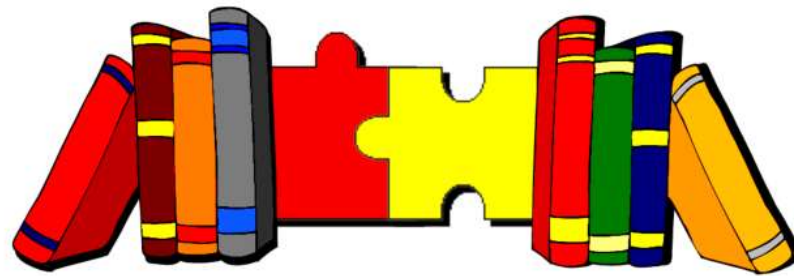


# Libraries and Autism



We're connected.

**NY State Department of Health  
Bureau of Early Intervention  
March 28, 2012**



**Welcoming people  
with all needs and all abilities  
within the scope of our Library services.**

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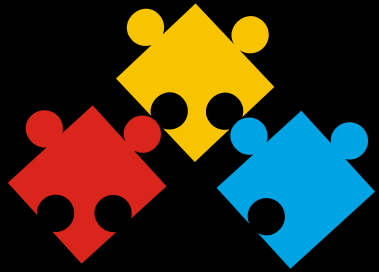
# Libraries as Community Inclusion Opportunities

“Being in the community is not the same as being part of the community.”

*- Bill Gaventa & Sue Hapshaw*

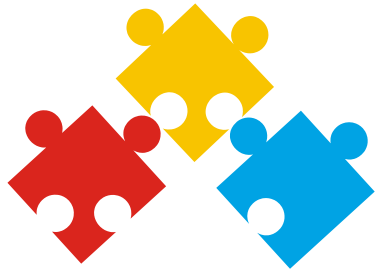
- community crossroads
- connections with people, activities, and information
- offering services across the life span





What is autism?

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# Autism...

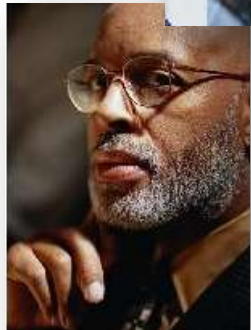
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**... is a developmental disability, which appears in a child's life before the age of 3, characterized by deficits or impairments in language, social interactions and communication, and by difficulties with behavior.**



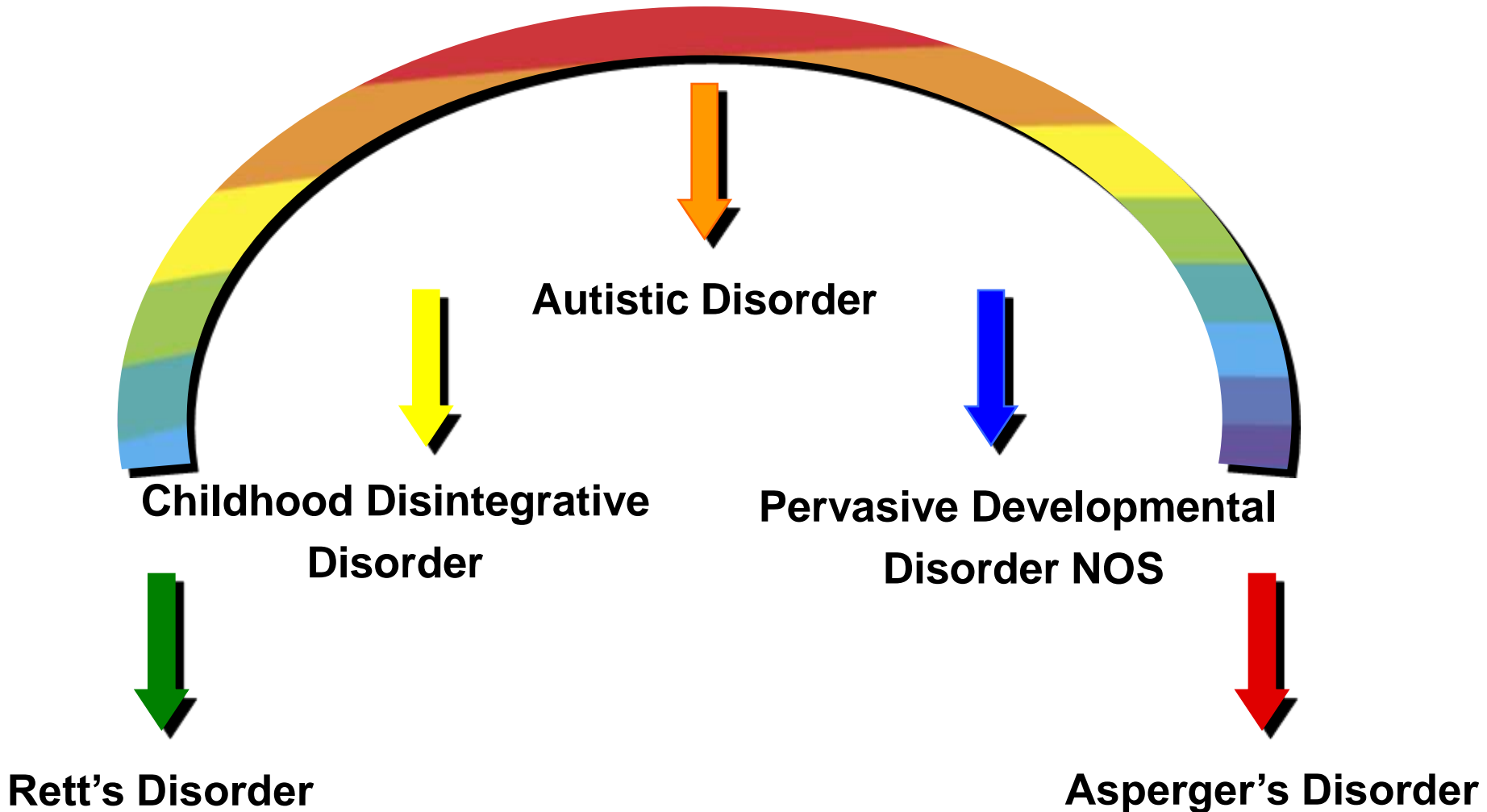
# Autism

**Autism was initially misdiagnosed and treated as a mental disease or a psychological disorder mistakenly thought to be brought upon by “cold” parenting style, parental neglect or abuse.**



**Autism is a broad spectrum neurological disorder.**

# Pervasive Developmental Disorders





# Demographics



- Approximately 1 out of 110 people in the U.S. population is currently diagnosed with autism. (for boys, it's 1 in 70).\*
- In New Jersey, prevalence of autism is 1 out of 94.
- Your town is not excluded from this statistic.
- While we may not think we have seen individuals with autism in our library, it does not mean that they aren't already customers.

\* October 2009 (Revised from the 2007 level of 1 in 150)





# Local Numbers

**Students ages 5 – 21  
diagnosed with autism  
in NY schools:**

**1996 – 3,416**

**2010 – 22,284**

*From the NYSED 2012*



# Variations in Autism

repetitive behaviors

difficulty reading social cues

physical overactivity

difficulty mixing in with other people

echolalic

no fear of real dangers

inappropriate laughter

oversensitive to pain

spin objects

not cuddly

apparent insensitivity to noise

resist changes in routine

poor eye contact

inappropriate attachment to objects

uneven skill level across areas

oversensitive to noise

extreme passivity

sustained by odd play

apparent insensitivity to pain

difficulty transitioning from one activity to another





# Did you know that all Behavior is a form of Communication?



Behavior is communicating the need for :

- attention
- help
- escape from demands
- sensory stimulation
- tangible object  
*a toy, a book, a computer session*

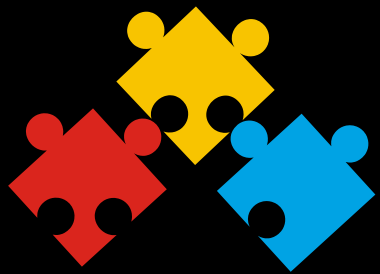




# Autism through the Life Span

- Autism is a lifelong disability, although a small percentage of children will lose their diagnostic label with intense early intervention.
- Many persons show improvements in functioning over time.
- An individual with autism is expected to live a typical life span.
- Issues change over time with development (infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood).





What can libraries do?

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**Information**

**Access to  
Technology**

**Keeping Current**

***YOUR  
LOCAL***

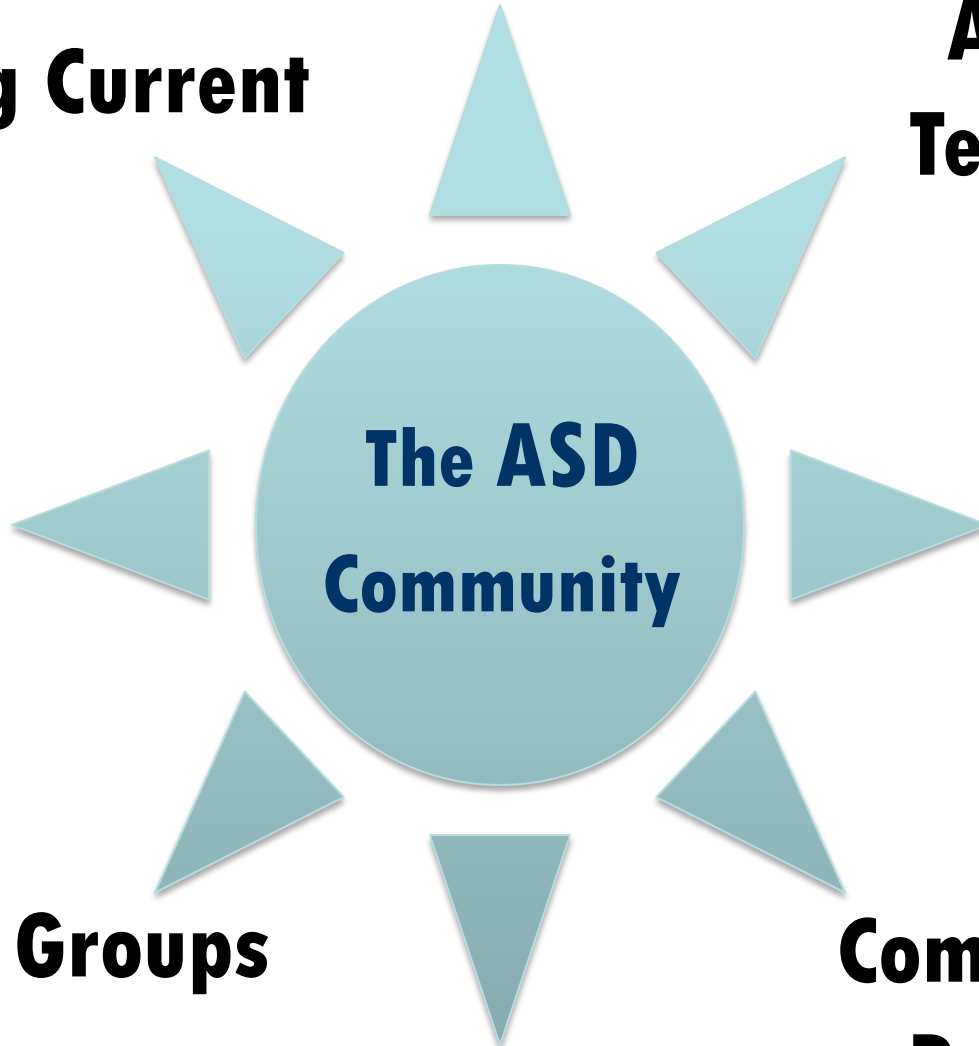
**The ASD  
Community**

***PUBLIC  
LIBRARY***

**Support Groups**

**Community  
Resources**

**Programming**





# Barriers to Inclusion

- Parents of children with autism often avoid community interaction because of the child’s “inappropriate” tendencies.
- There are often no outward physical characteristics or prosthetics signaling a person with autism as having a disorder.
- Onlookers might misunderstand the person’s behavior and/or the caregiver’s reactions.



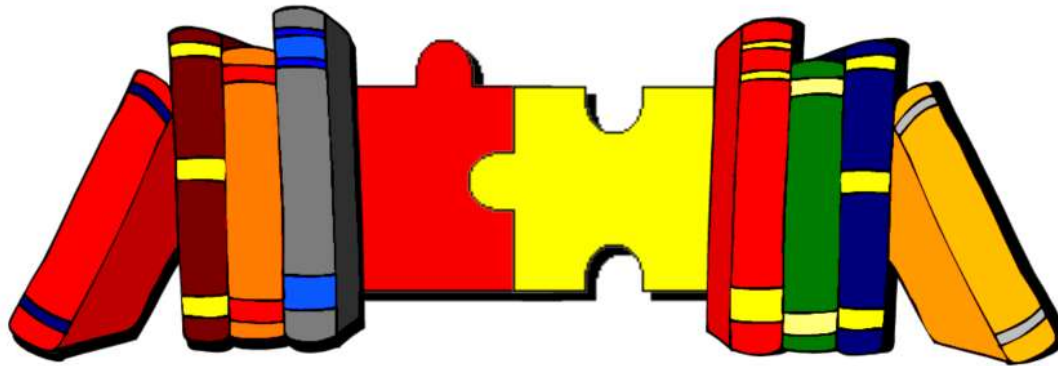
# It's the law

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)  
and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)  
were passed specifically to ensure that  
people with disabilities have  
equal access to community life and facilities.





# Libraries and Autism



We're connected.



# Strategies for Successful Customer Service

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ogy.

**Libraries and Autism**   
We're connected.

**Customer Service Tips**  
*"If you know one person with autism you know one person with autism"*

 **Communication Tip**  
Address the individual by name first  
Speak directly, simply, slowly and at a normal volume  
Try to make eye contact  
Avoid broad open-ended questions  
Provide a non-verbal communication board

 **Behaviors to ignore - "If it's not bothering somebody, let it go"**  
Rocking  
Quiet Humming  
Pacing  
Wiggling

 **Behaviors You Should Not Ignore**  
Destructive Activities  
Violent Tantrums  
Loud or inappropriate interaction with other patrons  
Violent Tantrums

 **Behavior Tip**  
Offer to help the caregiver and be empathetic  
Sit next to the person with autism  
Redirect attention  
Ask common social questions  
Offer to relocate other patrons

 **Emergency Tips**  
Contact security  
Call 911  
Do not touch the individual  
Avoid standing too close

 **Relationship Building Tips**  
Don't be condescending  
Be aware of your own attitude and avoid being judgemental  
Don't consider the caregiver as an intermediary  
Be an ambassador  
Give a tour of your library  
Know where your autism materials are located  
Offer "This Is My Library" book

*"The library can be a wonderful place for people with autism... with its cozy nooks and crannies... and books, and because it's not necessarily demanding anything socially, it's kind of perfect for somebody with autism"*

**Library Connections**  
Association of Librarians for the Autism Professional

www.thejointlibrary.org/autism • autism@thejointlibrary.org • www.libraryconnections.net • MyqandJan@libraryconnections.net



# Strategies for Success

## Assess communication style

- verbal
- picture system
- augmentative / alternative system
- sign language
- smart phones, tablets, ipads, e-readers

# Adapted Materials

- **Materials should be simple.**
  - few words on a page
  - pictures to explain them
- **Use hands-on and meaningful activities.**
- **Use adapted books.**
- **Depend on Social Stories: step-by-step activity descriptions with words and pictures.**



# The Scotch Plains Public Library

This is My Library  
The Scotch Plains Public Library



This is the inside of my library.



These are the times I can use my library.

LIBRARY HOURS	
Monday	9am - 9pm
Tuesday	9am - 9pm
Wednesday	8am - 9pm
Thursday	9am - 9pm
Friday	9am - 5pm
Saturday	9am - 5pm
Sunday	12pm - 4pm

SUMMER HOURS	
July & August	
Saturday	9am - 2pm
June, July & August	
Sunday	Closed

This is the circulation desk at my library.



I can use my library card to check-out, renew or return books or tapes or videos or DVDs to use outside the library.

This is a library card.



I need to bring my card when I go to the library. The card lets me check out books and use the computers.

# Special Needs Communication Guide



Library Services

Servicios de la Biblioteca

Special Needs Communication Guide

Guía de Comunicación para Necesidades Especiales

*Special Needs Communication Guide*

Libraries  
and  
Autism



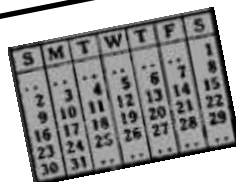
We're Connected.

[www.thejointlibrary.org/autism](http://www.thejointlibrary.org/autism)



books

libros



late fee  
cargo por demora



# Technology



- Web-based social stories
- Apps for iPads, iPhones, Tablets, etc.
- Computers – Blogs, Self-expression



# Libraries and Autism



We're Connected.



In 2008 the [Scotch Plains Public Library](#) and the [Fanwood Memorial Library](#), together with our partners, created **Libraries and Autism: We're Connected**. This award winning project produced a customer service training video and website primarily for library staff to help them serve individuals with autism and their families more effectively. The video focuses on what you need to know about autism and will empower you with specific techniques to offer more inclusive service to this growing and underserved population.

The resources here on the website, along with the on-site training workshops which have been presented to hundreds of librarians around the country, expand on our customer service video to address the real world implementation of best practices and universal service for people with ASD and their families and helps staff to improve their ability to provide excellent, inclusive, universal customer service to everyone who uses the library.

Every library we visit tells us the same story of increasing numbers of families dealing with ASD who are turning to their public library for resources, programs and a community center where they are welcome. We stress communication, customer service, using individuals on the spectrum and with other developmental disabilities as staff and volunteers in the library, programming strategies that work, connecting with local experts, and the importance of empowering staff to be willing to 'do something'.

 To receive a free "**Libraries and Autism: We're Connected**" Decal for your library, contact us at [autism@thejointlibrary.org](mailto:autism@thejointlibrary.org). We encourage you to explore this site and make free use of our support resources.

Please contact us anytime with questions, inquiries, comments or programming suggestions, and take the time to let us know if the video and any of these materials have been of use to you via email



## PROJECT NEWS:

### BACK from ALA in NOLA!



Three years ago when we started this project we searched the web hard for reference to Libraries and autism and came up dry, so it was heartening to see such attention being given to

For information on how to schedule a in-depth training workshop for your own library or group, please contact us at [autism@thejointlibrary.org](mailto:autism@thejointlibrary.org)

### UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS

- Tues., Jan. 31, 2012  
2 Workshops for the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association, Charolette Hall, MD
- Fri., Feb. 10, 2012  
Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, IN
- Wed., Feb. 15, 2012  
Serving the Underserved: Spring 2012 Colloquium for the Rutgers MLIS program, SCILS, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 7:30 pm
- Wed., March 14, 2012  
PLA 2012, Philadelphia, PA  
Preconference #7:  
Special Needs, Talented Children: Outreach Services to Families with Special Needs. 8:30 am - 12:00 pm
- Wed., March 28, 2012  
Webinar for NY State Libraries via the NY State Dept. of Health, Bureau of Early Intervention
- Fall, 2012  
4-week Online MOODLE Course





## **Strategies that Work**

- **Develop a well-rounded resource collection**
- **Sensory Storytimes**
- **Sensory Friendly Films**
- **After Hours Programs**
- **Paws to Read**
- **Create cozy safe areas**



# Programming for Kids on the Spectrum



## Sensory Storytime (*separate or inclusive*)

*“ Welcomes children of any age who have trouble sitting still”*

“Inclusive” story times for families can include a pictorial schedule and carpet squares to establish boundaries for the entire audience.

Incorporate two visuals to each story: the illustrations with the book and a flannel board to act out parts of the story.



Double visuals: read a book through once and follow with the same flannel story immediately after.

Engage as many senses as you can incorporate – with every story use music, pictures and items like beanbags and ribbons for the kids to touch. Emphasize the visual and tactile.

Sensory elements can include Educubes for seating, therabands with songs, use of a sensory balance beam or stepping stones and other sensory experiences for all participants





**Lights brought up**

**Sound turned down**

**Families can bring in their own  
gluten-free, casein-free snacks**

**No previews or advertisements**

**Audience is welcome to  
get up and dance,  
walk, shout or sing**



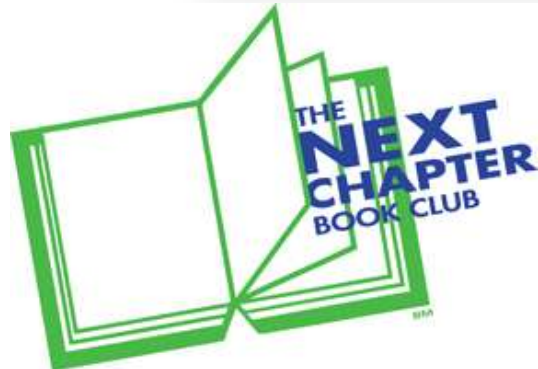


# Inclusive Programming?





# Adapt Library Activities for People with ASD?





# Walk the Walk



**Individuals with ASD and with other developmental disabilities can make a valuable addition to your library's staff and volunteer force**

.



**Model Inclusion**



# Keep Walking

Community Collaboration

Local Experts

Group Spirit



*family-centered  
autism support*





# One More Step

## Fair application of rules & policy



### Rules of Conduct

#### **LIBRARY RULES OF CONDUCT AND USE**

1. All persons are welcome in the library. Children under the age of ten must be under the direct supervision of a person over the age of thirteen at all times. This caregiver should monitor all activities and behavior of their children while they are in the building.
2. Please respect the rights of others to quietly study, read or work without interference. Please maintain low noise levels. Any listening devices should not be audible to anyone but the user.
3. Please turn all cell phones to silent alarm when inside the Library building. If you wish to make or take a call, we ask that you step outside the building. Library



### Fanwood Memorial Library Policy Manual

**General Conduct** - The Fanwood Memorial Library believes all customers have the right to use Library facilities, services and materials safely and freely, in a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere. With these rights come responsibility for actions and conduct that respects the rights of other Library customers and staff members. Customers are expected to use the Library for its intended purposes and misconduct will not be allowed in the Library.

Customers that fail to recognize these rights may be asked to leave the premises. It is the Director or the senior staff member on duty that will decide on whether any patron will be asked to leave. In extreme circumstances, the Fanwood





# Getting Closer

Raise all staff awareness & 'buy-in'

Empathy & understanding

[www.disabilityisnatural.com](http://www.disabilityisnatural.com)





# You're Almost There

## The Wakanheza Project

\wa- 'khan- ja\  
The Wakanheza Project logo features a central white figure with a closed mouth, surrounded by a yellow crescent moon and a red and black swoosh. The entire design is enclosed in a blue circular border with the words 'Support', 'Protect', 'Respect', and 'Charity' written around it.

[www.co.ramsey.mn.us/ph/cp/wakanheza.htm](http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us/ph/cp/wakanheza.htm)



- Offer assurance through a smile or a nod.
- Show empathy and imagine yourself in the other person's shoes.
- Distract or redirect their attention away from the stressful situation.
- Find something positive to say about the child, young person, or adult.
- Offer encouragement about something positive that you see in the situation



# Putting it all into Practice



**Show Respect**

**Value the Dignity of Each Individual**

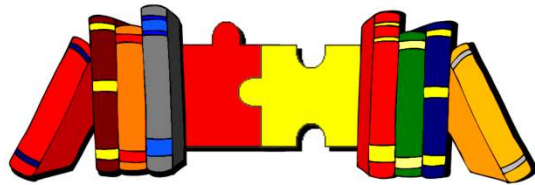
**Strive for Inclusion**



**Provide Opportunities for Participation**

**Just Ask - Address the Moment**

# Libraries and Autism



We're connected.

**Meg Kolaya**  
**Dan Weiss**



[www.thejointlibrary.org/autism](http://www.thejointlibrary.org/autism)

[MegandDan@libraryconnections.net](mailto:MegandDan@libraryconnections.net)

**Library  
Connections**  
innovative solutions for the library professional