



Children's Therapy

**& FAMILY RESOURCE
CENTRE**



Growing Up Together

**Our world is made up of many
different kinds of people.**

Each one of us is special in our own way, but we are all very much alike. We all have friends and families, go to school, and have hobbies such as soccer, art, or music.

Kamloops Location

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Merritt Location

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What is Autism?

Autism affects the way a person's brain and body works. It is not a disease and is not contagious. You cannot catch autism from a classmate or friend. A person with autism may have a hard time communicating with other people, making friends, or following directions.

However, with the help of teachers, classmates, families and friends, children with autism can learn and play.

What Causes Autism?

No one knows why some people have autism and there may be many different causes. Scientists are still trying to find out just what those causes are and how to best help people with autism.

Some Kids with Autism May:

- Have trouble talking, make strange sounds, or not talk at all
- Flap their hands, spin, or laugh
- Sit quietly and not look at others
- Play or behave differently than other friends
- Be very active or be very quiet and like to spend time alone
- Have trouble looking directly at you
- Do or say the same things over and over again (like lining up toys or repeating a line from a movie).

Where do Kids with Autism go to School?

Kids with autism can be in many different types of classrooms and schools.

They may be a member of your class or may be in a classroom that was set up especially for them. Many children with autism also participate in after-school activities with classmates, friends, and neighbors. You may see some special arrangements used to help a child with autism participate in your class. He or she may have a special "coach," sit at a special desk or table, or use pictures or symbols to communicate with you and the teacher. Some kids may even have special computers that "talk" for them. Friendly classmates can be the best help of all to a child with autism.



How Can I Be a Friend To Someone with Autism?

When you become a friend to a person with autism, you both learn a lot from each other.

Here are some ideas that can help you be a better friend to a kid with autism:

Accept your friend's differences.

Know that some kids with autism are really smart, just in a different way.

Protect your friend from things that bother him or her.

Talk in small sentences with simple words and use simple gestures like pointing.

Use pictures or write down what you want to say to help your friend understand.

Join your friend in activities that interest him or her.

Be patient – understand that your friend doesn't mean to bother you or others.

Wait – give him or her extra time to answer your question or complete an activity.

Invite your friend to play with you and to join you in group activities.

Teach your friend how to play by showing them what they can do in an activity or game.

Sit near your friend whenever you can, and help him or her do things if they want you to.

Never be afraid to ask your teacher questions about your classmates with autism.

Approximately 2,500,000 people in Canada have Autism, and it is more common in boys than girls.



This information was adapted from materials developed by the Autism Society of America, Alaska Autism Resource Centre and the Indiana Resource Center for Autism.



Kamloops Autism Program

For inquiries please contact:

**Children's Therapy and
Family Resource Centre**

Owned and operated by:

Thompson Nicola Family Resource Society

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