



Sesame Street and Autism
see amazing in all children

Screening Guide

Activity & Discussion Ideas

In these pages you'll find:

- » Ideas for screening new videos about Julia and her world
- » Suggestions for setting up kids' activities at screenings or events
- » Prompts for discussions that inspire and support parents



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Julia, an adorable Muppet on the autism spectrum, has come to Sesame Street! She already stars in her own storybook and appears within the Sesame Street and Autism initiative (sesamestreet.org/autism). Now she's made her screen debut! Julia is amazing, and sometimes she does things a little differently.

[For more ideas on autism-friendly events, click here.](#)

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Welcome

This guide is designed to help you organize fun, easy, and successful viewing events to introduce Julia to the kids and adults in your community. You'll find suggestions for some things to do and say before, during, and after viewing the videos. You know your audience best—use the ideas that best fit your event. Consider these tips:

- » Hold your event in a few different areas, rather than one huge room. Some kids with autism may need a quiet spot with low lighting so they can unwind if things get noisy or crowded. Mats and beanbags are good options for seating in these areas.
- » Not everyone will want to do the same things at the same time, so have various choices available. For instance, if some kids have had enough viewing time, they can wander over to the sensory table (see page 13).
- » Avoid bright, fluorescent, or flashing lights and strong smells; cleaning fluids or perfumes can be difficult for some kids.

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For Kids

My Name Is Julia

Introducing the new kid on the Sesame Street block...in a brand-new Sesame Street episode!
Here are ideas for before and after the viewing.

BEFORE

Introduce Julia! You might say, “There’s a new friend on Sesame Street. Her name is Julia, and she loves to play. Sometimes her way of playing is a little different, because she has autism. As you watch the video, see if you notice things about her that are a little different from her friends, and things that are the same. And remember: Everyone is different in some way. That’s what makes the world so interesting.”

DURING

Enjoy the video! It’s okay to stop and answer questions or listen to comments during the viewing, if that seems appropriate.

AFTER

Ask kids what they noticed (for example, that Julia repeats things, or that she covers her ears when it’s noisy). Ask them to name things they do differently from their friends. Perhaps some people eat pizza with their hands, others with a fork. Some fall asleep with a nightlight, some with music playing. Some people walk around, others use wheelchairs.

Distribute the coloring pages (5–6) and crayons or markers for kids to color.



VIDEOS:

Meet Julia

Visit sesamestreet.org/autism for videos



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For Kids

Playing Together

Julia and her new friends just like to have fun!

BEFORE

Put out bubbles, bubble wands, and paper and markers in advance. Before showing the videos, ask, “What do you do when you get excited? Do you jump up and down? Sing? Shout ‘hooray’?” Invite them to watch for what Julia does when she’s excited. Ask them to also watch for ways in which Abby, Elmo, and Julia are kind to one another.

AFTER

Try one or more of these ideas:

- » Pretend to flutter like butterflies like Abby and Julia! What other animal might someone pretend to be? Play animal charades. Sparkle-tastic!
- » Kids can make their own bubbles by blowing the wand and by swooshing it. Some kids may just want to be bubble poppers. If there’s enough room, they can even bring boing boing boing as they pop!
- » Julia’s special friend is her bunny, Fluffster. Ask kids if they have a special stuffed animal or doll, and invite them to draw a picture of it.



VIDEOS:

Butterfly Flapping
Boing Tag
Blowing Bubbles
Julia’s Bunny

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For Kids

Singing Together

Sing it out! Who's amazing? We all are!

BEFORE

Print and distribute copies of The "Amazing" Song (see page 9). Offer some "quiet" musical instruments, such as chimes, triangles, or soft percussion. You might say, "Everyone experiences music differently. So you can watch, or sing or hum along, or dance and bop to the beat."

DURING

Have plenty of room in the viewing area for kids to get up and move. You may want to model some movements, such as "twinkling" their fingers over their heads.

Start with The "Amazing" Song video. It's helpful to play the video more than once, so everyone can take it in. Then move on to the "Sunny Days" and "Twinkle Twinkle" videos.

AFTER

Ask each person to share something unique about him- or herself. Each time, answer with, "You're amazing!"

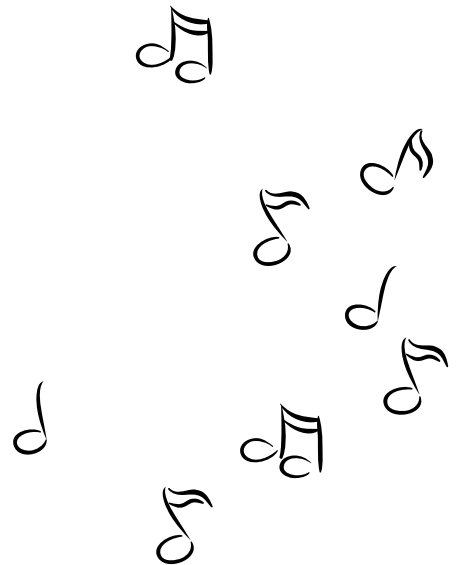
Then invite everyone to help make an "Amazing" Mosaic Quilt. Provide paper and crayons or markers and have each person draw a self-portrait on same-sized squares. Then tape the pictures together to make and display a quilt. You might say, "Separately, we are all amazing. But when we're together, WOW!" (You can also ask kids to make a separate square for each family member, then tape them together to make a personalized family quilt and take it home.)



VIDEOS:

The Amazing Song
Sunny Days
Twinkle Twinkle

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The “Amazing” Song

Music by Chris Jackson, Lyrics by Chrissy Ferraro

Every kid is an original, we’re all one of a kind.
There’s no one else quite like us that you’re ever gonna find.
And that’s what makes us wonderful, we’re different as can be.
But in some real important ways we’re still the same, you see.

(refrain)

We all can feel happy. We all can feel mad.
We all can feel good. We all can feel bad.
We all want to laugh and we all want to play.
We all are amazing, each in our own way.
We all are amazing, every kid is amazing.
We all are amazing, each in our own way.

For some of us it’s harder to reach out as others do.
But when you just look closer you’ll see amazingness show through.
We each have our own ways to see the world and show we care.
But we know we can be friends ‘cause there’s so much that we share.

We all are still growing, we all need a hand.
We all need a friend who can understand.
We all are important and we all are okay.
We all are amazing, each in our own way.

At times we may have our own ways to play
and that’s okay.
But in the end we’re all so much the same
in some big ways.

(refrain)

We all can be silly, we all can be sad.
We all can feel lonely, we all can feel glad.
We all are just kids and we all want to play.
We all are amazing, each in our own way.
We all are amazing, each in our own way.
Every kid is amazing, each in their own way.



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For Grown-Ups

Parents Are Amazing

These videos show parents rising to the challenge, every day.

BEFORE

Introduce the video by saying that these short films introduce some parents of kids with autism. Parents of kids on the autism spectrum face special challenges; it's empowering for them to know how many others share similar experiences. For the wider community, the more people understand these special challenges, the more supportive they can be.

AFTER

Have a conversation about patience—something all parents are short of from time to time. Is there a particular activity or time of day when it runs low? Invite everyone to share strategies for recharging. It might be as simple as a cup of tea with honey, or some soothing music, or deep belly breathing.

You can also prompt discussion by asking:

- » What things can people outside the family do to support you and be helpful? What small chores can they do to give you a break?
- » What strategies do you use to allow all the kids in your family to “just be kids”?
- » What words have you found most helpful in explaining your family to others?



VIDEOS:

A Parent's Role
Meeting Unique Needs
Being a Supportive Parent
Family Friends

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For Grown-Ups

Siblings Are Amazing, Too!

These videos show children rising to the challenge, every day.

BEFORE

Print out the “Here We Are” printable to have on hand. Introduce the videos. Say, “Every family is unique and amazing in its own way, and so is each member of the family. You’re about to see some amazing families.”

AFTER

If the crowd isn’t too large, invite brothers and sisters to introduce their own siblings. Then pass around the handout, “Here We Are,” for everyone to color and fill out. This is for all siblings, no matter what kind of family they are part of.



VIDEOS:

Family Time With Grover
A Sibling Story
Two Sibling Stories

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Here We Are Draw yourself with your sibling in the frame.

MY NAME

MY SIBLING'S NAME

MY FAVORITE THING TO DO

HIS/HER FAVORITE THING TO DO

SOMETHING I DON'T LIKE

SOMETHING HE/SHE DOESN'T LIKE

AN IMPORTANT THING THAT MAKES ME SPECIAL

AN IMPORTANT THING THAT MAKES HIM/HER SPECIAL

WAYS YOU CAN EXPLAIN AUTISM TO OTHERS

- » (Child's name)'s brain works differently than yours. Your brain is like the boss of your body. It's what makes you you. The brain has an important job: making sense of the world around you.
- » Everyone with autism is different, the same way all children have differences. Some children do things differently than others.

- » Your brain lets you understand everything you see, hear, smell, touch, and taste. The brain of a person with autism works differently and that can make it hard to talk, listen, understand, play, and learn in the same way others do. Many people with autism are good at remembering videos, drawing, reading, and many other things.
- » People have other ways besides talking to tell us what they know and want.

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How Does It Feel?

Anywhere, anytime...all kids like to get their hands into things! A sensory table is a great invitation for all kids to play together—with or without conversation. This makes it an ideal activity for a Julia viewing event.

Always have adult supervision. Depending on the size of your event, you'll need one or more long tables filled with any of these items:

- » sand
- » water
- » shaving cream
- » raw rice or uncooked pasta, in all shapes
- » beanbags
- » play dough
- » small squeeze balls
- » shredded paper or confetti
- » paper punchers (with different shapes, if available), with paper
- » ink pads and stampers (or fingerpaints), with paper
- » leaves and pinecones
- » paper towels and wipes for cleaning up!

To get kids interacting with the textures, you might also add:

- » shovels
- » ice-cube trays
- » small plastic containers
- » plastic measuring cups
- » sieves or strainers
- » sponges
- » plastic letters and numbers



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For Kids

What Do You Want Other Kids to Know?

A team of young people with autism share their perspective. Get ready for a view from the inside!

BEFORE

Introduce the first video, Benny's Story: "The first video was made by a group of young people with autism. The animated characters they created tell you the things the creators want you to know about them.

The second video shows more kids on the autism spectrum, sharing what they'd like you to know about their lives. As you watch, think about what other people should know about you!"

AFTER

Ask, "What things would you like other people to know about you? What is something that's special or important about you?"



VIDEOS:

Benny's Story
Behind the Scenes

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For Kids

We're Amazing, 1, 2, 3!

Watch as Elmo introduces his new friend.

BEFORE

Introduce the video. “Here’s a special storybook about Elmo and Abby and their new friend Julia. While you watch, notice the ways each friend is special and unique.”

AFTER

Have a table with some craft options to emphasize the idea that all of us are unique:

- » Invite everyone to make a cut-paper snowflake. Just like people, no two snowflakes are the same—which is part of what makes them so beautiful. Hang them around the room, or send them home with the kids.
- » Set out some nontoxic inkpads and white paper, and let kids make a collage of fingerprints (have hand wipes available)! Invite them to compare their own fingerprints to those of the kids around them. Like snowflakes, no two are exactly alike!
- » Have kids make cards for friends and family with the message, “You are amazing!” Invite them to dictate to a grown-up what is special about the recipient, as the adult writes it on the card.



VIDEOS:

[We're Amazing, 1,2,3!](#)

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