



Dear Parents of Justin's Classmates,

We'd like to let you know that your child was presented with some basic information about autism in class today. As you may know, our son Justin is a student in your child's classroom and has autism. Today we led a First Grade-level discussion about autism and how it affects Justin in particular. We read a book that explains how Justin is similar to his classmates in many ways but different in other ways, some because of his autism and some because of his individuality. The book will become part of the classroom library, so please feel free to look at it the next time you are there unless it has already been checked out.

As you may know, autism is a neurological disorder that impacts a child in the areas of language and social development. Autism is also a spectrum disorder, meaning that some children with this diagnosis are more challenged than others. What this means for Justin is that while he is capable of doing First Grade work, he still struggles with expressing himself, understanding others, and playing well with other kids. With some modifications, it is our expectation that Justin can actively participate in the classroom.

Justin thoroughly enjoyed his Kindergarten experience, thanks to the support of the knowledgeable school staff and the kind families in the Kindergarten classroom. He's excited about a new school year, and looks forward to getting to know his classmates. We invite classmates on play dates often, since Justin is at his best one-on-one or in small groups. Justin takes part in a lot of typical 6-year-old activities: swimming, bowling, and Park District classes - just to name a few.

We hope that having Justin as a classmate enhances your child's education. Justin has certainly taught our family many life lessons. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you or your child have any questions about autism in general or Justin in particular. You might even want to ask Justin, since he's got a lot to say these days!

Thanks,

**Shelby N. Class
Bea Longingin-Class
(Justin's Parents)**