Vol. 1:
The Terrible Taunting is the first Geek Club Books' autism story app created to engage and entertain children while teaching them about autism. The main character is autistic and reader chooses the gender. Recipient of the Temple Grandin Award.



AWESOME PRODUCTS & SERVICES



I've never experienced a more positive professional than Sarah Trautman-Eslinger, M.A., BCBA, President and founder of **STE Consultants**. They offer a range of ABA services on site or via telehealth solutions.



Senseez sensory cushions benefit children with autism, ADHD, or sensory processing disorder.



Autism Movement Therapy, provides access to music and movement for all individuals with special needs.



This nonprofit helps those who might become lost or disoriented reunite with their loved ones and caregivers using new and existing technologies in ways that are practical, easy to access and affordable.



Founded by Joey Travolta, **Inclusion Films** trains individuals with developmental disabilities to ultimately acquire the creative skills and strong work ethics to become film makers.



Jackie Bryla, SLPA, is experienced in technology and has creatively used apps with her speech and language students. She provides a wealth of information about apps on her website and is available for consultations too.



GripCase is an ergonomic, protective iPad case. The company cares about supporting families through technology, especially those with special needs.



CHEWIGEM

for the need to chew

Run by an autism family, **Chewigem USA** offers safe, non-toxic chewable jewelry that is designed to discreetly hide a need to chew.

Tales2Go

We Excite Kids to Read.

Our family LOVES to listen to audio books! When they were little, the kids would fall asleep listening to a story or stay entertained on a road trip. **Tales2Go** is an award-winning kids' mobile audiobook service that streams thousands of titles to desktops and mobile devices. Yay!



FAMILY GRANTS & PROGRAMS



Kulturecity is creating a world where all autistic individuals and their families are accepted and treated equally.



The Puzzling Piece (beautiful 'statement' jewelry) has a program for earning an iPad for your child or classroom.



Toys AUcross America is a Kulturecity program by Michael Miller (Autism Santa) and his son. They mail surprise toy packages to autistic children.



Find more family grant options on the Autism Speaks website at <http://bit.ly/family-grants>



AUTISM EMPLOYMENT

If one of these programs is not available in your area, use them as inspiration for starting something similar in your town. Don't be shy! Reach out to them for advice.



Celebrate EDU empowers young adults with disabilities through education and training to help them develop fulfilling and positive futures.



A vocational program in Phoenix teaches spectrum adults job skills in the arts.

Ken's Krew helps those with disabilities to successfully enter the workforce through access to good jobs, training and support to prepare for and sustain employment.

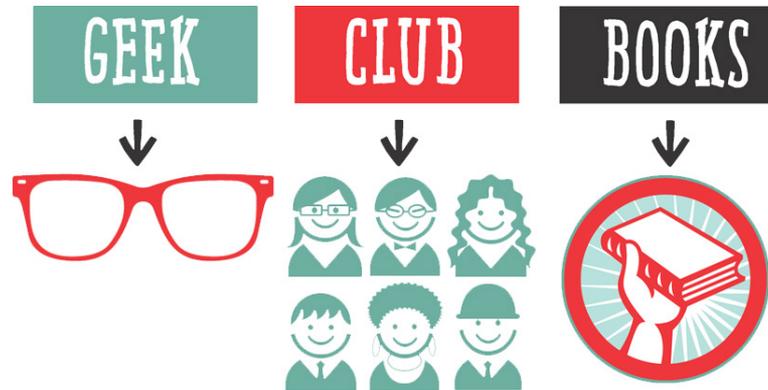


Creates jobs for the autistic while recycling and giving new life to old toys.



Project SEARCH is a one year school-to-work High School Transition Program.

Project SEARCH



501(C)3, AUTISM STORYTELLING

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