



DEBORAH  
KERCHES

— NEUROPEDIATRA —



*Explaining*  
**Autism Spectrum  
Disorder**  
*to children*

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a condition of early-onset neurodevelopment, characterized by impairments in communication and social interaction associated with restricted and repetitive behaviors, interests and activities, often accompanied by delays in neuropsychomotor development. There is a universe of symptomatic possibilities and each person with autism presents particularities that deserve care and individualized interventions. Worldwide prevalence of 1-2% is estimated. According to more recent data released in march 2020 by the CDC (US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), there is now 1 for every 54 children on the autism spectrum (an analysis of 2016). There are no statistical studies in Brazil so far. The identification of early signs and intervention favor the development, learning, acquisition of new skills, autonomy, as well as their quality of life and their family. People with autism have a unique way of learning, playing, developing, relating, communicating, overcoming challenges, facing and living life. Awareness and knowledge about autism make it possible to welcome, support, respect, include, love and fight against labels and prejudice. This e-book aims to be an auxiliary tool for parents, family, educators and healthcare professionals talk in an uncomplicated way about autism to children. I also want this content to contribute to the


understanding that we are all different, that we all have something to learn and teach, and especially that we want to love and be loved!



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Hi, kids. How  
are you?  
Do you want to  
talk to me?

Yes, Dr. Deborah.  
We have a friend from  
our neighborhood that  
is a little different...


We don't understand  
him very well, but we  
would like to try...




Why do you think he's different?

Because he doesn't look into our eyes, doesn't say "hi" or "bye", and likes to play by himself...


He also doesn't talk to us and doesn't like to be touched.



I invite him to play and he seems not to listen!



My mother told me that Bruno is a child with autism.




And do you know what a child with autism is?




No...

Children with autism often play, learn, feel, communicate and behave in different ways from other children. They want to make friends but may not know how.

An illustration featuring a woman with blonde hair wearing a white lab coat and a red tie, smiling and pointing towards a boy. The boy has orange hair, is wearing a green t-shirt, and is sitting on a blue surface with a red bag and a white shoe. A speech bubble above the boy contains the question, and a larger speech bubble below the woman contains the answer.

Children with autism  
go to school?


Yes! Some have difficulties to  
learn and others learn what their  
colleagues still cannot do!



That's true! I saw  
Bruno making beautiful  
drawings and I can  
barely draw a house...

How nice! See? They  
can be very creative  
and have many other  
abilities, as cool as  
this one!





Kids, you will only know how nice Bruno can be if you get closer to him.


Do you mean that we should keep inviting him to play with us?



Of course! You can get closer and play with him the same way he's playing.

Oh! I haven't thought about it...






What if he doesn't speak to us?

If he cannot speak, he will find other ways to express himself...

What is important is to not give up, be patient, and respect his space.



I love playing Superhero. I like to imagine that I am Spider-Man. Will he like to play this way?

The child with autism may not understand "make believe" games ... But if you help him, he can learn.


You can show him Superhero cartoons.




And other toys? Will he know how to play?




Maybe he doesn't know what the toy's function is ... But you can help him understand.



On the other day it started raining and I said it would rain cats and dogs...



Bruno got really scared. I wonder why...




He probably imagined that it was really going to rain cats and dogs. He understands everything literally.



When the playground is very noisy, I see Bruno putting his hands to his ears and rocking. Why does he do that?



People with autism may become more bothered by noise. Putting your hands in their ears, "rocking" or showing any other repetitive movement can be a way to calm down.



Now I understand Bruno  
better! I want to be his friend,  
Dr. Deborah!

Me too!

Me too!

Me too!





This will be so nice!  
And we'll learn a lot  
from him!

I'm sure you will! And with  
lots of love, kindness, and  
patience you will make a  
difference in his life and  
him in your life!





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