

Hi! This is a letter from **Ethan's** Mom & Dad.

Ethan is in **Mrs. Rambo's Grade 2** class this year. We wanted to let you know that Ethan has autism.

In many ways Ethan is just like any other seven year-old. He is a very good-natured, funny and active little boy. He loves to play tag, visit the playground, go swimming, read books and play with trains. His favourite shows are Thomas the Tank Engine, Toy Story and Bugs Bunny. He has a big brother, Ayden, who is in grade 5 at John Muir and a little sister, Samy, who is in preschool.



Although Ethan has a warm and sunny disposition, he does have some behavioural challenges that you might like to be aware of. It is our hope to create some understanding for you and your child about these challenges.

- First, **Ethan has a hard time understanding spoken language.** He can express more language than he can actually understand. This makes relating to other children in a simple conversation difficult for him. This is especially true if more than one child is speaking to him. He is much better at one-on-one. So even though Ethan wants to play with his classroom friends and does try to join in their play, it's difficult for him to know how to stay connected with them in a conversation. We are very appreciative of the warm gestures and kind efforts of the children in his classroom as he learns to become a good playmate. And a big "thank you" to all the students who say "Hi Ethan" and "Good-bye Ethan" – each day. That is really important and helps him learn good social skills!
- Secondly, **some loud sounds are upsetting to Ethan,** like the school bell in the morning, which is why you might see him covering his ears. The gymnasium is also very 'noisy' for him with all the screams and echoes.
- When **Ethan is anxious he will make noises, whistle or start repeating lines from his favourite movies.** Although this seems a bit silly, it makes Ethan feel better. Things that make him anxious are too many people talking at the same time or having to sit quiet for a long time in class and listen (this is hard work for him). We know he has to learn to do both better and we appreciate your patience with our (and the Teaching Assistant's ~ "Mrs. C") efforts here.
- Lastly, **Ethan loves to move** and enjoys running, jumping and climbing because it makes him feel relaxed. It is an important part of keeping him feeling good. And, he is very quick on his feet – making him a great player in a game of tag!

As parents of Ethan, our hopes and dreams are similar to those you have for your children. We dream that one day, Ethan will be living on his own, have a job, friends, and be a contributing member of the community. We are doing everything we can to ensure that he has, and will have, a fulfilling and independent life.

We thank you in advance for your patience and understanding as we pursue these goals for Ethan in **Mrs. Rambo's** class. Thank you for taking the time to get a better understanding of our son, Ethan, and his special needs. It is very much appreciated. If you have any questions about Ethan, please feel free to grab us in the hall or drop us a line at ouremail@shaw.ca.

Sincerely,
Sherri & David ☺