The Autism Acceptance Book has 62 pages filled with information, activities, ideas and journal pages for children ages 6 to 13.

A free teacher’s guide is available at wateringcanpress.com with lesson plans that provide creative ideas for using the book in classrooms while fulfilling National and State content standards.

For more information, go to www.wateringcanpress.com.
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Welcome to Your AUTISM ACCEPTANCE BOOK!

What do all your friends, family, teachers, and the people in your community have in common?
They are all different from one another!
Everyone is different in some ways, which is great, because this is what makes us all unique and special.

When people seem different from you, the best thing to do is to try to understand them and find out what is special about each of them.

The AUTISM ACCEPTANCE BOOK will help you learn more about people who may seem different than you because they have autism.

- It will teach you about autism and many of the things that are difficult for people with autism.
- It will show you that we are all different and help you understand why people with autism may sometimes act differently than you do.
- It will help you imagine how things might feel for people with autism.
- It will let you figure out ways to be understanding, accepting, and even helpful to people with autism.

You will see that when you make an effort to understand people, you will find their special qualities. That means that anyone can become your friend if you take the time to understand him or her. When you do this, you will build all kinds of new and valuable friendships.

What are you waiting for? Turn the page and get started!
How are you **DIFFERENT**?
Here, you get to think about ways that you feel different.

There are many things that I think are fun and that I am really good at doing. One of the things I’m really good at is .........................................

There are also some things that are hard for me to learn. Some of my friends are good at these things and I wish I were, too. One thing that I think is hard is ........................................ When I can’t do that well, I sometimes feel .........................................

I know that everyone looks different from each other and this is how I think I look different—I am .........................................

I get scared of some things that might not make other people scared. One thing that sometimes makes me feel scared is .........................................

I notice that people act differently when they are upset. Some people like to be quiet and alone; others want to be around friends. Some people cry and some people might get mad and yell. When I’m upset, I usually .........................................

How do **YOU** like to be treated?
Now, you can think about how you like people to treat you.

When I feel different, I hope that people will: (circle all that apply)

- treat me nicely
- lend a hand
- be my friend
- BE PATIENT
- NOT LAUGH AT ME
- help me feel better

You probably circled all of them!

That means that you hope others will take time to understand you, be kind to you, and walk in your shoes!

Now it’s your turn to learn about people who are different from you because they have autism.
You and Your Friends with Autism

Understanding what makes them different and special and how you can be a good friend

You just learned that autism affects how some people’s brains work.

When people have autism, it may lead them to act differently than other people.

Now, you will get to learn how and why your friends with autism sometimes act differently.

You can even try to imagine how they feel. Here’s your chance to practice taking a walk in someone else’s shoes!

Remember, this means you use your imagination to think about how it feels to be them.

Then, you can think about how you can be a good friend to each person you know with autism.
People with autism may not understand the way you use certain words.

People with autism think and listen very logically and literally. This means that when they hear statements, they tend to think the words mean exactly the way they sound. But often, other people use expressions that don’t mean what they say.

You probably know that when someone says, “That is so cool,” they are not talking about the temperature of something. If someone says, “Can you lend me a hand?” you know they are not actually asking to borrow your hand and take it home.

People with autism may not understand when you use words in a way that is different from their normal or exact meaning. If people around them are using words or expressions they don’t understand, they might get frustrated. They might seem confused, upset, or even scared.

Walk in their shoes and see how it feels.

Look at the expressions below. Think about how hard it might be to understand these statements if you always thought that words only had their normal meanings.

Watch out for the ball—duck! Did you change your mind?
Let’s hit the road. Wow, that’s neat.

Can you think of other expressions that use words in this way?

“ ”
“ ”
“ ”

People use these kinds of expressions ALL the time, so just think how often this must frustrate your friends.

Be a good friend to your friend with autism.

When you are talking to your friend with autism, try to avoid using expressions that she might not easily understand. If you say something that seems to confuse her, you can ask if she knows what you mean. If she says, “no,” then you can re-word it and try to say it more simply and clearly. When you make the extra effort to choose words with more care, it can make a big difference to your friend with autism.
GROUP ACTIVITIES

Communicate Through Pictures
You have learned that some people with autism sometimes have trouble talking. They sometimes might use pictures to express what they want to say.

Here's an exercise where you can practice communicating in a new way.
Each person should find a partner. Sit with your partner and without talking, try to tell your partner what you did last weekend. You can draw pictures—you just can't use any words. Your partner should then tell you what he or she understood from looking at your pictures.
Each person should take a turn drawing to "tell" about their weekend while the other person tries to figure out what their partner is "saying."

Draw your weekend story here:

Different is Special!
For this activity, everyone should sit in a circle. Each person should take a few minutes to think of something about themselves that is different and special. It can be a hobby, a talent, or anything else about them that is unique. Once everyone has thought of a special thing about themselves, it is time for the group to share their thoughts with each other.
One by one, each person in the group will explain what makes them different or special.

It's nice to see how we are all proud of the things that make us unique!

Compliment Each Other
Now, since everyone likes hearing nice things from others, go around the circle one more time. This time, instead of telling the group something about yourself, give the person next to you a compliment about what makes him or her unique.
The compliment can be something specific such as “I love your red hair;” or “You are really good at math.” It can also be more general, like “You always treat people nicely.”

Doesn't it feel nice to know that the people around you like that you are different?