



## **#CelebrateDifferences #TheConnectionIsYou – BE A FRIEND!**

Every person in the world is unique in his or her own special way. When you become a friend to a person with Autism, you can both learn a lot from each other. Understanding Autism and how to support people with Autism comes from interacting with them. Learning how to treat and talk to a person with Autism can help you be a better friend.

### ***Here are a few tips for being a friend to someone with Autism:***

- Always be kind and compassionate.
- Accept your friend's differences and realize your friend may have information or skills that you can learn from as well.
- Treat them like anyone else and talk to them like you would talk to another one of your friends.
- Try not to use sarcasm or slang as your friend may not understand ("get over it," "let's hang out")
- Your friend's behavior is often their way of communicating. They might scream, hit themselves, repeat phrases or throw things because they have a hard time telling people what they want or need. Try to figure out what your friend is saying with their behavior.
- Give your friend extra time to answer your question or complete an activity.
- Protect your friend when others try to bully or make them do something that is not appropriate.
- Understand your friend may be bothered by things that you are not (loud noises or bright lighting).
- Help others learn about and accept Autism.
- Join your friend in activities that interest them.
- Invite your friend to join you in group activities, such as going to the movies, hanging out with other friends, or attending sporting or school events.
- Ask them to do things with you, but don't just explain it to them. Show them what to do so they can imitate you and feel included.
- Say something to your friend when they do good things. You can cheer, give high-fives or just tell them "great work". They like to be complimented too!
- Don't give up! You may think your friend isn't listening or paying attention to what is happening, but never underestimate their ability!