What is an “All about me” book?

- User-friendly description of your child, written from your child’s perspective
- Helps a new person get to know the most important information about your child
- Particularly helpful for transitions to new classrooms, teachers, therapists
- May have an “autism awareness” component
- Also helpful for doctors, babysitters, neighbors, etc. who may interact with your child
Background/About Me and My Family

- Introduction
- Who is your child?
- Who is your family?
- Pertinent child and family history
Do you know autism?

- Keep it reader-friendly
- Autism is child-specific
- Three areas of involvement
- Focus on skill over need
- Dispel rumors
- There are still a lot of unanswered questions
- Autism is treatable—positive outlook results in positive outcomes
How I communicate

- Account for all current forms and functions
- Encourage readers to model, prompt, accept, and reinforce communication regardless of form (multi-modal communication)
- Include information about emergent language skills (i.e., “I’m learning how to....”)
- Indicate discrepancies between receptive (understand) and expressive (produce) communication
- Stress that behavior is communication
Things I can do for myself

- Reminds readers not to over-prompt (they may inadvertently have low expectations)
- Creates a high level of expectation in the new environment from the beginning
- Focuses on your child’s strengths (i.e., “I have already learned how to...”)
- Mention emergent skills (i.e., “I’m learning how to...”)

Things I need help with

- Account for all domains (communication, self-help, social, academic, motor)
- Stress the importance of least restrictive prompts (i.e., providing “just enough” help)
- Suggest prompt forms and frequencies
- Remind readers that your child is learning and that each opportunity to practice is one step closer to independence (i.e., your child can learn to do this by him/herself!)
Things I Like/Things that motivate me

- Include a short rationale for reinforcement (e.g., motivation keeps me on task, helps me learn faster)
- Suggest reinforcers that include food, drink, activities, toys, privileges, sensory items, etc.
- Suggest reinforcers that are free as well as those that cost money
- Indicate if you are willing to donate/supply reinforcers
- Explain the token economy if your child has one
Sensory considerations

- Explain the rationale (e.g., helps me stay alert/focus, keeps my sensory system in check so I can concentrate)
- Indicate that sensory time can be brief, but should be frequent
- Suggest activities that are easy to implement in the environment, don’t require special equipment, and can be done independently if possible

“I can’t be ‘on’ if I don’t have the chance to be ‘off!’”
Medical information

- Allergies (food and environmental)
- Past surgeries that might be important
- Medications, including dosage and timing
- Dietary requirements, if appropriate
- Any health conditions, such as asthma or diabetes
Other things you might want to include

- Mealtime behaviors
- Sleeping behaviors (if your child naps in school)
- What my parents would like me to learn this year
- Motor skills and self-care skills
- Academic skills
  - What I know/can do
  - What I am working on learning right now
- What you can do when I get upset
Other important information

- Any other information that the reader needs to know
- May serve as a summary/conclusion
- Should end with a positive statement (e.g., “My family and I are excited about the new school year, I know I will learn a lot in your class, you’re gonna love me,” etc.)
Don’t forget

- Include photos of your child, especially engaged in his/her favorite activities, surrounded by family and friends
- Each topic should be one page
- Use bullets to keep it brief and to the point
- Consider updating your book every six months to one year
- Consider involving family and friends in the creation of your book to get their perspectives
CARD can help!

- UF Center for Autism and Related Disabilities
  2046 NE Waldo Road
  Suite 3200
  Gainesville, FL 32609

352-273-0581

www.card.ufl.edu