

AT-HOME ACTIVITIES **STUDENTS WITH AUTISM**



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BOARD GAMES

ZINGO (4+)

Why it's great: A picture-based, fast-paced Bingo game that builds vocabulary, attention, and turn-taking.

Supports IEP goals in:

Expressive & Receptive Language: *"Student will identify and name pictured objects with 80% accuracy."*

Social Interaction: *"Student will take turns with peers in structured activities in 4 out of 5 opportunities."*

OUTFOXED! (5–8 older kids may enjoy it too!)

Why it's great: A cooperative deduction game where players solve a mystery together—no competition required.

Supports IEP goals in:

Cooperative Play & Peer Engagement: *"Student will work cooperatively in small group games, completing tasks with one peer in 3 of 4 sessions."*

Executive Functioning: *"Student will use deductive reasoning to solve simple problems with 1 prompt in 80% of opportunities."*

FEELINGS IN A FLASH (5+)

Why it's great: Helps kids recognize and talk about emotions in a non-threatening way.

Supports IEP goals in:

Self-Regulation & Emotional Identification: *"Student will identify their own emotions using visual supports in 4 out of 5 trials."*

Perspective-Taking & Social Thinking: *"Student will label emotions in others based on facial expressions or scenarios with 80% accuracy."*

POP THE PIG (4+)

Why it's great: Simple, repetitive, and highly engaging without complex rules—great for motor planning and turn-taking.

Supports IEP goals in:

Turn-Taking & Waiting: "Student will wait for their turn in a small group game with no more than one verbal prompt."

Behavioral Regulation: "Student will demonstrate impulse control by following game rules during structured play in 3 of 4 sessions."

ROBOT TURTLES (4-8)

Why it's great: Introduces early coding concepts in a visual, logic-based board game.

Supports IEP goals in:

Sequencing & Planning: "Student will independently sequence 3-4 steps to complete a task using visual supports with 80% success."

Problem Solving: "Student will identify and correct errors in a plan with 1 adult cue in 3 of 5 opportunities."

SNUG AS A BUG IN A RUG (3-6)

Why it's great: A cooperative matching game with multiple skill levels and sensory-friendly components.

Supports IEP goals in:

Color/Shape Identification: "Student will identify colors and shapes during structured activities with 80% accuracy across 3 sessions."

Cooperative Play: "Student will engage in cooperative game play with peers, taking turns and following directions in 4 out of 5 trials."

Sensory Regulation: "Student will participate in a structured game with sensory supports and remain regulated for 10 minutes with no more than 1 break."

CONVERSATION CHAINS (6+)

Why it's great: Helps practice conversation skills and self-expression in a game-like setting.

Supports IEP goals in:

Pragmatic language: "Student will respond to conversational prompts with an appropriate on-topic statement in 4 out of 5 opportunities."

Perspective-taking: "Student will ask or answer questions about another's perspective or experience with 80% accuracy using sentence starters or visual supports."

HEADBANDZ (with picture cards)

Why it's great: Encourages asking questions and categorizing, which builds communication and flexibility.

Supports IEP goals in:

Inferencing Skills: "Student will identify objects or categories by asking yes/no questions in 3 out of 4 trials."

Flexible Thinking/Verbal Reasoning: "Student will use descriptive language to formulate questions and make educated guesses in structured play in 4 out of 5 sessions."

Social Interaction: "Student will maintain a back-and-forth exchange during a game with peers using question/answer format with no more than one prompt."

SENSORY ACTIVITIES

Sensory Bins (e.g., rice, beans, kinetic sand)

Why it's great: Tactile input regulates the nervous system and builds fine motor skills.

Ties to IEP goals:

- "Student will tolerate tactile input for increasing durations with minimal sensory avoidance."
- "Student will use a pincer grasp to retrieve small items from a sensory bin in 4 of 5 trials"



Finger Painting / Shaving Cream Play

Why it's great: Encourages creative expression and sensory exploration without pressure.

Ties to IEP goals:

- "Student will engage in messy play for at least 5 minutes with no more than one prompt."
- "Student will use bilateral coordination to paint or mix with both hands in structured activities."



Animal Walks or Movement Breaks (bear crawl etc.)

Why it's great: Builds gross motor coordination and self-regulation.

Ties to IEP goals:

“Student will perform structured gross motor activities with proper body coordination in 3 of 5 sessions.”

“Student will follow a 3-step movement sequence with visual cues with 80% accuracy.”



Water Play (pouring, scooping, toy washing)

Why it's great: Soothing sensory input and excellent for fine motor and sequencing.

Ties to IEP goals:

- “Student will complete functional fine motor tasks (e.g., pouring, squeezing) with 80% independence.”
- “Student will follow a 2-step task (e.g., wash and dry) in 4 out of 5 trials.”



Music & Rhythm Time (shakers, drums, clapping)

Why it's great: Engages auditory and proprioceptive senses while building attention and imitation.

Ties to IEP goals:

- “Student will imitate rhythmic patterns using body or instruments in 3 of 4 sessions.”
- “Student will attend to auditory cues and respond within 5 seconds with 80% success.”



Heavy Work Jobs (pushing laundry basket, carrying groceries)

Why it's great: Provides calming proprioceptive input and teaches responsibility.

Ties to IEP goals:

- “Student will complete heavy work activities as part of a sensory diet in 4 out of 5 trials.”
- “Student will follow a household task routine with no more than one prompt.”



Playdough Activities (rolling, cutting, sculpting)

Why it's great: Strengthens hands, builds creativity, and can calm anxiety.

Ties to IEP goals:

- "Student will demonstrate fine motor strength and dexterity by manipulating clay/playdough in structured tasks."
- "Student will complete shape creation tasks (e.g., roll a ball, flatten) with 80% accuracy."



Obstacle Courses (pillows, tunnels, tape lines)

Why it's great: Improves motor planning, sequencing, and body awareness.

Ties to IEP goals:

- "Student will navigate a 3-part obstacle course using verbal or visual prompts in 3 of 5 sessions."
- "Student will demonstrate safe movement and spatial awareness in 80% of structured activities."



Balloon Tennis or Sock Toss

Why it's great: Supports visual-motor coordination and focus in a fun way.

Ties to IEP Goals:

- "Student will catch or bat a balloon or soft object with alternating hands with 80% accuracy."
- "Student will maintain attention to a partner-led motor activity for 5 minutes."



Calming Jars / Glitter Bottles

Why it's great: Visual sensory tools that support emotional regulation and focus.

Ties to IEP Goals:

- "Student will use a sensory calming tool (e.g., glitter jar) when cued to self-regulate with 80% success."
- "Student will identify personal calming strategies using visual aids in 3 of 5 opportunities."

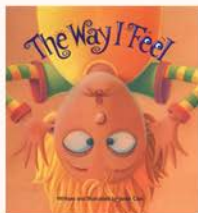


BOOKS

The Way I Feel by Janan Cain

Explores a range of emotions with vivid illustrations and simple language.

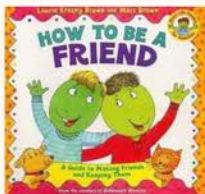
Great for building emotional vocabulary and self-expression.



How to Be a Friend by Laurie Krasny Brown & Marc Brown

Teaches friendship skills, including sharing, listening, and apologizing.

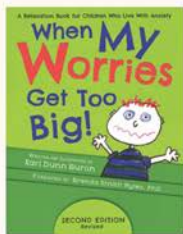
Excellent for social-emotional development.



When My Worries Get Too Big by Kari Dunn Buron

A calming strategy story designed for children who experience anxiety or sensory overload.

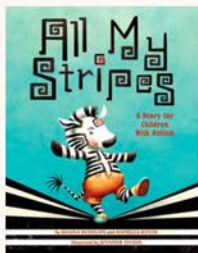
Includes visual tools and coping strategies.



All My Stripes: A Story for Children With Autism by Shaina Rudolph & Danielle Royer

Follows Zane the zebra as he learns to embrace all parts of who he is—including his autism.

Boosts self-esteem and acceptance.



Benny Doesn't Like to Be Hugged by Zetta Elliott

A child describes her friend Benny, who is autistic, with respect and honesty.

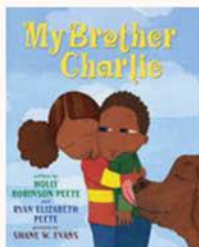
Promotes neurodiversity awareness and inclusive friendship.



My Brother Charlie by Holly Robinson Peete & Ryan Elizabeth Peete

Told from the perspective of a sibling of an autistic boy.

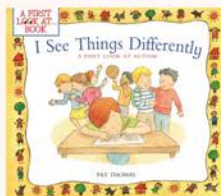
Helps children understand family dynamics and diversity in communication.



I See Things Differently by Pat Thomas

A friendly, non-judgmental introduction to autism for young children.

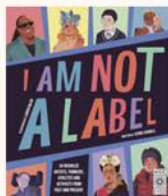
Encourages empathy and understanding of different perspectives.



I Am Not a Label by Cerrie Burnell

A beautifully illustrated book profiling real-life people with disabilities, including autism.

Inspires confidence, identity, and representation.



HOMEMADE FIDGET TOYS

Balloon Stress Balls

How to make: Fill a balloon with flour, rice, or cornstarch. Tie it tight!

Skills supported: Tactile regulation, hand strength, focus



Calm Down Glitter Jar

How to make: Mix warm water, clear glue, glitter, and food coloring in a clear plastic bottle.

Skills supported: Visual soothing, emotional regulation



Bead-and-Pipe Cleaner Twist

How to make: Thread colorful beads onto pipe cleaners—twist, bend, and roll!

Skills supported: Fine motor skills, sensory input, quiet play



Sensory Bags

How to make: Fill a ziplock bag with hair gel, beads, or buttons; tape edges shut.

Skills supported: Tactile exploration, visual scanning, calming



Paperclip Chain

How to make: Link paperclips in patterns to twist and fidget.

Skills supported: Finger movement, repetitive motion



Velcro Board or Strip

How to make: Stick Velcro dots to a piece of cardboard or a bookmark.

Skills supported: Tactile feedback, sensory seeking, quiet fidgeting



Bubble Wrap Pad

How to make: Cut a small square of bubble wrap and tape the edges to cardboard.

Skills supported: Auditory and tactile regulation, stress relief



Straw Connectors

How to make: Cut straws into pieces and thread onto string or yarn.

Skills supported: Hand-eye coordination, tactile input, focus



Fabric Marble Maze

How to make: Sew two pieces of felt into a pouch with a hidden marble inside to push through a maze (or use glue and duct tape).

Skills supported: Finger isolation, focus, motor planning



Foam or Cardboard Flip Book

How to make: Cut squares from foam sheets or cardboard, glue different textures (e.g., felt, sandpaper, foil) to each, and connect them with tape or string to flip through.

Skills supported: Tactile discrimination, sensory exploration, self-soothing



APPS

Choiceworks

(Visual Schedules & Self-Regulation)

Purpose: Helps with routines, emotional management, and transitions.

Best for: Kids who benefit from visual structure.

Skills: Self-regulation, daily routines, task completion



Social Express

(Social Skills Learning)

Purpose: Animated scenarios teach perspective-taking and appropriate social behavior.

Best for: Elementary through middle school.

Skills: Social reasoning, conversation skills, emotional recognition



Otsimo Special Education

(Learning & Communication)

Purpose: Offers games and activities tailored for children with autism and learning differences.

Best for: Younger children and early learners.

Skills: Language, math, matching, auditory processing



Endless Reader

(Sight Word & Language Learning)

Purpose: Engaging word games with animations and sound.

Best for: Kids who benefit from repetition and visuals.

Skills: Vocabulary, phonics, early literacy



Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame

(Emotional Regulation)

Purpose: Teaches calming strategies through problem-solving with a Sesame Street monster.

Best for: Preschool–early elementary

Skills: Self-regulation, emotional awareness, coping strategies



Toca Boca Series

(Open-Ended Pretend Play)

Purpose: A suite of apps (e.g., Toca Life: Hospital, Toca Kitchen) for creativity and social story-building.

Best for: Kids who thrive on pretend play and exploration.

Skills: Imagination, role play, social narratives



Autism iHelp

(Language Building)

Purpose: Flashcard-style app targeting vocabulary development across categories.

Best for: Younger kids or early language learners.

Skills: Receptive/expressive language, categorization, memory



Minecraft (Creative Mode)

👤 Age Rating: E10+

🎮 Why It's Great: Open-ended building game with no time limits—excellent for imagination, flexible thinking, and cooperative play.

🧠 Skills Supported: Planning, problem-solving, spatial awareness, social interaction (multiplayer)

🎧 Sensory Tips:

Use Peaceful Mode to remove enemies and reduce stress.
Turn down or mute music and sound effects if they're overstimulating.

Use headphones or subtitles for clearer focus.

✅ Possible IEP Goals

🔧 Executive Functioning & Planning

"Student will follow a 3-step building plan using visual or verbal cues in 4 of 5 opportunities."

"Student will plan and complete a multi-step task (e.g., constructing a virtual structure) independently with 80% accuracy."

🧩 Problem-Solving & Flexibility

"Student will adapt to changes in a structured building challenge (e.g., limited materials) with 1 adult prompt in 4 out of 5 trials."

"Student will generate two or more possible solutions to in-game building problems with visual support."

👥 Social Communication (if using multiplayer mode)

"Student will engage in cooperative gameplay by taking turns and contributing to a shared build in 3 of 4 opportunities."

"Student will use appropriate language (e.g., requests, comments) with peers during structured online or offline collaboration in 4 of 5 sessions."

Animal Crossing: New Horizons

👤 Age Rating: E

🎮 Why It's Great: Calm, real-time game that encourages daily routines, gentle social interaction, and self-expression

🧠 Skills Supported: Emotional regulation, planning, perspective-taking, decision-making

🔊 Sensory Tips:

Low-stimulation visuals and relaxing music

Customizable pace—no time pressure or "losing"

Use closed captions for players with auditory sensitivities

✅ Possible IEP Goals:

🔄 Planning & Sequencing

"Student will plan and follow a daily routine in-game (e.g., fishing, planting, shopping) using a visual checklist in 4 of 5 sessions."

😊 Emotional Regulation & Coping

"Student will identify a preferred in-game calming activity (e.g., visiting the museum or fishing) and use it during breaks to self-regulate with 80% success."

👥 Social Understanding

"Student will interpret and respond to virtual characters' emotions or requests with 80% accuracy using visual supports."

LEGO Video Games

(LEGO City, LEGO Star Wars, etc.)

👤 Age Rating: E10+

🎮 **Why It's Great:** Cooperative gameplay with puzzles, silly humor, and low reading demand—great for social bonding and motor skills.

🧠 **Skills Supported:** Teamwork, sequencing, problem-solving, fine motor coordination

🎧 **Sensory Tips:**

Minimal speech, mostly visual humor

Adjustable sound/music

Cooperative mode allows parent/peer to guide when needed

✅ **Possible IEP Goals:**

🧠 **Problem Solving**

“Student will solve in-game puzzles by trial and error, using support only as needed, in 4 of 5 opportunities.”

👥 **Cooperative Play**


“Student will complete a cooperative task (e.g., unlocking a new area) with a partner using turn-taking strategies in 3 of 4 trials.”


👉 **Fine Motor Skills**

“Student will use a handheld controller to complete game actions requiring precision (e.g., jumping, building) with 80% accuracy.”

Monument Valley

 Age Rating: E

 **Why It's Great:** Visually calming puzzle game with no time limits—ideal for developing patience and spatial reasoning.

 **Skills Supported:** Visual-spatial awareness, sequencing, perseverance, flexible thinking

 **Sensory Tips:**

Soft ambient music and smooth animations

No time pressure or loud sounds

Ideal for solo, calming play


 **Possible IEP Goals:**

 **Visual-Spatial Reasoning**

“Student will manipulate virtual objects to solve spatial puzzles with 80% accuracy across 3 sessions.”

 **Flexible Thinking**


“Student will adjust their approach after an unsuccessful puzzle attempt in 4 out of 5 opportunities with minimal adult support.”


 **Sustained Attention**

“Student will maintain focus during a 10-minute visual logic game session without leaving task area.”

Zoombinis

 Age Rating: E

 Why It's Great: Classic game that builds logic and pattern recognition using adorable characters—no reading required.

 Skills Supported: Reasoning, cognitive flexibility, categorization, visual memory

 Sensory Tips:

Adjustable volume and pacing


Bright, cartoon visuals with clear feedback

Works well on iPad or computer


 Possible IEP Goals:

 Pattern Recognition & Problem Solving

"Student will sort or group virtual characters based on visual features in 4 of 5 gameplay levels."

 Cognitive Flexibility

"Student will try alternate problem-solving strategies after an unsuccessful attempt in 3 of 4 sessions."

 Working Memory

"Student will complete multi-step visual puzzles by recalling character traits and rules with 80% accuracy."

Zoombinis

😊 Clasificación de edad: E

🎮 **Por qué es genial:** Juego clásico que desarrolla la lógica y el reconocimiento de patrones utilizando personajes adorables; no requiere lectura.

🧠 **Habilidades apoyadas:** razonamiento, flexibilidad cognitiva, categorización, memoria visual

🔊 **Consejos sensoriales:**

Volumen y ritmo ajustables Imágenes brillantes y de dibujos animados con respuesta clara Funciona bien en iPad o computadora

✅ **Posibles objetivos del IEP:**

⚙️ **Reconocimiento de patrones y resolución de problemas**
“El estudiante clasificará o agrupará personajes virtuales según características visuales en 4 de los 5 niveles de juego”.

🔄 **Flexibilidad cognitiva** “El estudiante intentará estrategias alternativas de resolución de problemas después de un intento fallido en 3 de las 4 sesiones”.

🧠 **Memoria de trabajo** “El estudiante completará rompecabezas visuales de varios pasos recordando rasgos de personajes y reglas con un 80% de precisión”.