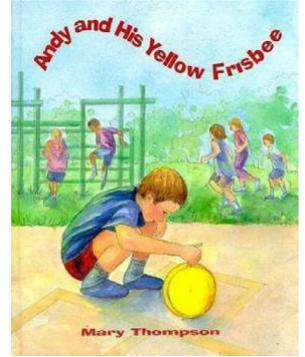


# Andy and His Yellow Frisbee

By Mary Thompson

This heartwarming story introduces young readers to autism, a disability that can be particularly confusing for those who unfamiliar with it. Andy is a young boy who has autism. Sarah is new to the school and curious about why Andy spins his yellow frisbee every day by himself on the playground. When Sarah tries to talk to Andy on the playground, Rosie, Andy's older sister, watches and worries about how her brother may react. Rosie knows that Andy has trouble finding the right words to express himself. Though he doesn't talk to her, Sarah finds a way to understand Andy, and Rosie is relieved to see that her brother doesn't need her protection.



## Discussion and Questions:

- We all have special talents and things we enjoy doing. In the book, Andy was really good at spinning things round and round. Tell me about what you are really good at doing.
- It can be scary to do something new. In the book, Sarah has her teddy bear and Andy has his frisbee to help them feel comfortable and less afraid. What do you use to comfort you when you are scared or nervous?
- Andy sometimes has trouble using words to express himself. Has this ever happened to you? How did that make you feel?
- How did Sarah try to make friends with Andy and his sister Rosie?

## Activities:

- **Mirror Play!**
  - Spending time in front of a mirror can be fun and exciting for infants and toddlers. They can pat the mirror and imitate expressions. Caregivers can point out the child's facial features or their own, as they label them out loud. As the child begins to make facial expression (e.g., smile, frustration, giggle) the caregiver can label the emotion. For example, 'Are you happy? I see your smile. Smiling is a way we say we are happy.' As children develop, they begin to understand feelings and emotions and how to label them. For toddlers, ask them to demonstrate different emotions (e.g., sad, surprised, happy). Be creative and silly!
  - Additional activities can be found at: <https://simplehomeblessings.com/baby-betterment-mirror-time-matters/>
- **Hug Jar**
  - Find an empty jar or container to create a Hug Jar that is filled with hearts. These hearts can be made of construction paper for older children or use unlinked linking rings for young children who may still mouth small items.
  - When a child (or a parent/caregiver) feels like they need a hug they can take a heart/ring out of the jar and give it to the person from whom they want a hug. Caregivers can vocalize this activity for infants by identifying when an infant might appear to need or want a hug. By making statements like, 'I see someone is upset, maybe a hug will help' or 'I see how happy you are, do you want a hug?' In this way an infant is exposed to the name of an emotion or feeling, as well as what it feels and looks like.
  - This activity models expressions of emotion, connection, and contact. The book points out that not all people are in the same emotional state and might really value their personal space. This can help children recognize the need to ask individuals for permission before hugging/touching them.
  - Additional activities can be found at: <http://homegrownfriends.com/home/the-hug-jar/>

- **Name Game**
  - This game is a fun group communication activity that helps children practice introducing themselves and getting to know each other. To play this game, gather the group of preschoolers in a circle and begin by introducing yourself (“I am \_\_\_\_\_”).
  - Ask the child to your right to share their name just like you did and repeat your name while pointing at you. Have each child in the group take a turn saying their name and repeating the name of the one person who came immediately before them.
  - This is a fun social skills activity for all children at the beginning of the school year to learn the names of the other children and a great start to making new friends.
  - Additional information can be found at: <https://www.waterford.org/education/15-activities-teaching-strategies-and-resources-for-teaching-children-with-autism/>
- **Emotion Charades**
  - Emotions and feelings can be difficult for young children to understand, express, or label. In the story, Sarah went to a new school and she was scared. She watched children play on the very busy playground and noticed Andy and his yellow frisbee. Carefully Sarah tried to understand Andy and become his friend.
  - Write feeling words on small cards or copy and cut apart a feeling face chart to create individual cards.
  - With a child or group, take turns choosing a card and acting out the emotion on it. If the child prefers, they could draw the emotion on another piece of paper or a white board rather than act it out (similar to Pictionary). Have other children try to guess the emotion being displayed.
  - Additional information can be found at: <https://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2011/03/28/12-activities-to-help-your-child-with-social-skills/>