

Kids and Coins for Autism

A Guide for
Students and Teachers



**AUTISM
SPEAKS®**

It's time to listen.





The mission of Autism Speaks is to change the future for all who struggle with autism spectrum disorders. Autism Speaks is dedicated to funding global biomedical research into the causes, prevention and treatments for autism; to raising public awareness about autism and its effect on individuals, families, and society; and bringing hope to all who deal with the hardships of this disorder.



Kids and Coins for Autism

Autism is a complex disorder that affects the way a person's brain works. It affects 1 in 68 children and 1 in 42 boys. Boys are four times more likely than girls to have autism.

Even though there are many people with autism, each person is different in terms of his or her challenges, abilities and personality. Some people with autism may require a lot of help, while others need less assistance at home, school and in the community.

Often people with autism have difficulty talking or expressing their thoughts and may also have trouble learning how to play or interact with others. Some people with autism may show unusual behaviors such as making unexpected movements or avoiding eye contact. People with autism may also have strong abilities that may include knowing a lot about a favorite subject or being really good at art, music or math – just like other kids!

To increase awareness about autism, **Autism Speaks** has created "**Kids and Coins for Autism**," an initiative where students will have the opportunity to collect coins to help those affected by autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Their support will help raise funds toward public awareness, safety from wandering, bully awareness, family crisis assistance, job training, housing and research.

By participating in **Kids and Coins for Autism**, students learn that they can make a difference in the lives of others.

Thank you for being a part of
this important issue!

education

success



A photograph of a blue sign titled "Autism Speaks COIN DRIVE RESULTS". The sign lists the top 8 places and a total amount. The background of the sign shows a school building and trees.

Place	Amount	Category
1st Place	\$310.83	4th Grade
2nd Place	\$161.61	1st Grade
3rd Place	\$155.71	Kindergarten
4th Place	\$136.78	2nd Grade
5th Place	\$90.37	3rd Grade
6th Place	\$78.78	5th Grade
7th Place	\$76.44	Staff
8th Place	\$50.18	Preschool
TOTAL	\$1,060.71	

research

work

How Your Donations Help



\$100 provides FIVE families with the **Autism Speaks 100 Day Kit**, an important tool that gives resources to parents of children who have recently been diagnosed with autism.



\$250 provides THREE schools with the **Autism Speaks Community Tool Kit**, dedicated to helping all members of the school – from bus drivers to administrators – welcome a student with autism.



\$1,000 provides TWO children on the autism spectrum with **iPads**, allowing them to access apps that help advance communication and learning skills.



\$2,500 provides FOUR **scholarships for children** to attend summer camp in a fun, safe environment.



\$5,000 supports FIVE families touched by autism who are affected by a **natural disaster or a catastrophic life event** and are in need of critical living expenses.



\$10,000+ offers **numerous opportunities** in research to better understand the puzzling world of autism.



Collecting Coins

The objective of the **Kids and Coins for Autism** campaign is to inspire your classroom or school to collect as many coins as possible and then donate them to Autism Speaks. Our partnership with Coinstar makes it simple to donate your coins directly to Autism Speaks at over 11,000 kiosks in the United States! Your campaign can range from one day to an entire month depending on what works best for your school. Many schools choose to participate during Autism Awareness Month in April, but you can raise money any time of the year! In the following pages you will find resources to help you host a successful **Kids and Coins for Autism** campaign including fun ways to collect coins in your school, educational materials for teachers and even ideas to get parents involved in your project.

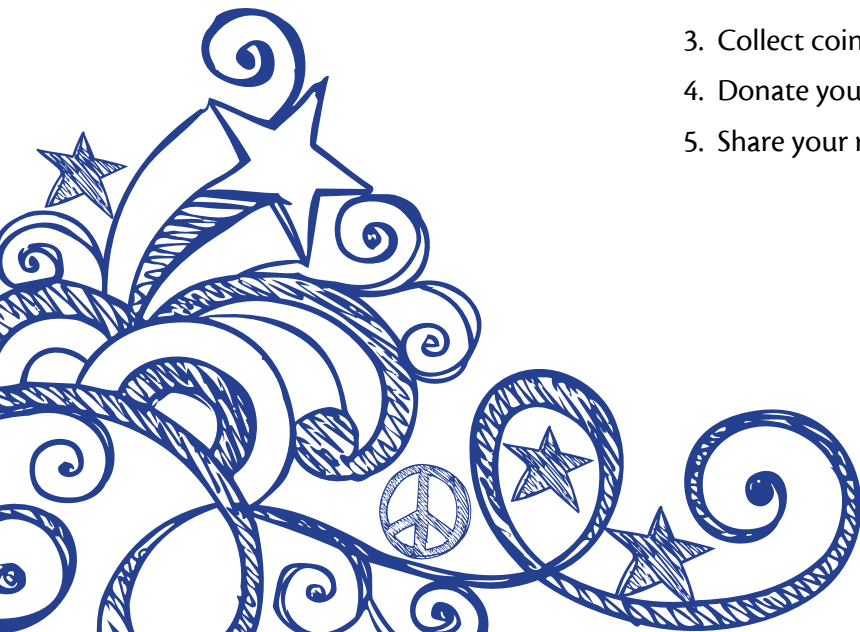
Consider setting a goal of \$1,000 for your school's campaign. Any school that raises \$1,000 will be listed on the **Autism Speaks Kids and Coins for Autism website**. Autism Speaks will also send a thank you letter to your principal and a certificate to proudly display in your school.

At the end of the school year, any school that raises \$1,000 or more will be recognized in a national Autism Speaks press release.



You can make a difference in 5 easy steps –

1. Set a date for your campaign
2. Choose the best method to collect coins for your classroom or school
3. Collect coins! Get teachers, staff and parents involved too!
4. Donate your coins at a local Coinstar location
5. Share your results with Autism Speaks!





Creative Campaign Ideas

FILL THE BOX

This is a great activity for K-5 classrooms. Have students decorate containers such as tissue boxes, jars or plastic storage containers. Use our downloadable templates or create your own. Each student collects coins in his/her container for the allotted time period. On the last day, the student who raised the most wins a prize.

PENNY WARS

This is a team competition that is great for middle school or high school students. Create your teams and designate a large donation container for each team. Then declare war! Pennies earn positive points. Silver coins and paper bills earn negative points. Teams want to collect pennies in their jars and attack the opposing teams with silver coins and paper bills to deduct from their totals. Have each grade in the school compete and award the winning grade a prize, or ask coaches, teachers, student council officers or athletes to be team mascots and have the losing mascot dye his/her hair blue, sit in a dunk tank, perform a routine at the next pep-rally, etc.

have any photos of these activities?

68 POUNDS OF CHANGE

For the 1 in 68 children with autism, collect 68 pounds of change! Put your collection container on a scale and see how fast your school can collect 68 lbs. of coins. Have a race between grades or classrooms. Can you raise 68 lbs. in 68 hours?

ESTIMATION COMPETITION

Spend a week collecting coins in one large container. At the end of the week, let students pay \$.25 to guess the number of coins that have been collected or the total amount raised. The winner gets a prize and the change gets donated to Autism Speaks.



have any photos of these activities?

TRACE THE TRACK

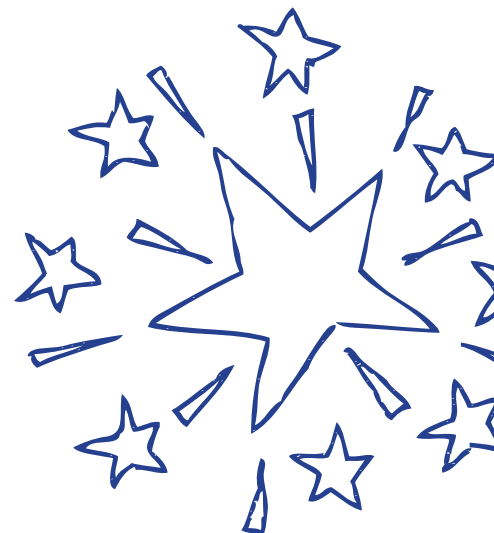
Students collect enough quarters, nickels, dimes and pennies to make a line of each around the school track. How many times can you circle the track? Take a photo and share with Autism Speaks for our website!

COIN DAYS

Designate certain days of the week to a specific coin. For example: Monday is Penny Day, Tuesday is Nickel Day, Wednesday is Dime Day, Thursday is Quarter Day and Friday is Silver Dollar Day. Consider assigning a coin to each grade or classroom to see who can raise the most on their day.

LIGHT IT UP BLUE CLASSROOM COMPETITION

How blue can you be? Decorate your classroom with blue lights, blue drawings, whatever you can think of to celebrate World Autism Awareness Day on April 2. Let students visit each classroom and vote for the best decorations with coins. The winning classroom gets a prize and the coins get donated to Autism Speaks.





Maximize your efforts



KICKOFF ASSEMBLY

Hold an all-school assembly to kick off the program. Ask Autism Speaks local representatives to attend or host it yourself. Have student leaders explain how the program will run. Provide facts about autism and the importance of understanding what autism is and the value of helping families and children affected by autism.

PUZZLE THE PRINCIPAL

Show true blue school support by having the principal in on the game. The class with the highest contribution can puzzle the Principal with a with a fun request – have him/her sing a song over the loudspeaker, dress up like a clown, get a pie in the face, etc.

AUTISM COIN 'STARS'

Recognize top students who go above and beyond during the campaign.



How to Donate through Coinstar

To count funds easily, Autism Speaks has partnered with Coinstar to be the featured charity during the month of April. Coinstar is an automatic self-service counting machine located at supermarkets nationwide. Note: Wal-Mart has machines BUT they should not be used as they do not include a 'Donation' mechanism.

For the nearest location, go to coinstar.com/kioskfinder or call 800-928-CASH

How to use Coinstar:

- Press Green button to start
- Press blue button to 'Donate' Coins (DO NOT select 'Cash Value')
- Press the 'Donate' Button again
- Enter XXXX, Autism Speaks #
- Enter YES to confirm
- Place coins in machine
- Press DONE to complete
- SAVE your receipts

Remember to fill out the Autism Speaks **"Kids and Coins for Autism" Summary Report** included in this kit and send to Autism Speaks with your Coinstar receipt in order that we can credit your school for your donation.

How to donate if you don't have Coinstar in your area:

Deposit your coins at a bank and have a check or money order made out to Autism Speaks

Fill out the attached Summary Report and send to Autism Speaks with your check or money order.



Kids and Coins for Autism *Summary Report*

Please complete this form and send along with your Coinstar* receipt to the address below

OR you may complete it online at http://bit.ly/_coins_

*** If there is not a Coinstar machine in your area, you may send a check or money order along with this form.**

Representative Name: _____

Are you a teacher, student or parent:

School name: _____

School address: _____

Are you registered for a Walk Now for Autism Speaks team that you would like this money credited to?

Walk Event City: _____

Walk Team Name: _____

Total amount donated: _____

Picture of receipt (for online form):

Representative phone: _____

Representative email: _____

Please tell us about how you raised the funds and attach any pictures you would like to share:

Please mail this form with your donation or receipt to:

Autism Speaks

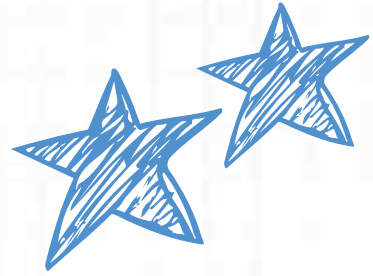
Attn: Kids and Coins for Autism

1060 State Road, Second Floor

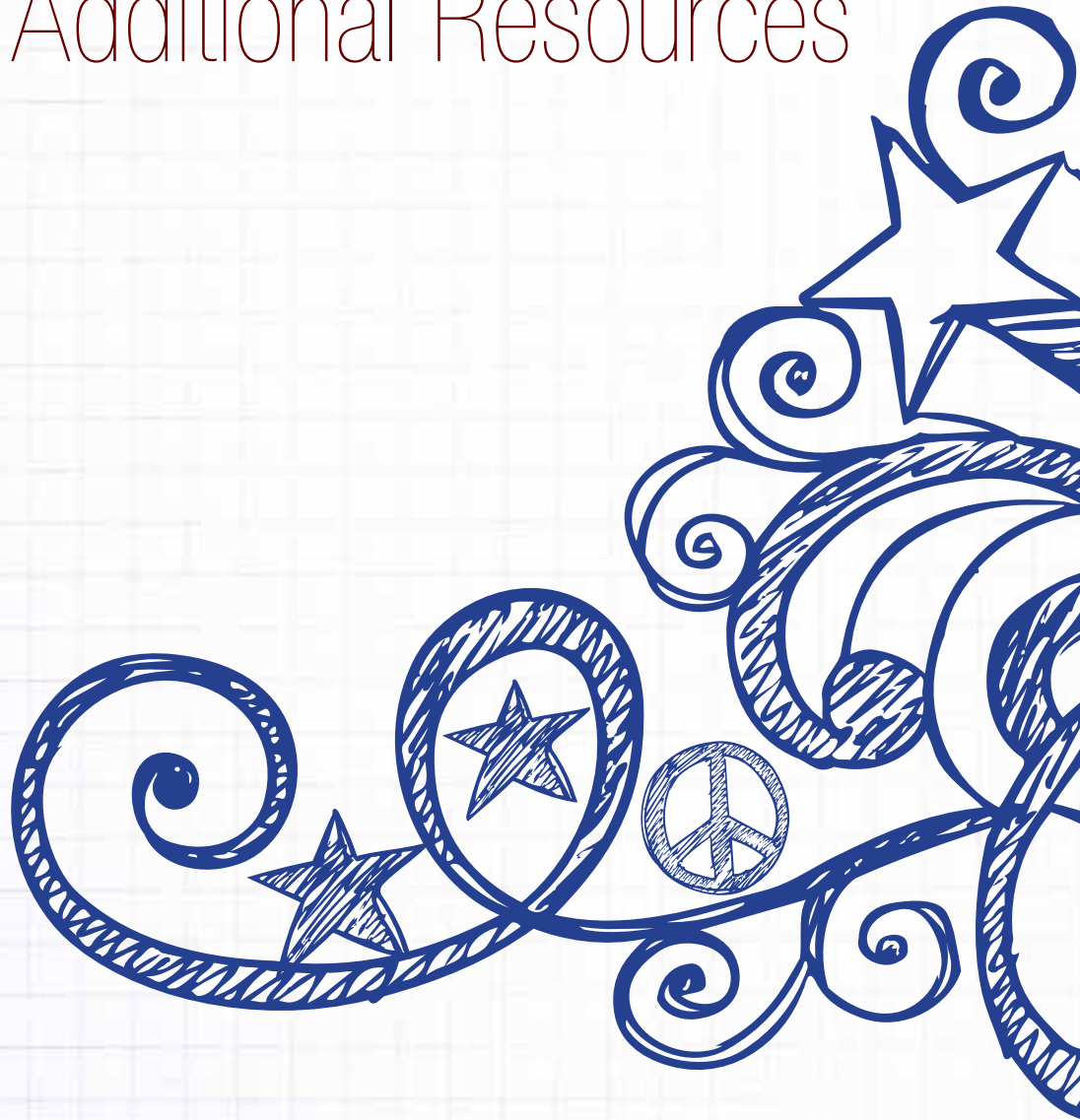
Princeton, NJ 08540

OR

Scan and email this form and your receipt to studentinitiatives@autismspeaks.org



Additional Resources



The Principal Factor for Success

Support from the Principal and administrative staff makes a big difference!

Daily Morning Announcements – Keep the enthusiasm going! Here are some suggested morning announcements that can be used each week to energize your campaign each step of the way.

Kick Off!

Today, we join with schools across the country to begin our “Kids and Coins for Autism” campaign. For the next three weeks we will be learning more about autism as well as raising funds to make a difference in the lives of families and individuals affected by autism! Our school goal is to raise \$___. Help us meet that challenge with your own classroom goal!

One Week Later

We are excited to share our “Kids and Coins for Autism” one-week update. We have raised \$___ towards our \$ _ goal. Mrs./Mr. _____ classroom has taken the lead with \$___. I hope you are enjoying the many educational activities in each of your classes and learning more about this important cause. Keep up the good work – continue to bring in your coins and watch your class thermometer grow!

Two Weeks Later

Today, marks the end of our second week “Kids and Coins for Autism” campaign. We have raised \$___ toward our \$_ goal. Our classroom leaders this week are _____ with \$_____. With only one week to go, let’s break our own record – (set up a new challenge, ex., “ the Principal’s office will start off the week with a \$_ donation.”)

Three Weeks Later

Congratulations on a great job with the “Kids and Coins for Autism” Campaign. Remember to get any last minute donations into your classroom and we will announce the winning classroom as soon as we have the totals. We hope you have enjoyed learning more about autism and feel proud of your efforts to support Autism Speaks. We are certainly proud of you!

Teachers Teaching from the Heart

Teachers, we thank you for joining in this effort to build autism awareness and raise funds in your classroom. Over the next three weeks, you will play a critical role in making this initiative a success. We have created the checklist below to assist you in these efforts.

TEACHER CHECK LIST

Review the **Puzzle Piece Educational Tool Kit** ahead of time and plan your activities based on your grade level and specific interests. Check out the index in the back of the kit for additional ideas and resources.

Create a Materials List based on your specific activities to ensure you have all the materials you need.

Show your True Blue Colors! Using the templates and thermometer chart provided, create a larger Class Collection Box and hang your thermometer on the wall. Set your heights for donating the largest amount of any classroom!

Involve Parents. Use the sample parent letter or write your own. Have each child create their own collection box to use at home.

Challenge Students Each Day. As part of your educational activities, remind children to bring change in their box, by asking parents, visitors and siblings to contribute – perhaps donating part of their allowance or doing odd jobs around the house for coins. (Please note: Containers are not meant for door to door solicitation)

Focus on the Mission. Let students know that their donations can make a real difference in the lives of people affected by autism. Donations are used to create educational toolkits like the one you are using and 60,000 more, to raise awareness, provide scholarships and camp opportunities, teach children to swim, help teens get jobs and address housing needs for adults.

Make it Real. We have many stories about real families that you are welcome to talk about. Visit autismspeaks.org/blog to read some of the amazing stories about our community. Use the activities in the Educational Tool Kit or create a Quiet Zone to help children better understand.

Track Your Success - Count coins daily and keep a running total. Mark your progress on the thermometer.

Create excitement – use the many creative ideas to build excitement and friendly competition!

Collecting Coins – create a Coin Committee to collect and deposit coins weekly at a Coinstar location or local bank. Be sure to save all of your receipts to submit at the end of your campaign so that we can ensure proper credit to your school.

Wrap Up – Deposit remaining donations and submit Summary Form to Autism Speaks at Autism Speaks, Attn: Kids and Coins for Autism, 1060 State Road, Second Floor, Princeton, NJ 08540 OR scan and email this form and your receipt to studentinitiatives@autismspeaks.org

Motivate and Thank our Parents!

Don't forget to engage parents. Send a message to parents asking them to join in our campaign by supporting their children. Have children create an invitation and invite parents to attend your classroom on a day when you are having an educational autism awareness activity. Here is a sample program announcement letter that you may choose to use.

Dear Parent or Guardian,

In support of **April Autism Awareness Month**, the children and faculty at our school will engage in an educational and service-oriented activity to better understand the fastest growing developmental issue in the United States – autism. In 2014, the Center for Disease Control reported that 1 in every 68 children in the United States is diagnosed on the autism spectrum. More children are diagnosed with autism than with AIDS, pediatric cancer and juvenile diabetes combined. To date, there is still no solid answer as to why or how children are affected.

To help increase awareness, we will participate in the **Autism Speaks' Kids and Coins for Autism** program, a learning initiative in which children will gain a better understanding of what autism is and how it affects many of their fellow students and friends. In addition to educational activities, children will have the opportunity to collect spare coins to help those affected by autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

This is the first year that Kids and Coins for Autism is being presented as a nationwide effort and we are thrilled to be a participant. Many of our teachers will use this opportunity to build autism awareness activities into their lesson plans through fun, interactive readings and class exercises. Each child will be asked to create a colorful puzzle container of their very own and to fill it with spare change around the house. It is our hope that your child will take pride in filling the container and in helping families and individuals affected by autism.

We hope that during Kids and Coins for Autism, you will support your child in this activity and speak with them about the value of helping others. Then join in the fun by searching under the couch cushions, in old coat pockets and deep in the car seats for lost coins. Please know that your child's contribution, no matter how large or small makes a big difference in solving the complex puzzle of autism but is not for door-to-door collection.

Should you wish to make a personal donation, you may send cash or a check payable to Autism Speaks and we thank you for your generosity. You may also make an online donation with a debit or credit card at autismspeaks/kidsandcoins.org.

Thanking you in advance for your support of this important program!

Regards,

School Representative

P.S. As the program progresses, ask your child what they are learning about autism. We think they will make you proud! Thank you again for joining in this worthwhile cause.

Puzzle Piece Project and Autism Awareness Month Tool Kit

Autism Awareness Month is a time to educate your community about autism and **Light It Up Blue!** Spreading autism awareness in schools is a great way to celebrate April and promote inclusion and acceptance in the classroom and beyond.

The Puzzle Piece Project Tool Kit is a fun and interactive educational tool kit for grade levels K-12 designed to increase students' understanding of autism during Autism Awareness Month. Developed by a special education teacher for teachers, the tool kit includes age-appropriate lesson plans, extended activities, materials and relevant internet resources.

The Puzzle Piece Project Tool Kit includes the following materials:

- Grade Level Lesson Plan
- Internet Resource Guide and Book List
- Materials Index
- Puzzle Piece Template
- Discussion Guide for specific high school reading suggestions
- Request Form for follow up lessons/activities from your Special Education Team (see Materials Index)
- FAQs samples of questions asked by kids

Download the Puzzle Piece Project and Autism Awareness Month Tool Kit here
<written out link for print version>!

For more information about supporting students with autism in schools, check out the Autism Speaks School Community Tool Kit!

Autism Speaks would like to thank Janelle Franco, MA, for developing this curriculum and providing it to Autism Speaks in time for Autism Awareness Month.

Frequently Asked Questions

How is the money spent?

Program service dollars are spent on helping families and individuals affected by autism through research, family services, community grants, and advocacy. Autism Speaks provides more than 60,000 tool kits to families, including the 100 Day Tool Kit developed to assist parents of newly diagnosed children through the first critical few months.

Can we donate more than coins?

Yes! All donations – coin, dollars or checks are welcomed.
Checks should be made payable to “Autism Speaks.”

Can we donate the funds we raise to a specific program or to a local family?

Funds raised on behalf of a national program cannot be designated to a particular family. However, funds are available to families in times of crisis and hardship. If you know a family that is in need of financial support, please have them email familyservices@AutismSpeaks.org.

Why do students have to make their own containers?

We believe that allowing the child to create a personalized container gives them more pride and ownership of their efforts and helps to carry their coins back and forth from home and school. Please note that containers are not meant for door-to-door collection.

Should we wish to send in a donation, where should we mail it?

Autism Speaks, Attn: Kids and Coins for Autism,
1060 State Road, Second Floor, Princeton, NJ 08540

Who do I contact if I have questions?

You may contact us at studentinitiatives@autismspeaks.org