


# Getting to Know People with Autism Through Sport

Get to know the child with Autism—this is the starting point to providing the best possible support. With the appropriate support they may develop confidence and thrive, while learning to take part in different activities and engaging socially in different ways.

The player with Autism ...	You can help by ...
May need help understanding instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breaking the instruction down into clear steps</li> <li>• Explaining one point at a time</li> <li>• Using clear and concise language</li> <li>• Pairing your words with a physical demonstration</li> <li>• Using visual supports</li> <li>• Checking for understanding as you go</li> </ul> 
May need time to think about what you have said before they respond.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wait for at least ten seconds before repeating an instruction.</li> <li>• Remember! The longer the instruction, the longer the time needed to respond.</li> <li>• Using visual supports, so that the person doesn't have to rely solely upon what they hear.</li> </ul>
May interpret the words you say literally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be specific. Clearly tell the player what to do, for example "run fast!" rather than "fly!"</li> <li>• The child with Autism trying their best to follow your instruction might literally flap their arms thinking that is what you meant.</li> </ul>
May be sensitive to sound, or the physical contact of the game.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making adaptations to allow the player to participate.</li> <li>• Keeping the channels of communication open with parents /caregivers - find out if they are using strategies already.</li> </ul>
May need help to understand the rules of the game.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breaking the rules down – point out any occasions where the rule may change i.e. We always follow this rule unless...</li> <li>• Demonstrating</li> <li>• Using visual supports</li> </ul>
Is likely to respond well to routine and structure	<p>By keeping to a schedule within the coaching session, the player is more likely to participate and learn because there is predictability – this helps build trust. For example, by starting and ending activities in a consistent way; by using the same terminology consistently etc.</p>
May need help with transitions (e.g. coping with sudden changes; moving between activities; ending an activity they enjoy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing a signal that lets players know that the session is coming to an end – a visual countdown timer; a 5 minute siren (to help them know that when they hear the sound they have 5 minutes left to go).</li> <li>• Using a visual that shows what they will be doing next, for example a simple line drawing of a house to indicate going home.</li> </ul>
May surprise you with their skills, growing confidence and unique personality!	<p>Don't sweat the small stuff! Please don't take it personally if they say the 'wrong thing'. Generally, children and adults who have Autism try very hard to please. They want to do the right thing. With understanding and support, you can help them thrive!</p>