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Family & Relationships

Motivate to Communicate! 300 Games and Activities for Your Child With Autism
Simone Griffin
Jessica Kingsley Publishers
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Young eyes sparkle with new understanding. A smile melts your heart. Parents treasure those precious moments spent bonding with their children. For those whose children have communication difficulties, such as autism, such moments take on added meaning.

In their book *Motivate to Communicate*, Simone Griffin and Dianne Sandler offer parents of autistic children hundreds of games and activities that transform playtime into an exciting opportunity to encourage social interaction and communication. Griffin and Sandler explain, “It’s important for us to create lots of opportunities to teach our children how to communicate with others and also that they can have fun in social situations.”

To this end, Griffin and Sandler pack the book with ideas for using everyday games, toys, and household objects. Divided into easy-to-use sections focusing on party toys, outside games, and food, the book provides practical suggestions anyone can implement. From ping-pong ball races to a disco cave made with emergency blankets, each suggestion maximizes the fun. Readers can create a teddy-bear trampoline or paint pictures with food. Instructions are clear and the suggestions work for children of all ages. The book offers specific hints, tips, and suggestions for working (or playing) with autistic children. A resource list is also provided, including stores and websites which sell toys and projects.

The authors draw on years of experience working with children who have communication challenges. Griffin has been a speech and language therapist for over ten years. Sandler, a specialist teacher, has designed toys for children with special needs. Both have worked with children in all age groups. Their backgrounds and skills ensure that the games and activities they suggest are developmentally appropriate and impactful.

All of this practical advice is valuable, but perhaps the most important thing this book has to offer is hope in the face of daunting challenges. *Motivate to Communicate* reaches out to

parents hungry for guidance and support. It offers hope and new possibilities for new and creative ways to interact with children who have communication difficulties. Children will be drawn to the fun and joy the activities provide, and the wide variety of suggestions account for each child's personal interests and age level. While the book's writing maintains a rather matter-of-fact tone, reminiscent of an instruction book, the imaginative ideas draw the reader on and inspire. This book should grace the library of anyone—parent, teacher, therapist, caregiver, or loved one—who cares about a child with communication challenges.

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