

# Should We Tell the Class? Autism Disclosure and Classroom Rapport

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As a parent, you may wonder whether it's a good idea to tell your child's class that they're autistic. It's a personal decision, and one that depends on your child's comfort, needs, and the environment at school. This handout will help you think through the benefits and risks, based on current research and autistic perspectives.

A 2025 study found that when people knew they were working with an autistic person, they rated the interaction more positively. This was true for both autistic and non-autistic participants. Disclosure helped build better rapport and communication.

## Why Disclosure Can Help

- Reduces misunderstandings
- Helps peers respond with empathy instead of confusion
- Can lower the pressure on your child to mask
- Builds a sense of acceptance and belonging

## When Disclosure Might Be Harmful

- If the school lacks a supportive culture
- If your child doesn't want to disclose
- If staff aren't trained to respond to stigma or questions

## What Autistic Young People Say

Many autistic adults say they wish their peers had known they were autistic. It would have made school easier and less isolating. Some young people who chose to disclose felt relieved and more accepted.

## How to Support Disclosure (If You Choose It)

- Ask your child how they feel and involve them in the decision
- Choose how much to share, and with whom
- Help staff explain autism in a respectful, affirming way
- Keep the conversation going—this isn't a one-time event

## Alternatives to Full Disclosure

- Share a personal learning profile with staff
- Use inclusive strategies that benefit everyone
- Educate the class about neurodiversity in general
- Let your child choose what they want others to know

## Final Thought

There's no one-size-fits-all answer. Some children benefit from open disclosure. Others prefer privacy. The most important thing is that your child feels safe, accepted, and supported—whether or not the class knows.