

# Starting school

Resources to support primary school students on the autism spectrum

## Student profile

Introducing: Joanne Bloggs



This is me



This is my family

**My birthday is:** 26 February

**My class:** Foundation C

**My year level:** Foundation

**My teacher:** Mr North

**About me ...** (What are some of your child's interests, strengths?)

I love to draw and paint. I am also a good dancer and I do ballet and jazz. I am very good at talking (sometimes I get so excited that I talk a lot and forget when to stop) and I am really interested in books. I can't wait to read big books like my cousin. He is 2 years older than me and he is my best friend. I hope to make lots of new friends at school. I already know two other girls in my class (Carmen and Ayesha). I have a pet dog called Nala and I also have pet chickens. I like collecting their eggs. My favourite TV show is *Octonauts*. My favourite character is Captain Barnacles. I love going to the beach and swimming in my neighbour's pool. I would like to work in a library when I grow up.

**How I like to play ...** (Does your child prefer playing with others, alone, 'chilling out' in a quiet area, being active outdoors, having an adult help them to connect with others?)

I like to play with other kids but sometimes I don't know how to join a group. I might need some help from adults at break times because I get really nervous and then become quite shy when I don't know who to play with. I like playing outside on monkey bars and other play equipment. I might need some help learning about how to take turns and how to follow rules.

**This year at school I am hoping that ...** (What are some of your child's hopes and wishes for school?)

My wish for school is to learn and read lots of books. Sometimes I need help but I also like to do things by myself.

**What makes me feel good ...** (What makes your child feel excited, happy, calm, relaxed or cheerful, for example, and how do they show these feelings?)

I feel good when I am in a familiar place with people that I know and when I am doing things I know how to do. When I feel good I like to hug people. I also get quite loud and talk very fast when I am excited. I also flap my hands when I am really excited.

**What doesn't make me feel good ...** (What triggers your child, makes them feel grumpy, frustrated, angry, worried, nervous or scared, for example, and how do they show these feelings?)

I get really anxious when I am doing something new or when plans change. I like to know what is going to happen next and I ask a lot of questions. When there is a change in routine, I worry a lot. Sometimes I cry or I go very quiet and I shut down because I can't find the right words to explain my feelings. I might close my eyes and clench my fists for a few minutes.




Here is something I really like!




Here is something I don't like!

Help your school understand your child's needs: Families


1

 **I learn best when ...** (Describe what might be helpful for your child, such as sitting with a friend or being at the front of the room, knowing in advance about upcoming plans and activities.)

I get distracted quite easily so it would help me to sit at the front of the classroom. I would like to sit with my friends Carmen and Ayesha. I use a visual schedule at home and it would help me to have one at school too. I like to know what is happening and I ask a lot of questions. You can help me by explaining what is happening in advance.


 **I find it hard to learn when ...** (Describe potential barriers to learning, such as noise, too much visual stimulation in a room, changes in routine, challenges with communicating needs.)

I don't cope very well with changes in routine or when there is something new happening that I haven't done before. I also get distracted by noises like lawnmowers and sirens. They sound really loud to me and I can't think properly when I hear them.


 **When I need help, I ...** (Describe how your child shows an adult that they need support, such as putting up their hand, looking distracted or calling out for assistance.)

I don't always know how to show that I need help. I sometimes shut down and close my eyes and clench my fists. This means I need help to calm down.


I call out when I have a question so I might need help to learn how to put up my hand and wait my turn.

 **Here are some ways you can best support me at school ...** (Describe any techniques or activities that you or your child use to self-regulate or calm.)


- If I get overwhelmed, it helps me if an adult reminds me to count my breathing using my fingers.
- You can talk to me about my dog, my chickens or the *Octonauts* if I get anxious. This is a good distraction for me.
- It helps me to have a visual schedule and to be told what is going to happen in advance.
- You might need to remind me to speak quietly using my inside voice when I get excited!

 **My family hopes that this year at school will be ...** (What is your vision for your child's schooling? You could express your hopes and wishes for your child.)


A good experience where I feel a sense of belonging and am accepted by everyone at school.

 **My family are happy to help me settle in this year by ...** (Add any information here about how you might be able to support the school.)

- checking in with my teachers once a week
- helping out at special events
- letting my teachers know when I need extra support.

 **Other information that I would like to share with you...** (You can skip this section if you don't have any other information to add.)

If I come to school with a red wristband, it means I have had a bad morning so please look out for me.

 Resources for families: <https://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/parents/topics/autism-families/starting-school/>