

Ten things every child with autism wishes you knew

NOTBOHM, E., *Desať vecí, ktoré by každé dieťa s autizmom chcelo, aby ste vedeli*. Future Horizons Inc. 2005, translated by Tatiana Komanová in 2013.

Reviewed by Kateřina Lacková

The subject of the book is the author's son Bryce, who has autism. By reading between the lines, we can follow his journey from childhood into adulthood. The book is not a practical manual for handling daily problems of children with autism and it is not an ordinary clinical description of the disease either. The author of this publication brings a new view of the understanding of autism, and the readers are presented the concept of ten things, which in the words of the author each child with autism wishes we knew.

At the beginning of the text the author explains the attitudes she reached thanks to her son. Her view of autism is perfectly captured by the assertion that the thing she hates most of all is when someone says, "Oh, your child suffers from autism?" This book is designed precisely for these readers, as well as for parents of children living with autism, experts and laymen.

Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew consists of the following chapters:

1. I am a whole child.
(My autism is part of who I am, not all of who I am...)
2. My senses are out of sync.
(Significant sounds, smells, tastes... All this affects how I feel...)
3. Distinguish between won't and can't.
(It isn't that I don't listen to instructions. It's that I can't understand you...)
4. I am a concrete thinker, I interpret language literally.
(Puns, inferences, metaphors, allusions, and sarcasm are lost on me...)
5. Listen to all the ways I'm trying to communicate.
(It's hard for me to tell you what I need when I don't know a way to describe my feelings...)

6. Picture this! I am visually orientated.
(Show me how to do something rather than just telling me...)
7. Focus and build on what I can do rather than what I can't do.
(How can I learn well in an environment where I feel I'm not good enough?...)
8. Help me with social interactions.
(Teach me how to play with others...)
9. Identify what triggers my meltdowns.
(Remember that everything I do is a form of communication...)
10. Love me unconditionally.
(Three words we both need to live by: Patience. Patience. Patience...)

This book spends quite a bit of time discussing the “language of autism”. It makes it very clear that the way we embrace and encourage these children has monumental impact both on their self-esteem and their future success. The author believes that we often use negative language without realising it; the book therefore provides some handy hints on how to detect and remove these negative words from our daily interactions. Each of the chapters presents a number of specific examples, such as how to speak to a child with autism; they also contain examples from real life and questions to ponder. The book is written in a very readable form, which will bring every reader to reflect upon its contents.

I can cordially recommend this publication to anyone interested in this subject.

Mgr. Kateřina Lacková
Ústav speciálně pedagogických studií
Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci
Žižkovo nám 5
771 40
Czech Republic
e-mail: lackovakatka@seznam.cz
www.uss.upol.cz