

PERSPECTIVES



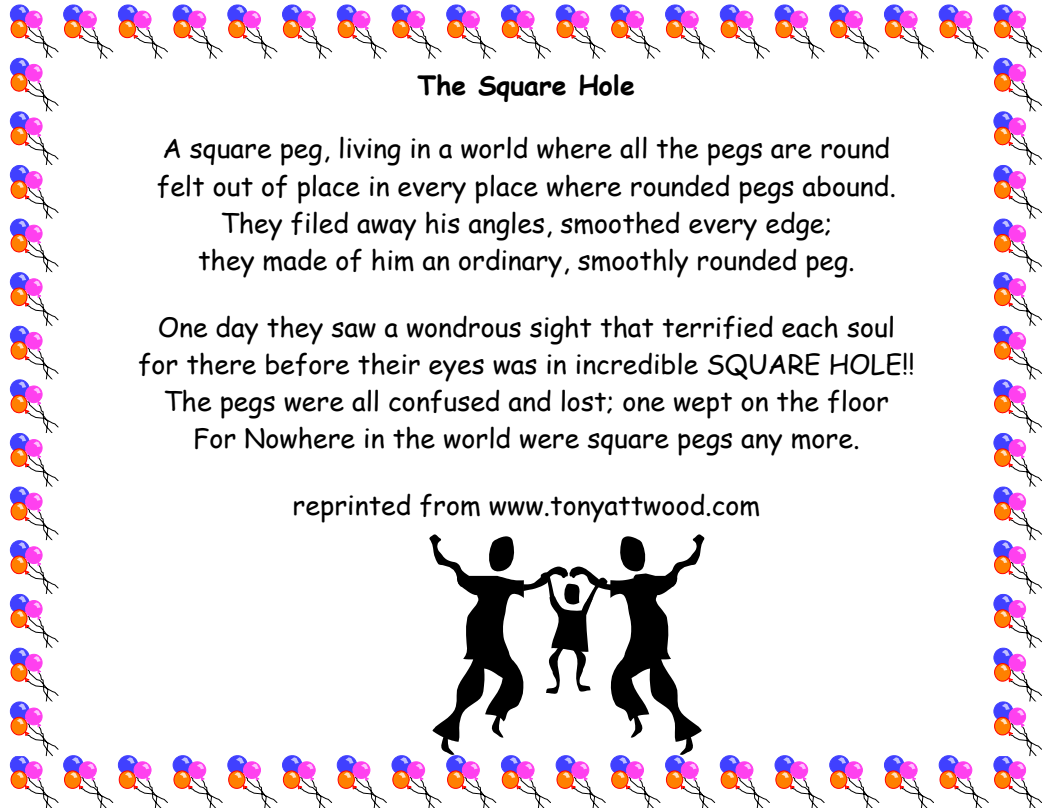
Genesee Intermediate School District

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The Square Hole

A square peg, living in a world where all the pegs are round
felt out of place in every place where rounded pegs abound.

They filed away his angles, smoothed every edge;
they made of him an ordinary, smoothly rounded peg.

One day they saw a wondrous sight that terrified each soul
for there before their eyes was in incredible SQUARE HOLE!!

The pegs were all confused and lost; one wept on the floor
For Nowhere in the world were square pegs any more.

reprinted from www.tonyattwood.com



Free Pictures and Computer Games

<http://do2learn.com>

do2learn offers free teacher and parent materials: picture communication cards, homework helpers, math grids and tables, lined writing paper, alphabet, number, color and shapes, activity choice boards, art project layouts. There are also free computer learning games which include color, number, work, and emotion games, interactive facial expressions game, songs with FLASH animation to demonstrate street and fire safety rules.

Be sure to check it out!!

Social Skills Materials

Social Skills are an integral part of day to day life and something that most of us take for granted. For individuals on the Autism Spectrum social interactions are often scripted and do not come naturally. Here is a list of resources for social skills. For more information go to www.tonyattwood.com.

Social Thinking Across the Home and School Day is a two-part video that is intended to assist parents and professionals with facilitating social thinking and related skills. The first video is a workshop with Michelle Garcia Winner and the second shows Michelle working with both elementary and high school children in individual and group sessions. Available at www.thegraycenter.org for \$89.95.

Watch, Listen, Move Closer, Ease In — The Fall 2002 issue of the Jenison Autism Journal. A social story that helps young children understand how to join a group: www.thegraycenter.org for \$6.00.

Thinking About You, Thinking About Me by Michelle Garcia Winner — philosophy and strategies to further develop perspective taking and communicative abilities: www.thegraycenter.org for \$39.00. These books are available from Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

Peer Play and the Autism Spectrum by Pamela J. Wolfberg. This book provides assessment strategies and activities to develop peer play for the elementary level.

Solving the Relationship Puzzle by Steve Gutstein. The Relational Developmental Intervention program is designed to encourage genuine reciprocal exchanges. His approach is different from conventional social skills programs.

Relationship Development Intervention with Young Children by Steve Gutstein and Rachel Sheely published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers. The book provides a series of exercises based on the relationship development intervention model. The activities are explained and presented in a logical and user-friendly manner.

Pass the Compliment. Even after being out of high school for 10, 20, or even 50 years, most adults remember being teased, ridiculed, or insulted when they were children or teenagers. For many, name calling is part of what it means to be a kid. Students with autism may be at an increased risk for this type of verbal bullying because of their social, communication, and behavior differences. Teachers, however, have the power to change that culture and inspire a different kind of "name calling" in classrooms.

"Pass the Compliment" is like the old telephone game many have played at childhood sleepover parties (Loomans & Kohlberg, 1993). Students are asked to think of a compliment they would like to pay to the person sitting directly in back of them (or next to them, or in front of them). The first person in the row begins the game by turning around and whispering a compliment to the second person in line ("I think you are creative"). The second person in line then turns to the third person in line and repeats the first compliment and gives a new one ("I think you are creative and

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funny"). The third person in line turns to the fourth person in line and shares three compliments, and so forth. When the compliments get to the end of the line, the teacher calls on those in the back row to relay all of the compliments from the entire row ("I think you are creative, funny, independent, a good cartoonist, and gutsy"). Row members then let everyone know if the message got through or if some of it got lost in the process.

Other versions of this community builder include the following:

- ◇ Set up a compliment box in the classroom and pick some to read aloud every week.
- ◇ Pick one or two students at the end or beginning of the day or week and have five classmates give those individuals compliments. Compliments can be general or specific. For instance, a middle school teacher might read a student's story and ask her classmates to provide five compliments related to the story (e.g., "Student gave the story a creative title," "The ending was a surprise," "The part on the staircase was really suspenseful").
- ◇ Begin or end the day or the class period by asking students to give themselves a group compliment ("We created amazing poetry this week").

Paper Bag Interviews. Paper bag interviews are a great way to facilitate interactions between students and to provide them with opportunities to ask and answer questions. It is also a fun way to engage all students. Instead of one or two students having a chance to speak during a lesson, paper bag interviews give all students time to share. This activity can be used to teach younger students turn-taking or reading simple sentences. Older students can learn actual listening skills or ways to ask clarifying or follow-up questions.

To engineer paper bag interviews (Gibbs, 1995), the teacher writes a series of questions related to classroom topics and places them in small lunch bags or cardboard boxes. The teacher then puts students into small groups of three to five students and hands each group one bag or box. Students then take turns drawing questions from the container and answering them. At any point, a student may decide to pass on a question and draw a new one.

Paper bag interviews can be used regularly throughout the year. Teachers can either use this activity to give students opportunities to learn about one another or to comment on different topics of study in the classroom, or questions can give students a chance to do both. For example, the question, "How are you most like Crazy Horse?" prompts students to disclose something about themselves while they consider information they have about this historical figure.

Other versions of this community builder include the following:

- ◇ Have students generate the questions.
- ◇ Ask students to take turns answering questions using different types of expression, including sign language and gestures, original drawings and illustrations, and facial expressions.
- ◇ Put questions in the bags that relate to student interests. If a student in the group has just become an uncle, include a question about this big event. If a student is really interested in the Beatles, include a question about 1960s rock and roll.

from "You're Going to Love This Kid!" by Paula Kluth, p. 95-96



Here is a humorous look from the other side

Neurotypical syndrome is a neurobiological disorder characterized by preoccupation with social concerns, delusions of superiority, and obsession with conformity. Neurotypical individuals often assume that their experience of the world is either the only one, or the only correct one. NTs find it difficult to be alone. NTs are often intolerant of seemingly minor differences in others. When in groups NTs are socially and behaviorally rigid and frequently insist on the performance of dysfunctional, destructive, and even impossible rituals as a way of maintaining group identity. NTs find it difficult to communicate directly, and have a much higher incidence of lying as compared with persons on the autistic spectrum. NT is believed to be genetic in origin. Autopsies have shown the brain of the neurotypical smaller than that of an autistic individual and may have overdeveloped areas related to social behavior. (Institute for the Study of the Neurologically Typical, 2002)
reprinted from <http://isnt.autistics.org>



There can be concerns regarding the misinterpretation of the actions of individuals on the autism spectrum. Get to know the police, firefighters, and emergency responders in your local area. Share information regarding your child and request that it be kept on file. Here are some safety resources.

Autism Safety Resources

Bill Davis joins Carolyn Gammichia and Dennis Debbaudt as having the longest track record of advocating for the safety of persons with autism. His career as an instructor and activist began after his son, Chris, today age 9, was diagnosed with autism. Concerned about how police, firefighters, and others might misinterpret his son's traits, Davis began a mission to educate his community about the disorder and, today, is a tireless crusader for the rights of all persons with autism.

He also created the three one-of-a-kind products below to assist you in keeping your child protected:

1. Video: Encountering Autism

An excellent training aid for emergency responders, retailers, hospitals, and more. Addresses challenges emergency responders may encounter when they arrive at a scene and provides guidance on how to communicate and interact with autistic individuals. Also discusses uncontrollable behavior. Price: \$39.00.

2. Book: *Dangerous Encounters: Avoiding Perilous Situations with Autism: A Streetwise Guide for all Emergency Responders, Retailers and Parents* By Bill Davis and Wendy Goldband Schunick.

Targeted toward emergency responders, retailers, and retail security, to name a few, *Dangerous Encounters*, takes readers through everyday situations, stressing safety and awareness. Discusses situations such as a person with autism rearranging CDs or books by color, which could be misinterpreted as suspicious behavior. Price: \$19.95.

3. Autism Safety Sticker

Sticker reads "Person with Autism," which Davis advises parents to use in their home and vehicle. Price: \$5.00. Visit www.amazon.com to purchase book and www.discountlearning.com to purchase video

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Conferences

<u>Date</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Contact Name</u>	<u>Fee</u>	<u>Contact Info</u>
Nov. 21, 2003	West Michigan Inclusion Network Grand Rapids	Jill England, Paula Kluth, Sally Burton-Hoyle, Dohn Hoyle	Varies	(616) 954-9424
Dec. 12, 2003	Asperger's Syndrome & Autism Spectrum Disorders in Children & Adolescents Livonia	John M. Oritz, Ph.D.	Varies	Phone: 800-839-4584
Feb. 19, 2004	Communication & Best Practice Clinton ISD	Lynn Sweeney	Varies	www.autism-mi.org 1-800-223-6722
Feb. 27, 2004	Asperger Syndrome Jackson ISD	Dr. Richard Howlin	Varies	www.autism-mi.org 1-800-223-6722

On-line Autism Conferences are available at <http://autismtoday.com/conference.start.htm>
Some of the speakers include Maria Wheeler, Dr. Temple Grandin, & Dr. Tony Attwood.

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or sticker.

Additional Resources:

1. **SafePlace**, an Austin, TX-headquartered organization offers a variety of services to people with disabilities, such as: a **National Training and Technical Assistance Project**, a three-year project being funded by the U.S. Department of Justice; a **Resource Lending Library**, which features over 350 items featuring books, curriculum kits, videos, audiotapes, anatomically correct dolls, models, games, and more available for checkout either in-person or via mail; **Sexuality Education**; and **Caregiver Abuse Prevention**. Type www.austin-safepace.org/programs/disability/default.htm into your web browser, or visit their main Web site, www.austin-safepace.org, to learn more.
2. **The Autism Society of Illinois** sells decals that read, "**Emergency Alert — Occupant with Autism — May Not Respond to Verbal Command.**" Call (630) 691-1270, send a fax to (630) 932-5620, or send an e-mail to: AutismIll@aol.com for more information.
3. **The South Carolina Autism Society** publishes a brochure with important reminders and tips for ensuring the protection of your loved one with autism. To obtain a copy, visit their Web site at www.scautism.org, where you can download a PDF version; their toll-free number is (800) 438-4790.
4. **Medic Alert** provides low-cost bracelets and medallions that you can imprint with the wearer's name, key details (i.e., has autism, seizures, etc.) and a toll-free number which, if dialed, will pull up file information such as appropriate contact information, medications, etc. For more information, visit www.medicalert.org.
5. **The Autism Society of North Carolina** bookstore offers a video, *Autism Awareness for Law Enforcement Video*. The video, narrated by Dennis Debbaudt, highlights five teenagers with various levels of autism from the spectrum. Price \$15.00.

E-mail Group:

Join "The Law Enforcement Awareness Network," an e-mail discussion group geared toward first responder agencies and those serving the community by sending an e-mail to:

TheLawEnforcementAwarenessNetwork@yahoogroups.com.

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Genesee Intermediate School District

Special Education Services Center
2413 West Maple Avenue
Flint, Michigan 48507-3493

Phone: 810-591-4877
Fax: 810-591-4548



Coming Up: Autism Support Group

Date: Tuesday, December 2, 2003 **Time:** 6:00 p.m.

Place: Genesee Intermediate School District
Special Education Services Center-South, GenNET classroom
5089 Pilgrim Road, Flint 48507

(Pilgrim Road is south off Maple Avenue, between VanSlyke and Torrey Roads. Parking is located in the rear of the building. Enter through the far east doors.)

Rick McNally, Attorney, President of the Autism Society of Michigan, and father of a son with autism will share his experiences. He is kind, supportive and an excellent resource.

If you plan to attend or have questions, please call Becky Downing at 810-591-4868 and leave your name and phone number.

Hope to see you there!



Homework Help!

The Genesee Public Library now offers live homework help, an online tutoring service from Tutor.com for students 4th through 12th grades. This connects with expert tu-



tors in math, science, social studies, and English over the internet. A Genesee District Library card is needed to access the service from home or the library.

Students can access the service from home by going to the Genesee District Library's website at gdl.falcon.edu. The tutors are certified teachers, college professors, professional tutors, and graduate students.