

Autism Inclusion

Activities for the Classroom



A classroom that discusses and practises autism inclusion can benefit all students. Teaching your class about autism inclusion can promote a culture of acceptance, understanding, and inclusion throughout your school and broader community.

Consider Autistic identities

This resource includes activities on autism inclusion that you can use to teach this topic to your class. Prior to teaching this topic, consider that you may have students who have been identified as Autistic but may not have been informed. You may also have students not yet identified as Autistic, for various reasons. If this is the case, it may be best to avoid the possibility of students identifying themselves as Autistic and use the activities on disability inclusion instead.

Who are the activities for?

These activities are designed for students from levels Foundation to 6, with potential extensions provided for higher levels. You can differentiate and/or make reasonable adjustments to these activities as necessary for your students. The activities do not align with curriculum standards for levels A to D.

Activity 1 – Actions Towards Inclusivity

[Overview](#)

Activity 1

[Activity 2](#)

[Resources](#)

Alignment with the Victorian Curriculum 2.0

Personal and Social Capability

- Foundation – VC2CPFO02
- Levels 1 and 2 – VC2CP2O03
- Levels 3 and 4 – VC2CP4O03
- Levels 5 and 6 – VC2CP6O02, VC2CP6O01

English

- Foundation – VC2EFLY13
- Level 1 – VC2E1LY13
- Level 2 – VC2E2LY11
- Level 3 – VC2E3LY11
- Level 4 – VC2E4LY10
- Level 5 – VC2E5LY10
- Level 6 – VC2E6LY09

This activity can be used as part of an introduction to the topic of autism inclusion.

Let's get started

Begin with a discussion about inclusion and its importance to a depth that is appropriate to your students' level. You may wish to explore the resources on disability, linked below the following activity, to guide your discussion.

Expand the discussion

You can then incorporate the subject of disability. You may need to explain this concept further if students are unfamiliar with it. Explain that people with a disability might need to be included in specific ways, for example by making sure that accessible toilets are available. You can introduce autism as an example to further the discussion.

Clarify autism with a strengths-based approach

You may need to clarify what autism is if your students aren't familiar with it. You may wish to explore the links to resources on autism, listed below the following activity, to guide how you can discuss autism in an affirming and strength-based way.

Give examples to prompt workbook activities: Foundation to level 2

Explain that an inclusive classroom means that we all have the things that we need to learn best. For some students, including Autistic students, this might mean having fidget items, movement breaks, and visual schedules. Provide students in Foundation to level 2 with examples of autism inclusion and ask them to write about and draw one example in their workbooks. The amount of text to expect will depend on your students' level.

Provide scenarios that have an easy solution: Levels 3 to 6

You can provide students in levels 3 to 6 with scenarios where inclusivity for Autistic people has been unintentionally missed, such as the scenarios provided here. It is best if the scenarios feature an issue that is easy to change and avoids involving direct discrimination (as this could be upsetting for Autistic students in your class).

As a follow-on task, encourage your students to pick one scenario and write a persuasive text to the person or place featured who is not currently including Autistic people. Ask them to present a clear argument for why it's important to be more inclusive.

Example Scenarios

"A school is having an athletics day and is using a loud starting gun to start the races. Some students are worried about running in the race because they don't like loud noises. What could the school do to make the athletics day more inclusive?"

"A school bans students from using fidget items in class. However, some students are finding that they can't focus or stay calm in class without their fidget items. What could the school do to make the classroom more inclusive?"

Activity 2 – Exploring Sensory Processing

[Overview](#)[Activity 1](#)**Activity 2**[Resources](#)

Alignment with the Victorian Curriculum 2.0

Science

- Foundation to level 2 – VC2S2H01

Health and Physical Education

- Levels 3 and 4 – VC2HP4P06
- Levels 5 and 6 – VC2HP6P06

Personal and Social Capability

- Foundation – VC2CPFS03

Build on learnings about inclusion

Run this activity after students have learnt the basics about inclusion and autism. You may wish to explore the links to resources on autism and inclusion, listed below this activity, to guide how you teach these concepts.

Let's get started

Start the activity by discussing the senses with your students, such as taste, touch, sight, hearing, and smell, as well as how we can sense elements like temperature, motion, and pain. For students in levels 3 to 6, this discussion only needs to be a brief reminder of what they have learned about the senses in their earlier education. You can then lead into explaining how Autistic people can process sensory information differently to non-Autistic people, often with greater or lower sensitivity.

Talk about helpful tools

Describe how fidget and sensory items can act as a support for this reason. You could talk about how some people need to move or fidget to concentrate and feel calm, which is why some people find fidget and sensory items helpful. You can also talk about how fidget and sensory items can give people positive feelings by providing input to senses in which they are less sensitive.

Show sensory and fidget items and pass them around: Foundation to level 2

Show a selection of sensory and fidget items to your class. Ideally your selection will include a variety of items and meet a range of sensory needs as this will increase the effectiveness of the activity.

You can provide students in Foundation to level 2 with the items and ask them to make observations about

the items using their senses (excluding taste). Once they are finished, talk to them about which items they preferred. In this discussion, highlight the similarities and differences between students' likes and dislikes.

Talk about self-regulation: Level 3 to 6

Prior to providing students in levels 3 to 6 with the items, talk about how fidget and sensory items are an important tool that some people, including Autistic people use to self-regulate. You can explain self-regulation as the ability that we all use to understand and manage how we feel, behave, and react.

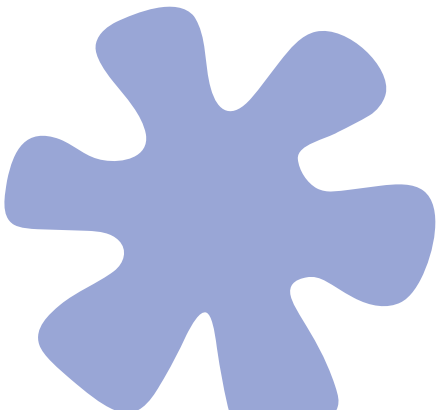
Expand the discussion

In a discussion, encourage students in levels 3 to 6 to think of scenarios where we may commonly think about and manage how we feel and behave. You can prompt them with questions such as 'do you think about how you behave in class? How does that influence how you act?', and 'when you feel sad, are there any activities that cheer you up? What are they?'.

For students in levels 5 and 6, you can expand this discussion by asking them to consider why it is important to manage our behaviour and emotional responses, and how they can influence others.

Following this discussion, provide students in levels 3 to 6 with the fidget and sensory items to explore. Encourage them to discuss which items they prefer, or dislike. Ask students to identify if any of the items positively influenced their mood, such as making them feel more calm, focused, or happy.

These activities align with version 2.0 of the Victorian Curriculum F-10.



Links to Resources on Autism

Information Sheet: How to communicate effectively with Autistic people by Amaze.

This information sheet explains how to communicate with Autistic people in a manner that is effective, clear, and considers common Autistic communication characteristics.

Information Sheet: Teaching an Autistic student by Amaze.

This information sheet is designed for teachers who have Autistic students in their classroom. It provides practical strategies that will assist teachers in creating an effective and supportive learning environment for their Autistic students.

Poster: What is autism? by Amaze.

This poster provides a brief description of autism. The resource is also available in Vietnamese, Dari, Burmese, Farsi, Hindi, Simplified Chinese, Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Turkish, and Arabic on the Amaze website.

Diverse Learners Hub by the Victorian Department of Education.

The Diverse Learners Hub provides a range of resources for educators on meeting the learning and wellbeing needs and aspirations of students with ADHD, autism, language difficulties, dyslexia, and dyscalculia.

Talking to Children About Autism by Reframing Autism.

This webpage provides guidance around talking to children about autism. While the information is aimed at parents, it remains applicable to educators.

Links to Resources on Disability

PWDA Language Guide: A guide to language about disability by People with Disability Australia.

This guide provides advice on talking about and reporting on disability. Content note: the guide contains ableist and offensive language as examples of language that is not appropriate or respectful.

The statement on language on the [Amaze website](#) specifically discusses language in relation to autism and may also be beneficial.

Teacher Guide by AllPlay Learn.

This resource describes inclusive education, disability, and how to include children with disability. It also links to other AllPlay Learn resources about teaching children with disability, language around disability, specific disabilities, and professional learning.

Disability Standards for Education 2005 by the Department of Education.

This webpage provides a range of resources about the Disability Standards for Education (2005) for students with disability, their caregivers, education providers, and educators.

Be a disability ally by the Department of Education.

This video was designed by students with disability and their parents and caregivers, with help from Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA). It explores the rights of students with disability to join in with every part of school life and gives tips on how to be an ally to students with disability. It could be used in lessons about disability inclusion.

Look! It's me! by Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA).

This webpage provides a list of children's books on diversity and inclusion, reviewed by young people with disability.