



Hello Emmanuel School!

My name is Natan Spira. I'm 7 years old and I am very happy to finally join your class. I met you this morning and I can't wait to come back tomorrow!

You have to know that I am a bit different from you. I have autism, which is a life long condition that prevents me from doing things like you. So here are a few things you should know about me so you can be prepared.

My vocabulary is very limited. My speech hasn't developed like yours. Instead of asking for something, I might actually help myself and grab it from you. I'm not impolite; it's just my way. Just ask me to tell you what I want but stay positive!

It is difficult for me to sit for more than 10 minutes. I always want to move around. I can sit and busy myself with an activity but listening to a whole story for example is very difficult. Assemblies won't be for me right now. We'll try later when I'm properly settled. I will sit and work with an adult at a work station in the class room but I really hope to sit with you at the same table very soon.

I can be very distressed with certain sounds; particularly the cries of a baby. That is very painful for me. If this happens, I should be able to put my special headphones on. If I don't have them, put my hands and my ears and tell me "it's ok" repeatedly and lead me somewhere quieter. I don't mind fire alarm though...

I can be a bit anxious when there is an unexpected change of plan. I am usually quite flexible but I like my routine like everybody else!

When I am happy I am flapping my hands. I can't say yet "I'm happy" but I can definitely show it! Watch for my hands flapping. It's a good sign ... I'm always smiling and laughing as well.

When I'm not happy it will be easy as well. I'll try to escape, I'll roll myself on the floor, I'll whine or even scream. As I don't have the vocabulary (apart from "I don't want") I can be quite distressed.

I looooooove to be around kids ! I love to run after a ball (although I can't play football yet). I can swim as well! I like to run. Run after me I love it! I climb, I jump; everything physical. Teach me to play with you!

I love trains, cars, planes, Lego, Disney movies, Kapla blocks and any construction game. Play with me! You can sit with me at lunchtime. I'm ok with that but hide your cookies or bread, as I'm not supposed to have gluten. I'm not allergic but gluten can make me very excited...

Please be patient with me. I might not understand what you say so keep it simple. When you ask me something make it so I can answer by yes or no. Something like "do you want xxx?"

If I can't have/do something, like pressing buttons or opening a door; don't try to explain it to me. I won't understand. Just tell me "stop" or "no". Simple!

I'm sure we'll find a way to communicate! Thank you again from your warm welcome and see you soon.