



## Autism Resource Kit For Libraries

A collection of resources to help children with autism participate in library activities. This guide was created by Nicole Caldwell, M.Ed. of [PositivelyAutism.com](http://PositivelyAutism.com). If you have any questions about using this guide, please send an e-mail to [nicole@PositivelyAutism.com](mailto:nicole@PositivelyAutism.com).

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# About Autism

Autism, also known as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), is a developmental disability. Autism is referred to as a "spectrum disorder" because it affects each person with autism differently, and some people are more significantly impacted than others.

Autism can cause difficulties with communication skills, and many people with autism are unable to speak or have limited verbal communication abilities. This can also include difficulties with understanding communication from other people. A person with severe autism may appear to be ignoring you, but they usually are not. They just have challenges with processing spoken communication.

People with autism may also have differences in social skills. It is common for people with autism not to make eye contact and have difficulty understanding social communication, such as facial expressions or gestures.

Another area of difficulty for people with autism is behavior. Children with autism may have high levels of anxiety about changes in routine and unexpected events. They may be sensitive to loud sounds, bright lights, and large crowds of people. They may also make unusual movements with their body, such as rocking their body, flapping their hands, spinning in circles, or repeating words or phrases over and over again. These sensory differences are known as "stimming." They are common to children with autism, and they are not intended as misbehavior of any kind.

In addition to these difficulties, people with autism may also have many strengths and gifts. People with autism may have a strength in processing visual information (as opposed to spoken communication). They also may have a special interest area such as trains or the weather, and can become very knowledgeable about their topic of interest. Each child with autism has unique gifts and abilities.

# About this Guide

This guide contains several resources that can help families of children with autism participate in library activities and services.

The first item in this guide is a Social Story. [Social stories, developed by Carol Gray](#), provide information to children with autism with words and pictures to help them understand what to do in particular situations. An example of a Social Story about going to a library is attached. Families can read this story with their children before coming to the library to help the child prepare for the visit.

The second item is a set of flash cards for library-related vocabulary words. Since children with autism often possess a strength in processing visual information, rather than auditory information, showing pictures is a way to help them become familiar with new things.

The third item is a set of pictures that can be used to show the series of activities a child will do at the library. Providing a visual schedule of activities can help reduce anxiety for children with autism.

Lastly, some links to additional resources are provided.



# Going to the Library

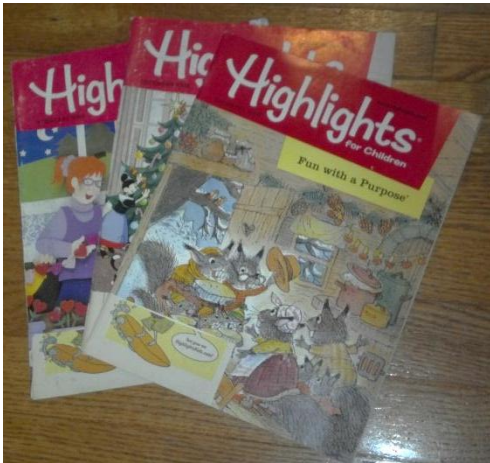
Soon, we will go to the library.



The library is a place where I can look at books.



A library may also have magazines, videos, and music CDs.





A librarian works at the library. He or she can help me find books.



In the library, people are reading quietly. I will try to use my whisper voice when I talk at the library.



There is also a bathroom at the library  
if I need to use the potty.



There are many things to do at the library.



I can use the computer.



I can go to story time.



I can find books to read.



To find a book, we can type its name on the computer. The computer will tell us where the book is.





We can also look for books on the bookshelves.



When I find a book I want, I take it to the desk, where someone will help me check it out.



I need to show my library card to check-out, or borrow, the book.



I get to take the book home for a few days.  
Then, I bring it back to the library for other  
kids to have a turn reading the book.



I am learning about going to the library.



The End

# Library Words Flashcards



librarian



book





CD



video



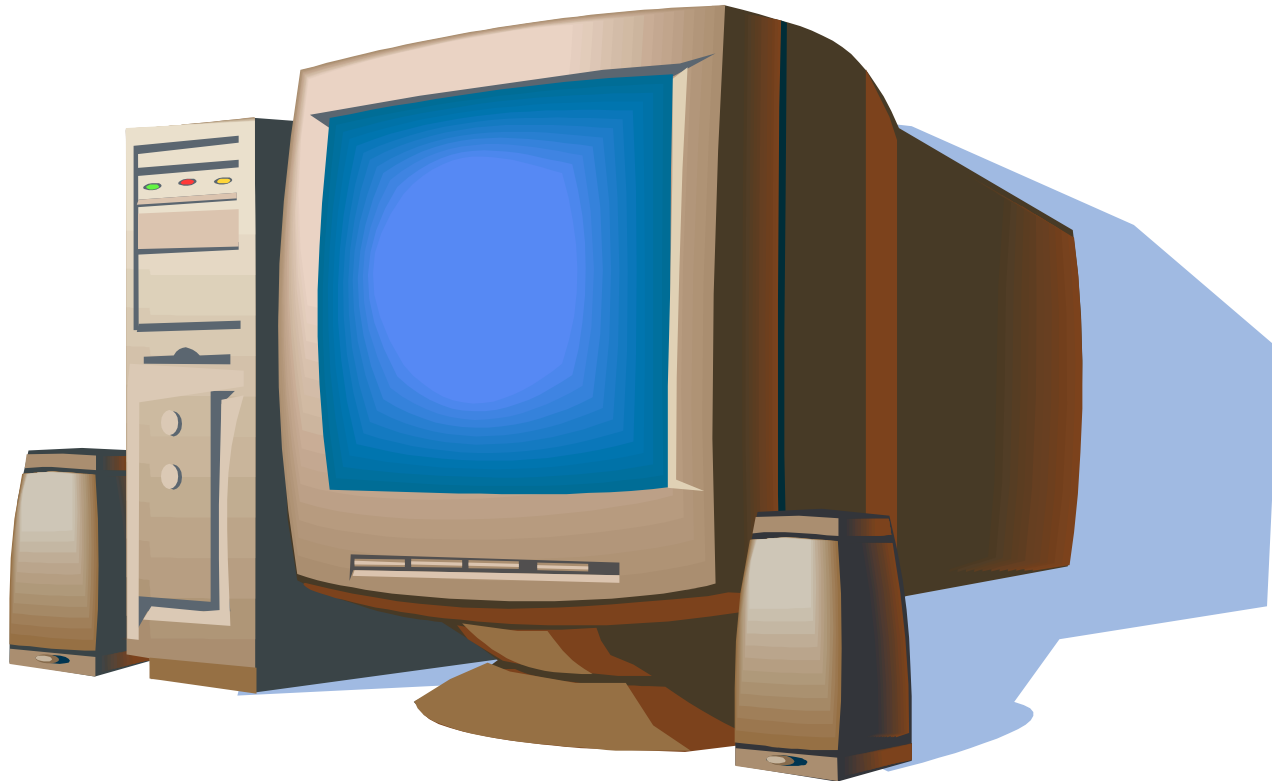
desk



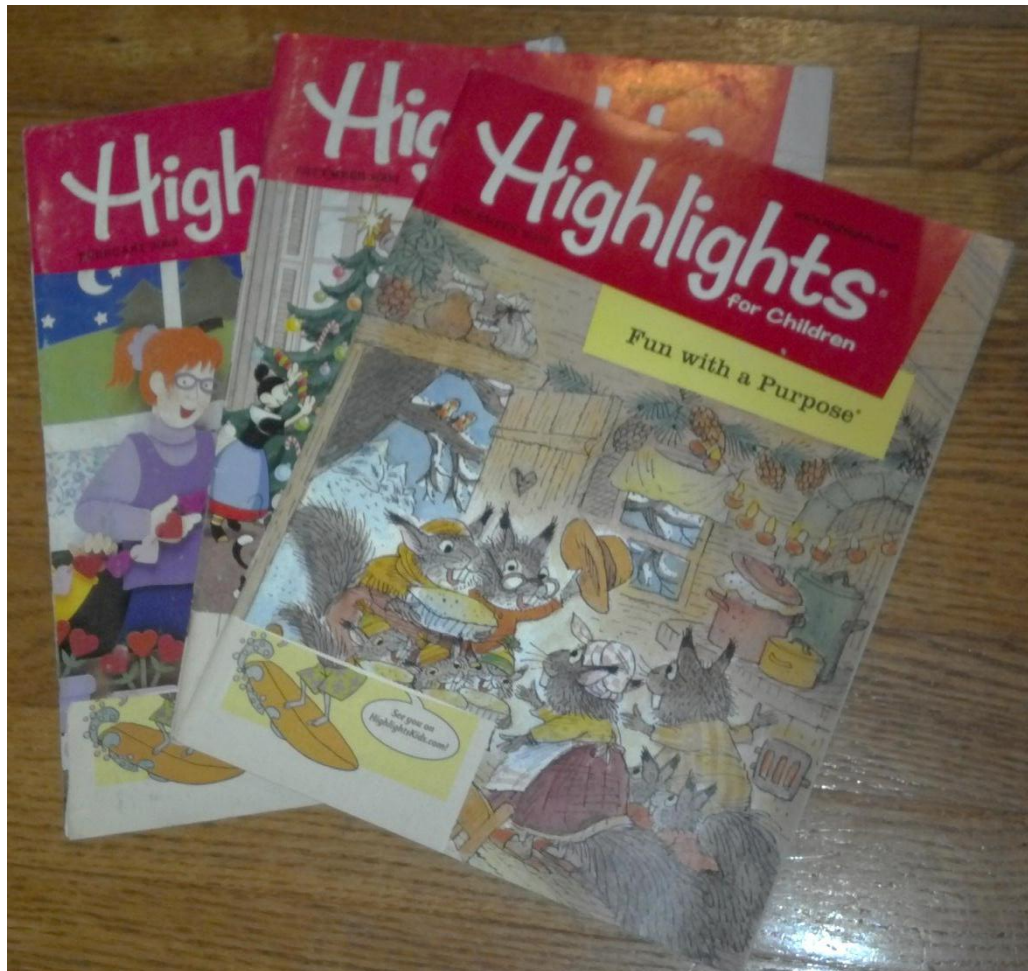
library card



computer



# magazine



# bookshelf



# Library Visual Schedule

Instructions:

Print and cut out each schedule card.

Arrange the cards in the order you will do the activities at the library. If you won't be doing one of the activities, you can leave it off the schedule.

Attach the schedule cards (in order) to a piece of paper, a notebook, a folder, etc. It may be helpful to laminate the schedule cards and attach [sticky Velcro dots](#) to the backs of the cards so you can move them around and add or take away cards from the list. For example, you may be going to story time one day at the library, but not another.

Review the schedule before going to the library, and refer to it during the visit. As you complete each step at the library, you could remove that schedule card from the list, and put it into an envelope.





Arrive at Library



Use Quiet Whisper Voice



Go to Story Time



Use Computer



Use Computer to  
Look Up Book



Find Books on Shelves



Check Out Books



Leave the Library



Good Job!

# Links for More Information

Autism Training Video for Library Staff (Approx. 20 Minutes):

<http://www.librariesandautism.org/video.htm>

“Libraries and Autism: We're Connected” Website:

<http://www.librariesandautism.org/>

“Autism in Your Library” (Tips from the Association for Library Service to Children): <http://www.alsc.org/blog/2012/03/autism-in-your-library-customer-service-tips/>

“Storytimes for Autistic Children” (Tips from the Association for Library Service to Children): <http://www.alsc.org/blog/2008/08/storytime-for-autistic-children/>