

FIFTEEN THINGS ABOUT ME

Hi, my name is _____ and I am in your class this year. I want you to know a little about me. I'm nervous to be in your class because it's new and I don't know what to expect. I need some time to adjust and then I will feel comfortable. Please don't judge me on my first few weeks. As the time goes by, you will be amazed by the skills you never thought I possessed. I sometimes look like I don't understand. That's just because I don't have the same expressions and reactions as other people. I might not look at you when you talk but that doesn't mean I didn't hear you. I did. In fact I usually hear more than most people. As I become familiar with your classroom I will begin to shine. A great way to speed up this process is letting me know what to expect. Written or picture schedules for the day reduce my anxiety. A five minute warning before a change of activity can help me greatly too. You are my teacher and I look up to you. I want to succeed this year but I can't do it without your help and most importantly, your belief in me that I can do it!

1. What is my general disposition?

2. What am I really, really good at?

3. What do I absolutely **LOVE** doing?

4. What do I absolutely **HATE** doing?

5. What academics are my strong areas?

6. What academics do I need a lot of extra help with?

7. Which skills would my parents really like me to work on this year?

8. How do you know when I'm getting frustrated?

9. What can you do to calm me down before the storm hits?

10. Too late! The storm hit! What can you do to calm me down?

11. What strategies work really well to get me to do something I don't want to do?

12. What typically makes me laugh?

13. What consequences back-fire and don't give the desired results?

14. I don't like consequences, but which consequences work well for me?

15. I would also like you to know...

PLEASE read the following article so that you can see just **how important you are** to me.

TEACHER APPROVAL

Think back to when you were 6, 8 or 10 years old. Do you remember your teacher? Do you remember how you looked up to her? Her words were golden. Do you remember when you forgot to do your homework or weren't paying attention? Her stern words cut you to the core. Not because she was mean but because you desperately wanted her approval.

School ended and those days were long forgotten. Then my child was diagnosed with autism.

Why didn't anyone warn me I'd become that 8 year old again?

I desperately need teacher approval, not for me, but for my child.

This is a common sentiment of parents to children with autism. So if you're a teacher, Autism consultant, SLP, ABA therapist, OT, PT, Psychologist, Social worker, Camp Counselor or anyone else that's an authority figure to a child with autism - THIS IS FOR YOU!

My child has autism. I know that. I'm not in denial. How could I be? I live it every day. I have other children. My friends have children. I know the difference. They answer questions, my child might not. They play together, my child might not. They share their thoughts, my child might not.

My child is different. He is on his own mission. I'm happy to be by his side. I am thrilled when he learns something new, no matter how small. I am proud when he accomplishes something I once never thought possible. I take delight in his idiosyncrasies. Please rejoice with me. Please notice his worth.

My child is multifaceted. He has weaknesses and strengths. He has deficits and skills. People are always pointing out the deficits. Please join me in noticing his skills.

Teachers. In our meetings, please allow for some time to recognize my child's good points. When you do, I go home walking on air. When you don't, I drive home in tears.

SLP's, OT's and PT's. When your opening statement is a positive remark about my child, I begin to relax. When you only voice concerns, my stomach twists into knots.

ABA therapists & Camp counselors. When you greet me by telling me my son had a great day, my anxiety fades. When you focus on the deficits, your words hurt me deeply all day.

Consultants, Psychologists and Social Workers. When you begin with positive observations, my heart soars in delight. When you only stress your concerns, my heart splits in two.

My child faces judgment at every turn. I invite you to stand apart! Stand strong with us! Unique is good! Let's tell the world! Help me instill pride in my son. Show him his greatness. Try and see his perspective. Praise him as much as you can. By doing so, you improve my child's life and build his confidence. You will motivate and inspire him. He will exceed your expectations and I will be eternally grateful to you.

- By Jenē Aviram

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