

April is National Autism Awareness Month

2019

Resource Guide for WV Schools



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INTRODUCTION

The Autism Society of America celebrates Autism Awareness Month each April to highlight the growing need for awareness about, and acceptance for, Autism Spectrum Disorder. Across the nation, thousands of planned events take place each April that are designed to educate the public about autism and about important issues within the autism community.

Included in this guide are ideas and resources that may assist school administrators, educators, and staff in their efforts to create an environment of acceptance and support for students with ASD. Please feel free to reach out to the Autism Society of WV and the WV Autism Training Center with questions, concerns, or inquiries.

Autism Society of America Quick Resource Links

[National Contact Center](#) - provides one-to-one response to individuals who call, email and write with their questions and concerns — or who just need someone to listen.

[Autism Source](#) – online database which includes more than 32,000 autism services and supports nationwide

[Online Courses](#) - about autism in general and on environmental health

[Safe and Sound Initiative](#) - provides resources to the autism community on topics such as general safety, emergency preparedness and prevention, and risk management. Safe and Sound also offers information and training to first responders such as police officers, firefighters, and EMTs, who are usually first on the scene in an emergency situation.

The **Autism Society of West Virginia** strives to provide information, support research, and advocate for programs and services to enhance the lives of West Virginians living on the autism spectrum and those who support them. You can reach out to the Autism Society of WV by calling President Christina Fair at (304) 224-2769 or emailing jfair3@comcast.net.

The mission of the **West Virginia Autism Training Center** (WV ATC) is to provide support to individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders as they pursue a life of quality.

The WV ATC was established in 1984 by the WV Legislature and is located at Marshall University. Services are available to families of West Virginians with Autism Spectrum Disorder as well as their educators and others significant in their lives.

WV Autism Training Center

Old Main 316

1 John Marshall Drive

Huntington, West Virginia 25755

304-696-2332

<https://www.marshall.edu/atc>

STATISTICS

What is Autism?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a lifelong neurodevelopmental disorder that occurs in early childhood and affects communication, social skills, and behavior. While ASD causes clinically significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of current functioning, the severity to which individuals are affected in each may vary.

Did you know?

- 1 in 59 kids have autism
- Every 20 minutes someone is diagnosed with autism.
- Almost half of children identified with ASD have average or above average intelligence.
- ASD occurs among all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.
- Boys are 4 times more likely to be diagnosed with autism than girls.
- More than 3.5 million Americans live with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- ASD is the fastest-growing developmental disability.
- There is no known single cause of ASD.
- Sometimes lights and noises bother some kids with autism more than they might bother you.
- Everyone is different. Being different is not a bad thing. We are all different.

IDEAS TO PROMOTE AWARENESS AND ACCEPTANCE

School – Wide Awareness

Here is a basic list of ideas that you can use to help spread awareness and acceptance of Autism Spectrum Disorder in your school:

1. Plan an Autism Awareness Spirit week in April.
2. Engage in friendly competition by organizing awareness-themed decorating contests.
3. Give older students an opportunity to read a book about autism to the younger students.
4. Get active! Motivate students to show support by getting involved in a local autism walk or awareness event and by learning about the local autism organization.
5. Post facts about ASD on puzzle pieces around the school or talk about them in the morning announcements. You can find a list of facts in the Statistics Section.
6. Invite speakers to talk about Autism Spectrum Disorder. Speakers can be people on the spectrum, family members of individuals with ASD, or professionals in the field. Reach out to the Autism Society of WV or the WV Autism Training Center to see if we can support you.
7. Ask classmates, friends, and teachers to wear autism shirts to raise awareness on a particular day.
8. Ask the School Library to set books about ASD out on display through April. See list of books in the Books and Media Resources Section.
9. Show a video about Autism Spectrum Disorder. For a list of ASD related movies and video clips, see list in Books and Media Resources Section.
10. Post ideas of how students can support those with Autism Spectrum Disorder on puzzle pieces around the school. See Appendix for puzzle printout.

Classroom Awareness

Help students learn about Autism Spectrum Disorder and ways they can more easily accept their peers with ASD by incorporating one or more of the following activities:

1. Teach a lesson on tips for being a friend to someone with autism. See Educator Resource Section.
2. Share information to help students understand and accept individuals with ASD. See Educator Resource Section.
3. Choose books or stories for students to read that discuss Autism Spectrum Disorder or have individuals with ASD as characters. See Book and Media Resource Section.
4. Have students decorate autism ribbons or puzzle pieces and display them in the classroom or on the door.
5. Encourage students to write letters to legislators about the needs of students with disabilities, including Autism Spectrum Disorder. Students will need to think critically about this issue and learn how to constructively write and advocate for this cause.
6. Create a pen pal system where students write letters, draw pictures, or cards to students with special needs, particularly ASD, fostering friendship and connection as well as reading and writing skills.
7. Set aside a designated time each day, or a special time once a week, to discuss Autism Spectrum Disorder and related topics. You can incorporate an activity listed in the Educator Resource Section or find additional lesson ideas by using the web links located there.
8. Learn about famous people with ASD, and encourage students to find out more about these individuals.
9. Bullying is an issue of concern for most schools. Discuss the concept of bullying and encourage students to adopt a No-Bullying attitude toward all peers, including those with ASD*
10. Show students a video to help them understand what it is like to experience the world through the eyes of someone with ASD. Then have a class discussion on how they felt watching the video and ways they can support those with ASD in their school. See Book and Media Resource Section for suggested videos.

*** Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder are very vulnerable to bullying. The IAN Research Report: *Bullying and Children with ASD (March 2012; October 2014)* found that 63% of children with ASD, ages 6-15, are bullied. Educating the school population about Autism Spectrum Disorders can increase understanding and acceptance, thus reducing the bullying.**

https://iancommunity.org/cs/ian_research_reports/ian_research_report_bullying

EDUCATOR RESOURCES

Definition of ASD – Student friendly version

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a neurodevelopmental disorder. That means some kids' brains develop a little bit differently. Autism Spectrum Disorder is also sometimes called autism or ASD for short.

Autism Spectrum Disorder is not a disease. You can't catch it from someone else. ASD can't be cured. People with Autism Spectrum Disorder have it their whole lives. It doesn't go away when they get older.

Kids with ASD see the world a little bit differently than others. They might have trouble talking to people, making friends, and sometimes they might move in unusual ways or do the same things over and over.

A kid with Autism Spectrum Disorder might have trouble:

- talking to others and learning the meaning of words
- hanging out or fitting in with other kids
- dealing with changes (like trying new foods, having a substitute teacher, or having toys moved from their normal places)
- dealing with loud noises, bright lights, or busy hallways

Kids with autism may have a little trouble with these or a lot, but they can still learn new skills and do all kinds of things. Sometimes they only need a little help to learn and do everyday stuff, but sometimes they might need a lot of help.

Adapted from Kid's Health.org <https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/autism.html> and Jack's Asperger's Talk <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ku1lajn5EU0>

Conduct a Class Discussion

Conduct a class discussion on how to make friends with peers with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Ask for ideas from the students and list them on the board for all to see. Point out that all involved will benefit from the friendships established. Be sure the following are included in the discussion:

- **Be Patient**-Those with ASD may take a little longer to process things and they are not intentionally doing things to get on your nerves.
- **Speak Clearly**-Short sentences and no slang work best, and do not use figures of speech which may cause confusion for them.
- **Accept Them**-Accept the differences and strengths just as you would any friend. Know that they are intelligent and talented in many areas that you may not be aware of.
- **Find Commonalities**-Ask your friend with ASD what he likes to do and discover things you both like and can share together.
- **Include Them**-Ask your friend with ASD to join you when you are with your other friends. If engaged in a game or activity, explain clearly how to participate.
- **Be Aware**-Get to know what bothers your friend with ASD and what makes him uncomfortable, including any sounds, any smells, or even crowds. Try to avoid these things if possible. If unavoidable, stay beside him/her and let them know how you understand and care.
- **Be A Good Friend**-If you see a student with special needs being bullied, stand beside him/her and let everyone involved know that you are there to support that student. Have the student walk away with you and then alert your teacher of the problem.
- **Ask Questions**-If there's something you don't understand about your friend with ASD, ask him/her to explain. If you cannot understand their language, ask them to write it down, type it, or draw a picture. If all else fails, ask your teacher for help.

Source: Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorders: Tools for Schools, WV Team Autism

Share Information

Share information to help students understand and accept individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Understanding ASD starts at a young age, and there is no greater place than the classroom to begin. Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder and learning how to interact with people with ASD comes from being taught how to treat and talk to someone with autism. Children naturally want to be helpful. Give them that opportunity by encouraging them to be a buddy to someone with ASD. It is up to teachers and parents to teach children about differences, acceptance, and understanding.

Share the following information with students to get started.

- People are born with Autism Spectrum Disorder and while they look just like you and me, ASD changes the way their brain works.
- Some people with ASD talk and others do not. Just because they cannot talk doesn't mean they don't have anything to say.
- Nobody knows what causes Autism Spectrum Disorder, but we do know that a person with ASD will always have autism.
- Kids with ASD are the same as other kids in a lot of ways. They like birthdays, swimming, and having friends.
- Being kind and compassionate is one of the best things you can do to help someone with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- Here are a few ways to be a friend:
 - ✓ Play games they like to play.
 - ✓ Talking to them like you would any other kid.
 - ✓ Giving them a high five when you're having fun!
 - ✓ Sitting next to them in the lunchroom.
 - ✓ Visiting them at their house.
 - ✓ Inviting them to your house.
 - ✓ Show them what to do so they can imitate you.
 - ✓ Being a buddy to them on the playground.
 - ✓ Walking with them to the next class.
 - ✓ Supporting them with kindness and understanding.

Classroom Activity Suggestions

Acknowledging Similarities and Differences

The teacher, or a designated student, chooses an object (an accessory or certain colored shirt) and sorts the class based on “who has it and who doesn’t.” Between each student sort, the students take a turn guessing what the object is. Close the lesson talking about what makes us different is what makes us unique.

The Brainstorm

Have students list ways to be a friend to someone different from them and write their responses on chart paper. Some examples are: say hello, invite them to sit at lunch with you, ask them to play a game at recess, speak with them about something that they enjoy.

Word Find

Ask students to write “Autism Awareness” and then write down all of the words that can be created using the letters in “Autism Awareness.”

Definition of a Friend

Have students cut out a large puzzle piece shape and write their definition of a friend on it. Attach the puzzle pieces to a bulletin board in the shape of an awareness ribbon.

Speaking Without Words

Explain that many children with ASD are not able to speak using many words. Whisper a simple sentence to one student, such as “My hand hurts,” “I want a hamburger for lunch,” or “I am allergic to milk.” Ask that student to tell the class the sentence without using words. Afterwards, have a discussion about how difficult and frustrating that would be if you had to communicate that way all the time.

Printable Activities

Please see the printable activities located in the Appendix of this guide.

*Some activities adapted from Autism New Jersey Mini-Lesson Ideas

Additional Resources

Links to ideas and lesson plans

<http://autism.sesamestreet.org/>

Sesame Street Autism Resources Page

<https://www.autismnj.org/awareness/ambassador-program/schools/>

Provides downloadable lesson plans and activity ideas for grades K-6

<https://educators.brainpop.com/bp-topic/autism/>

Provides downloadable lesson plans for grades K-12

Books/Pamphlets

WVDE Guidelines for Best Practice, Autism Spectrum Disorder - [Free to download](#) or request hard copy from WVDE.

10 Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew - by Ellen Notbohm

1001 Great Ideas for Teaching and Raising Children with Autism or Asperger's - by Ellen Notbohm and Veronica Zysk

Early Intervention and Autism: Real Life Questions, Real Life Answers - by James Ball

Beyond the Autism Diagnosis: A Professional's Guide to Helping Families - by Marion O'Brien, Ph.D. and Dr. Julie Daggett, Ph.D. - Book for professionals working with children on the autism spectrum. Provides insight into building positive relationships with families.

Podcasts

"All Autism Talk", *Autism Spectrum Therapies* - various autism-related topics

<https://autismtherapies.com/podcasts/#posts>

"Weekly Science Report", *Autism Science Foundation* - information on current research - listener friendly descriptions of scientific concepts, research studies, etc.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/autism-science-foundation-weekly-science-report/id1017003702?mt=2>

BOOKS AND MEDIA RESOURCES

Books for Elementary Level

TITLE	DESCRIPTION
A is for Autism by Jennifer Bloink	Uses a simple ABC format to teach about Autism Spectrum Disorder
We're Amazing 1,2,3!	children's book, Sesame Street, also in free e-book form
Nobody Knew What to Do: A Story about Bullying by Becky McCain	Discusses bullying and how children can stand up for others
Exceptionally Good Friends: Building Relationships with Autism	children's book, discusses process of making friends from two perspectives
Ian's Walk-A Story about Autism by Laurie Lears and Karen Ritz	Helps children understand associated behaviors related to ASD
The Autism Acceptance Book by Ellen Sabin	activity book, conversation-starter and educational tool that teaches children about ASD
I See Things Differently: A First Look at Autism	children's book, introduces ASD
Tobin Learns to Make Friends by Diane Murrell	Provides specific suggestions for young children
My Best Friend Will by Jamie Lowell and Tara Tuchel	Promotes understanding
Captain Tommy by Abby Ward Messner	teaches understanding and kindness
A Friend Like Simon	children's book, introduces ASD
Andy and His Yellow Frisbee by Mary Thompson	view of childhood ASD from a young person's point of view

Books for Secondary Level

TITLE	DESCRIPTION
Buster and the Amazing Daisy by Nancy Ogaz	Character with ASD
The Wright and Wong Mystery Series by Laura J. Burns and Melinda Metz	Characters with ASD
A Wizard Alone: The Sixth Book in the Young Wizards Series by Diane Duane	Character with ASD
To OZ and Back: A Bones and Duchess Mystery by Alexandra Eden	Character with ASD
Haze by Kathy Hoopman	Character with ASD, novel includes facts about autism
Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night by Mark Haddon	Character with ASD
Of Mice and Aliens by Kathy Hoopman	Character with ASD
Wishing on the Midnight Star by Nancy Ogaz	Promotes inclusion
The Reason I Jump	information/reference - written by individual with ASD

Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKCdV20zLMs> - video to introduce Julia (puppet with Autism Spectrum Disorder) on Sesame Street

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmDGvguzn2k&feature=youtu.be> - ****Carly's Café - Experience Autism Through Carly's Eyes** This experience is viewed through the eyes of Carly Fleischmann, a 17 year old girl living with non-verbal Autism Spectrum Disorder.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plPNhooUUuc&feature=youtu.be> ****What it's like to walk down a street when you have autism or an ASD**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lr4_dOorquQ ****Can You Make it to the End?** A young man with ASD takes a trip through the mall.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTT1KIdAQbo> - ****audio description of how people with ASD differ in sensory processing**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ku1lajn5EU0> - “Jack’s Asperger’s Talk” – 11 year old student addresses his 6th grade class and shares what it’s like to have Autism Spectrum Disorder

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIK2yXfrCfw&t=5s> - “My Autism,” by George - George's journey with autism at 9 years old. He shared this video with his fourth grade class to help them understand why he behaves the way he does sometimes (during lunch, group activities, recess, etc.).

(Those with epilepsy or who are prone to seizures should not watch these videos. Viewers should also be prepared for increased volumes, which are intended to simulate the intense auditory stimulation associated with ASD.)**

Movies


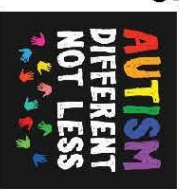
Autism the Musical - Follows five children with Autism Spectrum Disorder as they work together to create and perform a live musical production
Bunim/Murray Productions, Distributed by HBO Documentary Films, Released April 2007, 94 minutes

Best Kept Secret - Documentary of a high school teacher preparing her students with Autism Spectrum Disorder for life after graduation.
Independent Film, Produced by Danielle Di Giacomo, Released May 2013, 85 minutes

National Autism Awareness Month



April 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 Acceptance	1	2 <i>World Autism Awareness Day</i>	3	4	5	6 Invite a friend with ASD to a sensory friendly event in your area
7	8 Be sure to "Like" the WV ATC Facebook Page for info and updates	9	10	11 Check out the Autism Society YouTube Channel	12	13 Sensory friendly viewing of movie <i>Dumbo</i> at Marquee Cinemas in Huntington
14	15	16 Help raise awareness by posting facts about ASD on your social media page	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 	26	27** Ruth Sullivan Rally for Autism – Huntington, WV www.rallyforautism.org
28	29 Autism & the First Responder – free training for emergency services personnel Charleston, WV	30	** WV Autism Society Corridor Chapter Autism Walk April 27 - 10 am Clarksburg City Park Nutter Fort, WV	<div> WV Autism Society Northern Panhandle Chapter Autism Walk May 18th - Tomlinson Run State Park. </div>		

WV Autism Community Organizations

Autism Society-West Virginia

President: Christina Fair
Phone: (304) 224-2769
Email: jfair3@comcast.net
Web: autismwv.blogspot.com

Autism Society-West Virginia / The Corridor Chapter

President: Lea Robinson
Phone: (304) 622-3552
Email: learobinson@bestlifewv.com
Territory: Barbour, Doddridge, Harrison, Lewis, Marion, Monongahela and Tyler Counties

Autism Society- West Virginia Northern Panhandle Chapter

President: Luann Decker
Phone: (304) 670-3363
Email: wvnp.autism@gmail.com
Website: wvnpautism.org
Territory: Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, Marshall and Wetzel Counties
Meetings: 1st Thursday of each month

Autism Society-West Virginia / Putnam County Chapter

President: Nathalie Henchey
Phone: (304) 993-1371
Email: mnhenchey@icloud.com
Territory: Putnam County, West Virginia and surrounding area

Autism Society-West Virginia /Ohio Valley Autism Network (OVAN)

President: Sarah Wagner
Email: ovan.sarah@gmail.com
Territory: Tri-state area of Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia
Meetings: The 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6PM, Weirton Medical Center

Autism Society-West Virginia / Take My Hand Support Group

President: Lynn Browder
Phone: (304) 610-8961
Email: sweetbabyoemail@yahoo.com
Web: www.sweetbabyo.com
Territory: Kanawha County, West Virginia and surrounding areas

Eastern Panhandle Indigo Children (EPIC)

President: Bonnie Pretre
Email: e.p.i.c.wv@gmail.com
Web: www.epic-wv-autism.org
Territory: Jefferson and Berkeley Counties
Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of each month

Logan County Autism Association

President: Terry Rodighiero
Phone: (304) 784-9999
Territory: Logan County, West Virginia

Nicholas County Autism Support Group

Contact: Vanessa Stapleton
Phone: (304) 651-3008
Email: vanessa.stapleton@hotmail.com
Territory: Nicholas County and surrounding areas

Potomac Highlands Autism Support Network

Contact: Leigh Saville
Phone: (304) 851-1422
Email: leigh.saville@marshall.edu
Facebook: Potomac Highlands Autism Support Network
Territory: Hampshire, Hardy, Grant, Mineral and Pendleton Counties

River Valley Autism Network / Support Group

President: Patricia Boyce
Phone: (304) 273-3228
Facebook: River Valley Autism Network
Territory: Jackson County and surrounding areas

Support for Friends and Family of those with Autism/Asperger's

President: Kimberly Isaacs
Phone: (304) 966-4079
Email: istenochick13@yahoo.com
Facebook: Autism Support Group Parkersburg, WV
Territory: Wood County and surrounding areas
Meetings: 2nd & 4th Thursday of each month
Liberty Street Church
1406 13th St. Parkersburg, WV

Autism Society River Cities

President: Cheryl Cook
Phone: (304) 710-9292 / Affiliate phone
(606) 922-2957 / Cheryl's cell
Email: autismsocietyrivercities@gmail.com
Web: autismsocietyrivercities.org
Territory: Cabell, Wayne, Lincoln, Boone, Logan and Mingo Counties in West Virginia
Lawrence County, Ohio
Lawrence, Boyd, Carter and Greenip Counties in Kentucky
Meetings: Support Group with monthly family activities and organizes the "Rally for Autism" that is held each year in Huntington, West Virginia

APPENDIX

Autism Acceptance

What YOU Can Do!



*Talk to kids with ASD
like you would any other kid*



Be a buddy on the playground



Sit together in the lunchroom



Give a high five when you're having fun!



Walk to your next class together



Offer to hang out after school

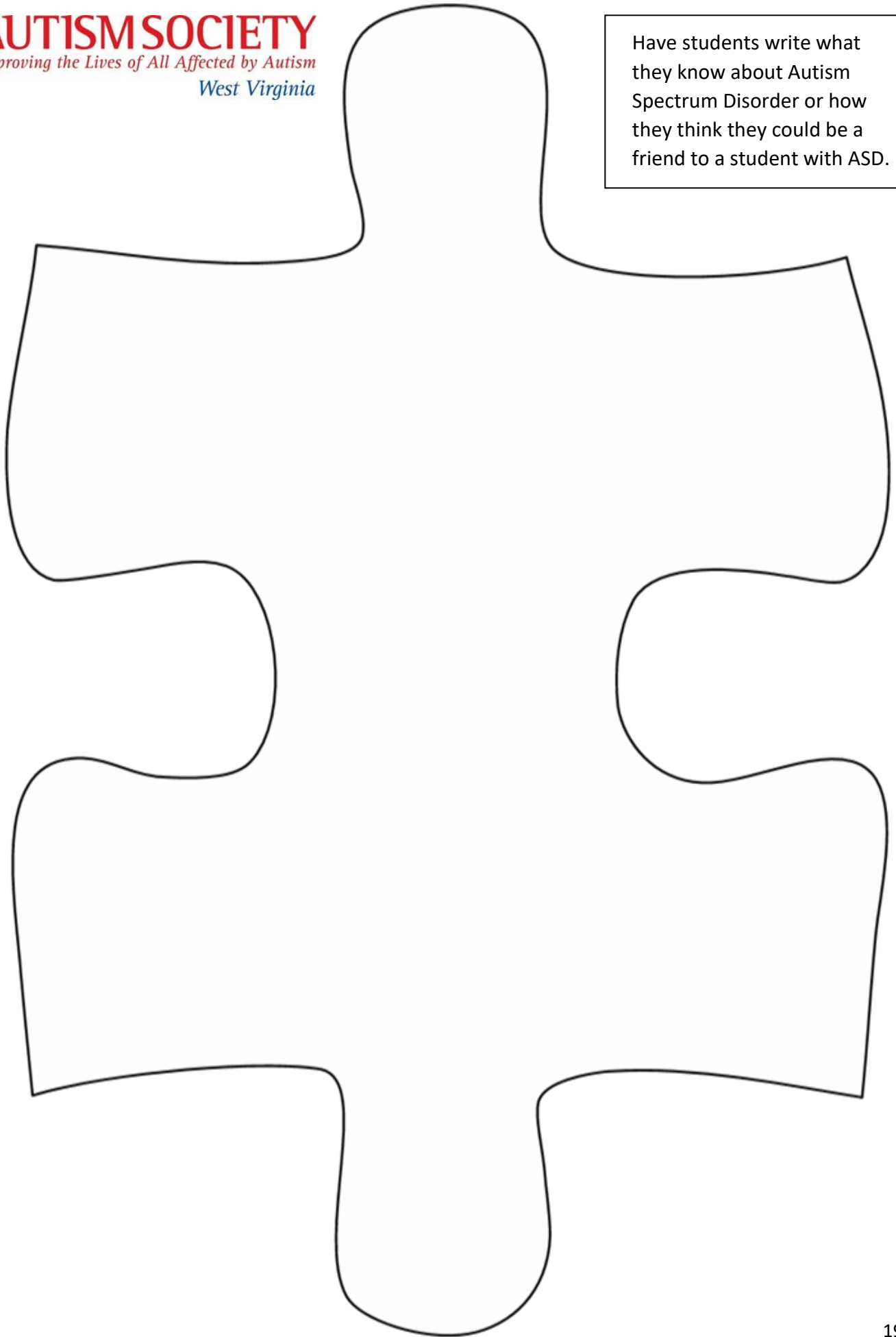


*Show support with kindness and
understanding*



Accept others for who they are!

Have students write what they know about Autism Spectrum Disorder or how they think they could be a friend to a student with ASD.



R M B F N S T E W S G U D U W
D I U D I Y D R L A M G K N T
M N B V E U C X O M V T K D T
A W H B L F P W B P W Y G E T
U F S C O Q V T A Y P I D R P
T I N A V N N W C S F U E S S
I I V W K R F L B A Q G S T S
S L M O D G A U N O J X H A D
M I X W V S P U Z Z L E S N N
B U E O S A Q R A G P G F D E
A I E R S S E N E R A W A M I
G T O X Q I C C L Q Z H S W R
X O F A T Y Z I J T Y L B R F
M I W E I T X S E B V M M Q S
D R R C Z Q U B K L Z Q H K V

AUTISM
FRIEND
PUZZLE
UNDERSTAND

AWARNESS
FUN
RIBBON

CLASSROOM
INCLUDE
SUPPORT

CAN YOU FIND YOUR WAY THROUGH THIS WINDING MAZE?

