

Books for Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Diagnosis

Uniquely Human: A Different Way of Seeing Autism by Barry M. Prizant – Offers a compassionate, strengths-based approach focused on understanding behaviors rather than just fixing them. He presents a groundbreaking shift in how we understand and support individuals on the autism spectrum. Rather than viewing "autistic behaviors" as symptoms of a disease to be cured or fixed, Prizant reframes them as meaningful coping strategies used to navigate a world that often feels chaotic, overwhelming, or unpredictable.

Your Child is Not Broken by Heidi Mavir – is an irreverent, "no-holds-barred" guide for parents of neurodivergent children. Part memoir and part parenting manual, it advocates for a radical shift away from trying to "fix" children to fit into a neurotypical world. A supportive, modern guide empowering parents to advocate for their children and embrace neurodiversity.

The Reason I Jump by Naoki Higashida – is an extraordinary memoir written by Naoki Higashida when he was only 13 years old. Because Naoki is non-verbal and has autism, he wrote the book using an alphabet grid to painstakingly spell out his thoughts, debunking the myth that non-verbal individuals lack complex internal lives.

1001 Great Ideas for Teaching & Raising Children with Autism by Ellen Notbohm – is a massive, practical "encyclopedia" of strategies. Unlike a narrative memoir, this is a reference book designed to be flipped through for quick, actionable solutions to everyday challenges.

Understanding & Connection

NeuroTribes by Steve Silberman - is a New York Times-bestselling historical and scientific exploration that fundamentally changed the public conversation about autism. It is widely credited with popularizing the concept of neurodiversity—the idea that conditions like autism, ADHD, and dyslexia are natural variations of the human genome rather than "errors of nature" to be cured. A deep dive into the history of autism and the neurodiversity movement.

The Autistic Brain by Temple Grandin - Combines personal experience with scientific research as it explores autism through a combination of cutting-edge neuroscience and her own lived experience. The book is a pivotal resource that shifts the focus from "fixing" deficits to identifying and fostering the unique neurological strengths of the autistic mind.

Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew by Ellen Notbohm explores the internal world of a child with autism. Ellen Notbohm writes from the perspective of an autistic child to help adults bridge the communication gap. The book is celebrated for its empathy and its ability to turn "frustrating" behaviors into understandable needs.

I Will Die On This Hill by Jules Edwards & Meghan Ashburn bridges the gap between autistic adults and parents. It is a powerful collaboration between Jules Edwards, an autistic parent and advocate, and Meghan Ashburn, a non-autistic mother of autistic children. The book aims to bridge the often-adversarial gap between the "Autism Mom" community and #ActuallyAutistic self-advocates to create a more unified force for disability justice.

Look Me in the Eye by John Elder Robison is a darkly humorous and moving memoir about growing up with undiagnosed autism in the 1960s and 70s. Robison, the older brother of *Running with Scissors* author Augusten Burroughs, provides a "reverse angle" on their dysfunctional childhood, detailing how his inability to follow social norms—like making eye contact—led others to label him a "social deviant".

Autism in Heels by Jennifer Cook O'Toole is a witty, raw, and deeply personal memoir that highlights the unique (and often invisible) way autism presents in women and girls. Jennifer, a world-renowned advocate and consultant for the Netflix series *Love on the Spectrum*, shares her journey of being diagnosed as an adult after years of "performing" as a neurotypical woman.

Navigating Autism by Temple Grandin & Debra Moore is a strengths-based guide designed for parents, educators, and clinicians. This collaboration pairs Grandin's personal insights as an autistic individual with Moore's three decades of experience as a psychologist to provide a practical framework for unlocking a child's full potential.

Practical Strategies & Daily Life

How to Teach Life Skills to Kids with Autism by Jennifer McIlwee Myers—an autistic author and advocate—provides a refreshingly blunt and practical guide to what she calls "survival skills." Her core argument is that while academic success is great, a child's long-term independence depends on mastering the "invisible" social and practical skills that neurotypical children often pick up by osmosis. **The Social Skills Picture Book** by Jed Baker - Visual guide for social interaction.

The Out-of-Sync Child by Carol Stock Kranowitz is the definitive guide to Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD). While not exclusively about autism, it is a staple for the community because sensory challenges—like oversensitivity to noise or a constant need to crash into things—are so central to the autistic experience. **No More Meltdowns** by Jed Baker - Offers strategies for preventing and managing behavioral outbursts.

The Verbal Behavior Approach by Mary Lynch Barbera Mary Lynch Barbera is a foundational guide that bridges the gap between complex behavioral science and practical, everyday parenting. As both a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and a mother of a son with autism, Barbera provides a step-by-step methodology for teaching language and reducing problem behaviors.

The 5-Point Scale by Kari Dunn Buron & Mitzi Curtis is a highly practical tool designed to help individuals with autism—especially those who struggle with emotional regulation and social anxiety—"see" and quantify their internal states. By turning abstract feelings into a concrete 1-to-5 visual, it provides a shared language for the individual and their support system.

Playing, Laughing and Learning by Julia Moore is a highly practical, theme-based resource designed for parents and carers of newly diagnosed children. Rather than just a list of games, it provides a framework for breaking down activities into manageable stages to build a child's attention, motivation, and small successes.

Optimistic Parenting: Hope and Help for You and Your Challenging Child by Mark Durand identifies a major roadblock in behavior management: the parent's own internal narrative. He argues that even the best behavioral strategies will fail if a parent feels hopeless, blamed, or believes their child is acting out on purpose.