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[MUSIC]

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This is Tell Me Your Story special edition, where we address relevant topics for our community. The topic for this special edition is about autism.

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Hello, everyone. This is Edgar Kley Filho from the Equal Opportunity Office. My pronouns are he/him/his. Today, we are talking to Ellen Shapiro-Smith from the Climenko Fellowship Staff, who will tell us about what she knows, the stereotypes and myth around autism, and all her experience about that. Thank you for joining us, Ellen, and please, let's go. Let's talk about this.

[00:00:55]

Thank you, Edgar, for doing this. I think there need to be a lot more education of the general public on what autism is and what it isn't. I'm happy to be here with you. When we were talking about this, the first question we wanted to talk about was, how would you define autism to someone who has never met somebody with autism?

[00:01:14]

Yes.

[00:01:16]

This is something I can't even remember when I didn't know what autism was. I've been advocating for my son for 20 years, so it's part of my lifestyle and part of our lives that autism is the way it is every day. The thing that I like to stress is that autism is a different wiring of somebody's brain. Their brain works differently than other people. It's not missing anything, it's not damaged. It's just wired in a different way. I can also tell you other things it's not, it is not an illness. It's not caused by vaccines. It's not the same as down syndrome. It doesn't mean someone with autism has a low IQ. It cannot be cured, although symptoms can disappear with treatment, and you don't outgrow it. You have it for life, and it's usually something that forms in utero when your brain is being structured, it's structured slightly differently. The definition that I found that suited it best for me was autism is a neurological developmental disorder that affects how people interact with others, affects communication, affects how they learn and affects how they behave. When you go through a diagnostic process, there are three things that the diagnostician will look for. Is there a delay in language in the child? Are there any repetitive behaviors? Do they have an obsessive focus on order and routine? It's funny, I know a lot of people on the spectrum, and some of them have some of these characteristics and some of them don't, and I can't imagine how they came up with this diagnosis because the field, the spectrum is very large.

[00:02:54]

Very wide in all the symptoms that they offer.

[00:02:57]

Yes. Like, my son has a little bit more things in this area and a little bit less things in that area.

[00:03:02]

Yeah. First, what's your son's name?

[00:03:06]

My son's name is Gabriel.

[00:03:07]

How old is he?

[00:03:08]

He's 20.

[00:03:08]

Twenty.

[00:03:11]

How does Autism manifest in your specific child?

[00:03:14]

This is interesting. Gabriel, his diagnosis was technically PDD-NOS, which doesn't exist in the diagnostic manual anymore. It stood for pervasive developmental delay not otherwise specified, which means nothing. [LAUGHTER] It means nothing. It means he's a little weird, or he's developmentally delayed in some ways that we can't specifically put in any other category. He has an amazing memory. He has a bunch of special interests like dinosaurs and manga and video games and Japanese culture, which doesn't sound different from any other typical 20-year-old. He loves science fiction. I think the things that make him seem very different from other people are his first and foremost, sensory processing disorder. He's very aware of his environment. The lights, are they too bright? Do they make a noise? Are they buzzing? Are they flickering? The chair. What is the chair made of? Is it fabric? Is it hard? Is it wood? Is it metal? Is there a rug on the floor? Is there white noise in the room? Is there someone slamming doors? Can you hear cars going by in the background? One of the things for him is all of these sounds are at the same level of amplification, so he can't really tune anything out. If you're in a classroom of 30 people and the kids are talking and the chairs are moving around and the teachers talking, and there's, I don't know, a film trip or something going on in the background, he hears all of that all at once. It overwhelms his nervous.

[00:04:50]

Be overwhelming.

[00:04:52]

He occasionally will just shut down. It just it overloads his system to the point where he has to go someplace else quiet or he'll cry. This was when he was a little bit young. He still has difficulties like being in a crowd, he'll wear headphones or he put his hands over his ears. It depends on where we are. That makes it difficult to go see a basketball game or to go to the museum.

[00:05:18]

Go to a music concert if it's too loud.

[00:05:20]

Yes. Go to a concert. This weekend, I went to this Halloween party. I just wanted to see what it was like. I didn't bring him with me. But there were kids running all over the place, and there was music, and there was a DJ and there was a splash pad, and all the stuff that I was overwhelmed. He would have been like, I can't even get out of the car. I don't want to go anywhere near this. He can't tune things out so that he can be in his own space and think about what's going on and what he needs to do. Everything's coming at him all the time.

[00:05:45]

Tell me if I'm wrong, just listening to what you are describing and the way that all the sounds and visual and maybe even smell and everything else comes all together, we tend to just ignore them.

[00:06:01]

Yes.

[00:06:01]

They somehow look like all of them come at once, and he needs to pay attention to each of them and how they are bothering his sensors in a way. Is that more or less?

[00:06:14]

I can hear the light buzzing, but I don't really care. I'm not paying attention to it. My chair is a little bit wobbly, but I don't really care about that either. It's a little bit warm in here because I'm dressed for 30 degree weather and it's 90 degrees outside. Those things, I can ignore them and focus on what I'm doing with you here. For him, it would be distracting the whole time. He'd hear the noise, and be like, what's that noise? Just would not be able to focus on what's going on because everything is equally important. Does that make sense?

[00:06:41]

That's what I'm trying to capture. It feels like he wants to define whatever is coming, where it's coming from. It feels like they would like to give some attention to that to say, oh, this is this.

[00:06:56]

Yes.

[00:06:56]

Why are we kind of, oh, I hear this, I don't care less.

[00:07:00]

We put it on the back burner, and we don't pay attention to it. Everything for him is in the forefront. Yes, the light's making noise. Yes, the chair feels funny. Yes, there's a carpet on the floor. Yes, I'm a little bit hot all the time. If you want to keep those things in your head as these things are all bothering me, while you're trying to do math or have a conversation with someone, it's impossible.

[00:07:19]

That's why it becomes overwhelming, and the reaction would be go away, try to make it to stop.

[00:07:26]

Hide under the table or put his hands over his ears or just go someplace is.

[00:07:29]

To try to stop the noise.

[00:07:30]

Sometimes that will happen to him when you ask him too many questions. Not necessarily all of this stuff from the outside, but if I say, how was school today? Who did you sit next to at lunch, and did anyone like your new haircut? He'd be like, what?

[00:07:42]

Too many at the same time.

[00:07:43]

Like, Mom, why are you asking me so many questions? I can't do this and then doesn't want to talk.

[00:07:46]

He needs to go specific one by one.

[00:07:49]

Very slowly. He has some expressive and receptive language delays, which is part of the diagnosis. He needs a little bit more time than a neurotypical person to answer some questions. He's very thoughtful and has very good answers, but it takes a while for him to find them in his brain, and then it takes a while to get from his brain to his mouth. Then he has to coordinate his mouth to get that out, and part of the problem with that is that his brain works very quickly and his mouth works very slowly. Trying to get it all working at the same time, he'll stutter sometimes, or he'll just blurt something out, which sounds like everything all at once. I don't know. I think his preferred way of communicating is through writing. He's very good at writing, very clear at writing, very thoughtful, very aware of his feelings and other people's feelings and the world around him when he writes. When he speaks, it's a lot of anxiety that prevents him from saying what he wants to say. The sensory processing is a problem. His fine motor skills aren't great, like manipulating pens, he does not write very well. I would consider him to be dysgraphic, where his writing, it's illegible.

[00:09:04]

What's the best mechanism for him to write?

[00:09:06]

Typewriter or computer.

[00:09:07]

Typewriter or computer.

[00:09:08]

In school, he always carried a laptop with him. He could do everything through laptop because his writing was just impossible. He can't even read his own writing.

[00:09:16]

It feels like a more modern way of communicating when you are typing or this time of the day handwriting.

[00:09:26]

You don't need the fine motor skills to grab a pencil in the same way. Grabbing a pencil was difficult for him, and we got him all these special pencils. It's not necessarily the grip, but it's the amount of pressure. That's called proprioception. The amount of pressure you need to put when you're writing to make the paper. He would hold his pencil, you can't see this because it's recorded. He would hold his pencil like this.

[00:09:47]

From the top of the pen.

[00:09:48]

From the eraser end and try and write with it like that. I don't know why. To try, it just didn't make sense to him. To grip the pencil at the end where the lead is very tightly doesn't make sense to him. It's always a light grip. Then typing, it's a light touch.

[00:10:05]

It's a light touch.

[00:10:07]

He doesn't touch type in terms of knowing where things are. He does hunt and peck, but he's way faster and better at that than he ever was with the pencil.

[00:10:14]

Sometimes I feel like what they are showing us is sometimes what meditation tries to tell us. Slow down, think about things first, process things before breathing. Isn't that what you try to do when you are stressed and overwhelmed with things?

[00:10:30]

Yes, and I think that some of us can adapt better than others.

[00:10:33]

Exactly.

[00:10:34]

Multitasking, he can't multitask at all. I multitask all the time.

[00:10:39]

That would be my next question. [LAUGHTER] Because it is in your experience with your child, knowing all this now that you are living with your child for 20 years.

[00:10:55]

In your own way to communicate the way that we learn, the average way of humans communicate in that way, also, you need to slow down to understand because I'm saying this because we both, when we sit down, when we have time to sit down and talk, we talk for two hours easily non stop about everything that we want to and really fast paced. When someone has that, that needs that timing to be able to express themselves. In a regular basis, living the life that I know that you do dealing with work and everything else and around, you have to s step back and also.

[00:11:38]

I usually text him.

[00:11:41]

We text each other during the day or write emails. That's a lot easier for me and for him. I think when I talk to him, like, if I pick him up somewhere, he comes to work with me occasionally, and when we drive home together, I live an hour away. Sometimes we'll talk, but it'll be like, so what do you like best about the day? He'll say one thing and, like, that's it for the hour. We'll listen to some music or he'll say, remember that story I told you? Well, I want to tell you one more thing. He needs a lot of space around when he talks. I can't say, like, Well, we have to go to the supermarket on the way home, and then we're going to be late late for coming home. Then when we get home, I need to wash the dishes and I'm going to do laundry, no. It's very small chunks of information if I want him to answer me. He won't answer me if I do along, like, what are we doing and this is what's happening later? Like it's just too much information. He'll just say, I give up. Very small tiny baby steps in terms of providing information and expecting him to provide back. Texting is really the best way to do it. He text me these long things. I was thinking this, and then I thought that and I wasn't sure if I should do this, and I talked to this other person and I thought about maybe that. He'll text me these long things, and I'll be like, Okay, well, let's talk about it. We'd go back and forth over text. I think he would be a wonderful writer, and that's what he wants to do. It's independent. It doesn't have any type of time schedule. He's very good, and we're trying to encourage him, like, go publish some stuff, go submit your work. He's very shy.

[00:13:21]

He's good about description.

[00:13:22]

Very good. He's very good. He uses funny snarky words. What was the other day? Something he said somebody once asked him, like, who you named after? He said, unbeknownst to my parents. I was named after an angel. It's like, he comes up with this funny and he writes that way too.

[00:13:38]

Beautiful.

[00:13:38]

It's really funny the way he chooses to describe things, and he's got a little tongue cheek sense of humor, which is also like, one of the stereotypes about autism is that people with autism don't have a sense of humor or they don't understand the jokes. But he has a great sense of humor. He loves it.

[00:13:52]

Now that you gave me a segue there. When you say that they don't have a sense of humor, don't identify jokes, emotions in general. Joke is a different way. What about anger or the tone of your voice?

[00:14:08]

He's very, very sensitive to tone. He knows what's going on. Sometimes people say that autism is too much empathy, a person that has too much empathy, not somebody that doesn't have enough so that they can't understand what other people are thinking or doing. He knows what's going on with me. He knows [OVERLAPPING] the tone of my voice and by how quickly I speak, if I sigh, like, he understands those things.

[00:14:36]

He copying details and expressions.

[00:14:39]

He is very emotional when we watch movies. He will see a child that's crying, and he will cry or he understands people's emotions. He might not understand motivation for doing something? Like, I remember once he had an assignment about the question was, he had to write about this question. If one of your friends wanted to do something dangerous, would you encourage them or discourage them? He said, I don't know how to answer that question. What do they mean? I said, Okay, if you knew that I was afraid of dogs, but I was going to go try and pet a dog that looked like it wasn't very happy, would you encourage me to pet the dog or discourage me from petting the dog? Like if he could put it in a concrete thing he could understand it. But the abstract he's not able to pull out something his own example to try and put himself in that position. But if somebody falls down and he sees them and they're crying, it's going to help them up and say, Oh my God, are you okay?

[00:15:41]

It sounds like maybe it's difficult to explain emotion, but not difficult to feel the emotion.

[00:15:49]

Yes.

[00:15:50]

He empathizes with the person. If the person is crying, there is an immediate connection there for the crying because that might mean something special that he doesn't need necessarily to explain.

[00:16:01]

Well, he in particular, I'm not sure. The only autism I know is his. I don't know. But I know some of the stereotypes, but it's like I'm trying to think, sometimes when he comes to visit me, there's birds that have flown into the window of Griswold, and they end up on the ground. They fall in, they know, hit their heads or whatever, and they die and he'll say, Look at this. What are we going to do? I'm like, Well, nothing really and like, Well, can we bury it? He's got this a very sweet, innocent type of not wanting to harm things in the world. But he also, I'm trying to think of some confusing things. We're trying to find a job for him and he's a smart kid. He likes to organize, he loves organizing things. He gets when people are BSing him. He is a complete straight shooter, really does not like pretense of any kind. Any type of fakey fake small talk, he hates that, and he'll be like, Stop patronizing me. He just doesn't. But on the other hand, he also, like in a grocery store, if he was working in a grocery store and someone come up to him and said, Can you help me find the sugar? I don't think he would know what to do. I don't know how to explain this. Like, some of his thought patterns don't sync up with daily living skills. When he makes dinner, he makes dinner once a week at home so that we can make sure if he lives by himself, he'll be able to feed himself. I'm home, and he makes spaghetti and meatballs every Wednesday. For the first three months, he would say, What size pot do I need? What size pot do I need for the spaghetti? How do I cook this? Like, every time. Now he can just do it without me and I'm like, thank you and this is really wonderful. I love it when you make dinner. But in the beginning, I don't know what size pot to use, big or small. What does big mean and how much spaghetti and just the whole planning of it was very difficult. Still those kinds of new planning ideas. Like, if you say to him, Can you, wash the kitchen table, he'd be like, Well, what do I wash it with? I'm like, Well, there's a sponge. You could try that. There's paper towels. He just doesn't know how to think in those ways. I don't really know how to explain what that is. If you give him a task, like, can you sort these crayons into whatever color they need to be or can you reach out books at a library? He did that when he was in high school. He loved it. It was fine. It would be difficult for him to I'm trying to think would be hard. Come into work like this, go into the elevator, say hi to someone in the elevator, go to his office, say hi to all of his coworkers, turn on his computer, start looking at emails and figure out what he needs to do. That would be incredibly overwhelming. That's what I do every day. But he would be like, getting to the elevator, and that would be it. As far as he could go, it would be too many things that are stimulating. Would prevent him, I think, from further expanding energy to complete some task. I don't know if this is making sense I'm trying to.

[00:19:14]

It does make sense. My following up question would be, so if you think about him working somewhere, you mentioned the library. You mentioned selecting things or organizing things would be one of them.

[00:19:29]

Yes.

[00:19:31]

The instruction would be if there was, for example, a line where you need to do mechanical things like a let's suppose car parts. Let's suppose, like, a Ford at the time of that. In each section, this is what you need to do. If it's in that circumstance, would it be something that would be?

[00:19:51]

No.

[00:19:55]

He worked at Whole Foods for two weeks, and his job was fronting which is you make sure all the merchandise on the shelves, is in the front so people can reach it. He would go in all the aisles and say, this can of beans or whatever. They're too far back, and he would bring them all forward. He loved that, moving everything forward. But it's not just one thing, it was a variety. It was the cookie aisle one day and another aisle, it was the bread aisle, and then it was the chips aisle. He'd liked putting things in order. If he was working in a car factory, I think he would be like, putting the whole car together himself.

[00:20:31]

I see. Instead of staying stationary in one place just one piece everything.

[00:20:35]

He would be like how did these fit all together to make it look neat? Or where is it supposed to go? When he lived with me and he was eight, I share custody so his room was only his half the time. The other time he lived with his dad. I had a lot of my art supplies in his bedroom. I would sometimes go in there and he would have taken them and lined them all up by size or take a couple of different I had some molds for cement and he put a thimble inside each one, and then he'd find a pompom ball or something and then stick one of those in each thing. He just did this organizing thing to make little I don't know what, groups of things. That's what he would do for fun when he couldn't sleep.

[00:21:17]

I can tell you thinking about that, my niece who lives in Brazil. Her son, we say Dave now might be seven, eight years, if I'm not mistaken, I'm such a bad uncle. But when he was diagnosed, I think he was two-years-old, maybe three, if I'm not mistaken. I might be completely mistaken because I'm far from there for so long. But one thing that you notice as we travel there, my partner bought a plastic bag, a transparent kind of full of farm animals.

[00:21:58]

Yes, keep going.

[00:22:00]

Then he gave it to him. Then he put all of them in a specific line and if you move one outside. He was not communicating yet. But he would go back there, just look and then put them right back.

[00:22:16]

I'm really glad you brought that up because one of the things that I took notes on is that in retrospect, this was before Gabriel was diagnosed. When we would take him to daycare, the daycare ladies would say, you can always tell when Gabriel was here because the farm animals are lined up all around the classroom. I didn't think anything of that. It wasn't until I read it somewhere in a book, I think, after he was diagnosed like five years ago, that that's a common symptom is that the kids line up their toys. There was another little boy who was a couple of years behind Gabriel in daycare who also lined up his toys. I'm like, I didn't know it at the time, but I was like, I want to talk to his mom and see what she's dealing with and how is that going to work for him. Does that mean he's autistic? He also lined up his trucks when he played with cars. He lined them up on the back of the couch. That was the way he played with them. It wasn't like, let's drive the cars around and race each other. They were just always a parking lot.

[00:23:10]

There is a meaning for them, because if you try to alter that.

[00:23:13]

Yes, he'll put it back.

[00:23:15]

He never made any fuss out of it, but he would make sure even when you try to squeeze them all together and move one just to know this. He would see immediately there was something out of order and he would go there, open them and put exactly the same place that used to be which I think that was beautiful.

[00:23:32]

The only thing I can categorize that as is sticking to a routine. There's a routine order. The cow, the horse, the donkey, the chicken. Put a pig in there? Pig doesn't belong. Pig belongs at the end. It's like that when we used to run errands, I'd say, we have to go to the supermarket and I'd be like crap, we have to go get gas first. No, usually we're going to the supermarket, we can't go get gas. Like who cares? But he'd be very upset if I didn't tell him ahead of time. I forgot. Gas first, then the supermarket. It just didn't feel right for him. That's very much a problem for him, too, that he's not very flexible. He has the same thing for breakfast every day. He wants to go to school driving the same route every day. He wants to see the same people he normally sees on certain days. Our custody was Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, he was at his dad's, and then it came to me Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and then there was an odd weekend that he would come with me. But now it's every Friday, one week with me, one week with his dad. That was a big switch up after he graduated. He was like, I can't keep track of this. Where am I? Whose house am I in? I don't like this. It's similar. It's less of a problem than it used to be because we switched twice during a week. When we moved house, we moved into our house two years ago. I don't like this house. It feels really weird. I don't know what to do. I don't know where to sit. Can we go back to the old house? Everything here is weird. The chairs are weird. The refrigerator is weird. The floor feels funny, the light comes in weird. My bed's facing a different way. He just could not get comfortable. How do you help that? It's weird for me, too, but I can suppress it.

[00:25:26]

Right now, after two years, is he more comfortable?

[00:25:29]

Yes, much more comfortable. I think we all are. Everything was weird for me, too, when we moved.

[00:25:35]

But again whatever it is we call, we either internalize or you just shove away.

[00:25:42]

Something.

[00:25:43]

We do something just to pretend that's not weird for a quick turn around.

[00:25:48]

Yes we pretend. We go, well, that's the way it is and then we move on. We go this refrigerator, the door opens the reverse of my old one. Well, but he's like, no, you have to change the refrigerator the other way. The distress that he experiences from things out of order is exaggerated. I'm distressed, too, but I'm like, it doesn't really matter. For him, it's very important, or it takes a lot to get used to it until things feel comfortable. This whole thing about the diagnosis of obsessive focus on order and routine. That is very important to him, but I can't understand why. To me, I'm like, it's frustrating because you can say, just use the refrigerator the way it is. What's the problem? It is a problem. I try to understand him, but I can't because it's not a problem for me and he doesn't understand why I'm not upset about it. It can be very frustrating.

[00:26:44]

Because that's what I think it is frustrating both ways, because we have a way to deal with life in a way that you think is right and just deal with it and they have a different way to see things.

[00:26:58]

Who says who's right?

[00:26:59]

Exactly. Why can't you see the way that I'm seeing which is interesting.

[00:27:02]

I'm trying to think I have an enormous amount of patience with him than I do for other people, knowing that he is differently abled and not neurotypical. Recently, this was last week, I wanted to teach him how to do line dancing. I do some line dancing. I learned to dance it was very easy. I'm kike, I can teach it to him in five minutes and then we'll do it together, and it'll be fun. It only had three steps. I taught him the three steps and I said, these are the three steps. You do the first one for five counts, and you do the next one for whatever counts. He couldn't do it. He was like, I don't know when to change my feet. I don't know when to do the move. I don't know when the music's coming on. I don't understand this. What I probably should have done is taught him one step and played music with that one step. Then a week later tried that one step again and then maybe try the second step. For me, I'm just like, I can follow somebody. I know how to do it. I was so very frustrated. Like, it's really not that hard. Come on, can't you do it? But it's like he just couldn't. His brain doesn't work the way my brain works. He needed a different way of absorbing it.

[00:28:21]

My God, I'm six-years-old almost, and I'm still now learning more with some folks that I have relationships with about ADD, for example. We tend to stereotype everything or believe that our neurotypical way of seeing things are the right ones. I'm not judging you first of all. I'm just saying this because you are doing something, you are seeing things, and you are adjusting. You just said, I'm much more patient with him than I am with regular people in general. The same, I'm learning now with other folks that I know for sure are diagnosed, that it's not my timing, it's not the way that I see things. If I want to have and I care about that person, I need to respect their timing because it means a lot. But it's an adjustment, I guess.

[00:29:24]

I think as we age, we have more humility. We go, what's it like to be in that person's shoes? They grew up without a parent or, like, we are more accepting of other people's differences as we age. I think that autism, it's not a visual disability. You can't tell from looking at somebody whether they're autistic or not. You're only able to tell if you have a type of interaction with them. We approach people and we interact with them the way we expect to interact with them as if they were neurotypical, and then something just doesn't work right or they don't respond the way we expect them to, and we step back and go, I don't know what that's about, but let me try something else or let me just wait. Rather than, hey, are you going to answer me? Why are you ignoring me? Or what's the problem? I often have said, I would give anything to be in his head for 15 minutes because I don't know what's going on in there and I can only assume and tentatively go in certain directions and see how he responds.

[00:30:31]

Social interactions at school when he was younger were difficult. He's like, "Why is everybody bumping into me? What do they want me to do?" I'm like, "I don't think they know they're bumping into you. I think that's just what happens when you're in a line." When you're in a line, you're going to the cafeteria, somebody bumps into you, but it's not like they did it on purpose. "But why are they doing that?" I'm like, "I don't know." He comes up with these/.

[00:30:52]

The question that matters to him and he doesn't understand. Again, in our way, we don't pay attention to that.

[00:30:59]

Or something that we observe or accept through osmosis. That thing of no one has to teach me how to walk down the hall and move to the right when I see someone who's coming forward. I move to my right, they move to their right, we pass each other. Gabriel has to be taught that. When you're walking down the hallway and someone's coming toward you, move over so that they can go this way and you can go that way. I have an innate whatever that is, knowing where my body is, and the social more is I move over here, they move over there, so we don't bump into each other. Those kinds of things we get from observing other people, like my parents would do that, so I would do that. He doesn't learn things like that or he doesn't observe it or doesn't think it's important enough to pay attention to or maybe he doesn't even notice.

[00:31:49]

Which make me think about when you're talking about cooking, a lot of my cooking and certain things about how to cook, I learned by paying attention to my mom's cooking or whoever was cooking near me. If it's not important for someone, and I'm not saying just him, I know people here that do not cook at all. Sometimes I'm surprising you don't know this, the pot that you need to do this, that you don't need this huge pot of water.

[00:32:22]

Exactly.

[00:32:23]

To boil an egg.

[00:32:23]

Exactly. He doesn't understand those things. If I say fill the pot half with water, he's like, "How much is half?" Let's go get a ruler and see how tall the pot is, and then we'll figure out. He knows how to do math. I don't even know how to quantify or qualify what it is that he's confused by. Gabriel's menu items for eating are all white foods that don't need to be prepared in any way. He eats bagels. He eats lots of bread. He eats pasta. Pizza's one of his favorites, although it's not completely whit. Cheese sticks. He has a very limited selection of things that he likes to eat. He's getting better. He'll try a new restaurant. He'll try new food at the same restaurant. But instead of saying, "There's a turkey burger. You want to cook a turkey burger for yourself for dinner because I'm going to go do something else." "No, I'll just have cheese sticks and some yogurt." He would rather have cheese sticks and yogurt because it's in the refrigerator already ready than, "A turkey burger would be delicious, but I have to get the pan out, and I have to cook it." It's not that hard to cook.

[00:33:30]

I know.

[00:33:32]

His choices are based on how easy is it? I guess I don't understand that either. I'm always like I want to eat a certain thing. If I'm in a hurry, I'll eat a cheese stick, but if I want to eat dinner at home, I'm not going to have cheese sticks and yogurt, I'm going to make something. [LAUGHTER]

[00:33:48]

Did you notice if food color, it is something that he rejects based on the change.

[00:33:57]

Texture.

[00:33:57]

Texture.

[00:33:58]

He used to not like soup at all because it was liquidy and chunky, and that doesn't make sense. He didn't like creamy things like mashed potatoes. He didn't like French fries. He did not like chicken nuggets. My kid was the only kid in the whole world that didn't like chicken nuggets. The texture, the crumbly stuff on the outside was too weird for him. Broccoli, he won't eat the leaves of the broccoli but he'll eat the stems, because the leaves feel funny in his mouth. I'm like, can you just go to the store and you can buy broccoli florets, but can you just buy the stems? No. [LAUGHTER]

[00:34:33]

That's really interesting. What the preference is based on the texture there. Wow.

[00:34:39]

I have a little bit of that. Like I don't drink anything carbonated because I can't stand the way the carbonation feels, so I've never been a soda drinker, and he's not either. But his is that to the nth degree. All things feel weird or feel funny.

[00:34:52]

That's really interesting.

[00:34:54]

I want to ask you.

[00:34:56]

Yes.

[00:34:57]

When did you first realize or suspect your child was autistic and how did you get them formally diagnosed?

[00:35:04]

When he was two, at his two-year-old checkup, he was not forming complete sentences. He had a couple of words. He had two-word sentences, but he didn't have anything three-word sentence. He would say, dog sit, cat eat, something like that, but he was not any more verbal than that. They suggested that we take him to speech therapy, which we did. He also went to an early intervention playgroup, where people were trained to talk about, like, "Here, this is the pen. Would you like the pen? Let's put the pen over here." "Do you want a snack? Here's the snack. Where's the snack? Do you want more?" There was a little bit of sign language going on. It was an early intervention based on communicating in a group. He aged out of that at three. Then we were like, we're not really sure what to do. He was in daycare, but not with any speech therapy or anything, and we were like, I already know what happens next because he's going to go to school. They said he should be really evaluated. He should have a core evaluation by the city of Brooklyn, which is where I was living at the time. When he was four, they did a core evaluation, and they had his daycare teachers fill out some forms, and we filled out some forms about his behavior. They said he has this PDD-NOS. They knew something was going on. I didn't have any idea. It wasn't until after the fact that I thought, something is a little different. They kept saying, "Does he make eye contact with you?" I'm like, "Yes, he makes eye contact with us." "When you point to something, does he know what you're pointing at? Does he go get it?" "Yes." "Does he answer when you say his name?" "Yes." Some of these things didn't really fit the profile? I think when he was diagnosed, we were like, we knew he's not non-verbal, and we knew he was smart, and we knew he could run around. We just didn't know what exactly it meant in terms of how it was going to make his life different. We weren't like, "Holy cow, what are we going to do?" We were just like, "All right, let's see what that is," because we didn't know what it meant. He played on the same level as other kids, so it didn't seem to be an intellectual disability. He taught himself to read when he was two.

[00:37:08]

Two?

[00:37:09]

We had little bath sponges shaped like letters in the tub, and we would say T, and he would get the T. We would say L, and he would get the L.

[00:37:17]

Wow.

[00:37:19]

We were like, "Is that really happening? I don't know if I believe that, is that really happening?" We tested him a few times. He read very early, so we know it wasn't an intellectual disability. But the other thing that we noticed about him too is that by the time he could coordinate his body enough to use a ride-on toy, like a scooter or a walking thing, by the time he got his body organized enough to figure out how to do that, he was way too big for whatever the toy was. He'd sit on a tricycle and not know what to do. Couldn't pedal, didn't know what he was supposed to do. By the time that all caught up and he was, "I know, I'm supposed to pedal." He was way too big for the tricycle.

[00:37:54]

Then it wouldn't work.

[00:37:55]

It was like his body was growing, but trying to get up to speed. I remember taking him to some go-kart track thing, and there were little kids and these cars that you pedal. He just would sit there and be like, "Why isn't it going?" I'm like, "You have to pedal." He'd be like, "I don't understand." I'm like, "Go like this," and, "I don't understand." I'm like, "Okay, I'll push you." I got nothing else, I don't even know how to explain that. When he was diagnosed, we were like, we don't really know what this means, but we'll follow it up in school. It didn't really become a huge difference in abilities until he was in middle school. In kindergarten and preschool, there was a lot of playing. He did have his own aide in preschool or in the after school program. He would go to school throughout the day, and then in the after school program, he needed somebody to keep him, I don't know, focus isn't the right word, translate the social activities. I don't know how to explain this. I used to call her his wrangler. She would help him integrate with the other kids in terms of, "Hi, how are you? Can I play with you?" Or, "I want to do something with this toy? Do you want to come with me?" He did not really play well with others. He liked to play by himself. He would go out in the playground and walk in circles around a tree because that's what he wanted to do. [LAUGHTER] One of his stems too, like the repetitive behaviors that they talk about as part of the diagnosis is a stimulation. Some kids flap their hands.

[00:39:30]

Yes.

[00:39:30]

Gabriel would spin in a circle.

[00:39:32]

He would go in a circle.

[00:39:33]

He would go out in the playground and spin.

[00:39:34]

That'd be flaps his hands.

[00:39:36]

Gabriel doesn't have the hand flapping, but he has the spinning, and he would say, "Look, I'm spinning in a circle. " I'd be like, "I can't do that. I would get nauseous." He would just do it in the playground by himself. He loved it.

[00:39:45]

When you say non-verbal?

[00:39:47]

Yeah.

[00:39:48]

What is non-verbal?

[00:39:53]

My son is verbal, so he speaks English and he speaks relatively clearly. Non-verbal, my guess is that they're not able to communicate using their mouths to form words we can understand. There are non-verbal kids who use sign language. There are non-verbal kids who use different tools, audio devices or whatever. I don't think it has anything to do with intellect, either. It's just the way the brain's wired.

[00:40:19]

It's a form of communication?

[00:40:21]

Yeah, it's like that part of the communication, those connections are not there somehow. I don't know, it's hard to say when the way they diagnose autism now, it's Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3, and Gabriel's between one and two. Even those levels don't really they don't cover everything.

[00:40:40]

Exactly. I think they are still discovering a lot. Because when they say that the spectrum, before they used to say Asperger syndrome it used to be by its own classification.

[00:40:52]

Yes.

[00:40:52]

Now they brought in the spectrum of autism.

[00:40:58]

Asperger's used to be its own diagnosis. Now it's a type of autism spectrum disorder.

[00:41:02]

Exactly, yeah.

[00:41:03]

Yeah. I don't know exactly why or why or what made them put them together or have them separate? I think the stereotype is someone who is Asperger's can function in society and make friends or just weird or slightly different. Then if you are more or less typical and you can't function, you can't talk to people you don't like talking to people, you're afraid of talking to people, that puts you more on the autism than Asperger's. I don't know what the formal diagnosis is, but it's like the high functioning versus low functioning, which can't really categorize people. That's why they call it a spectrum because people are all over the place. You can't define the spots. [OVERLAPPING]

[00:41:47]

They put some levers just to give some JR, distinction between [OVERLAPPING].

[00:41:51]

Be able to talk about what can your son do?

[00:41:54]

Because one of the stereotypes for Asperger's was one that you mentioned about your son that they are very honest about. They don't filter what they need to do they need to say exactly how it is. That would be one of them.

[00:42:07]

My son would say, if we saw somebody in a wheelchair. He would say, Why do their legs don't work? I don't know, let's ask them why their legs don't work or you know, why does that woman have her arm in a cast or why is her arm in that thing? I remember asking him maybe about one of his friends were disabled. I said, why is Chris in a wheelchair? His legs don't work. Not like he was in a car accident or anything like that, but his legs just don't work. He had a friend in one of his groups, someone who was more disabled than he was, and she would just play with a string all day, all day long, and wasn't verbal, wasn't really understanding what was around her and I said, well, that's Sophie. How's your friend? She likes to play with string. Not like she's not capable of doing anything else, and all she likes to do is play with string, but she just likes string. So he's missing some parts of some sort of judgment, you think. Is very sort of straightforward, like, that guy's legs don't work. I don't care why. She likes to play with string. I don't care why. There was nothing in there that upset him about that. They were a person whose legs didn't work. Which was very innocent and non judgmental in a way that I was that's interesting. Exactly. One of the things you may have heard is that when you meet one kid with autism, you've met one kid with autism, and they're all different. I don't know the other moms. I don't know what kind of things they deal with with their kids. I know a couple of moms whose kids are on the spectrum and I look at their kids and like, that's nothing like my kid. How is that on the spectrum? Because it's his own different flavor.

[00:43:37]

Own definition

[00:43:39]

It's just the way it manifests. Our brains are so complicated that the wiring can be off in so many different ways. That it will affect your behavior or your thought process, but not the same as mine because it's tweaks just a little bit different. Yeah.

[00:43:50]

I want to ask you this c how did your family member react to your child being diagnosed? Or not just family member, but folks that are close to you. What was their reaction?

[00:44:04]

I only remember one instance when Gabriel we were in a co-op for a little very short amount of time. One of the other moms came up to me after, like, a day or two and said, You shouldn't really have your son evaluated. He's quiet in a way that other kids aren't quiet. I was like, Who the heck are you, lady? I was really offended. She was right. But I was like, I'm not really sure what that means. I don't I couldn't figure it out. How did she know this? Was she right or was she just judging my child based on some type of preconceived something? He didn't really seem to be different. Like, my parents didn't really notice anything, and his dad's parents, like, I don't think anyone really noticed until he was in elementary school or, like, fourth, fifth grade. We told everybody. We told the dentist because going to being being touched in your mouth, it's a very sensitive thing for a lot of people and I'm like, He's going to fricking hate that. He was okay with it. But we told everybody who had whose life he was in just so they could expect. We don't know what to expect. This is what he likes. He likes this routine. He goes to bed at this hour. It's like I don't recall anyone going, Oh, my God, that's horrible. What are you going to do now? I think it's just like, here's here's the kid. Here's what he's like. Here's what we do to accommodate. One of the other things that he did not sleep very well took forever to get him to fall asleep. That didn't get fixed until he was in sixth grade. So he'd be up until midnight, and I'd be like, Just stay in your room. I got to go to bed. I can't stay up.

[00:45:45]

Now I have to give an explanation visually here or a description of it visually. When you said in quotation with your fingers fixed. What do you mean by that?

[00:46:00]

We had heard things you can try to help your kids sleep. Like we would oftentimes when he was an infant, we would like jiggle him a certain way or he'd walk and bounce a certain way, and it would take like two hours and if you put him down, he'd wake up. He just was not a good sleeper, and we did not know what to do about it, and were like, Oh my God, this going to happen forever. For a while, I was a stay at home mom, so it didn't matter if he didn't go to sleep. I'd be up when he was up, I'd sleep and he'd sleep. But when I got a job, I'm like, I can't stay up till midnight with you anymore. I got to go to sleep. Just like, what are we going to do? Someone suggested melatonin. The first night we tried melatonin, he fell asleep at nine o'clock.

[00:46:36]

Wow.

[00:46:37]

It's like three milligrams of melatonin is a hormone that we all produce. There is a theory that kids on the spectrum do not produce enough of it. We gave him three milligrams of melatonin as a supplement, and he went to sleep at nine o'clock and I was like, I don't believe this. Is this really happening? We tried it again. He took melatonin every night before bed and allowed him to go to sleep. Interesting. He took it until I don't think he takes it anymore.

[00:47:01]

I think he took it until high school.

[00:47:03]

And then?

[00:47:04]

Then he didn't need it anymore.

[00:47:05]

How was high school for him?

[00:47:07]

High school was rough. Middle school was very difficult. And he went to public school from kindergarten through eighth grade.

[00:47:24]

Through eighth grade. Middle school was very difficult. The teachers in his middle school thought he was lazy, and wasn't trying, and they also thought he was challenging them when he asked why. But he needs to know why so it makes sense to him. The teacher says, you need to write a paragraph that's an introduction, and a middle that's about this, and then the end. He'll be like, well, why? She didn't have enough time to say, here's how we start out when we're writing. We give an introduction because people want to know where we started. We can't just start in the middle and blah blah blah. It was often like, don't ask that question, just do what I tell you to do. He would get stuck, but I don't understand. Yes, you do, just write what I asked you to write. He's like, but I need to know why you want me to do this in order for me to do this. He would get stuck. I'm trying to think there was something else. When he was taking a test, he's like, why does my teacher want me to tell her all this stuff? She already knows it. [LAUGHTER] She told me.

[00:48:32]

Which is perfect.

[00:48:33]

It makes sense, right?

[00:48:34]

Yes.

[00:48:35]

She wants to know what you've learned. Well, can I just tell her what I've learned? Well, you have to do the test so she knows. How do you explain that? You know what I'm saying.

[00:48:44]

But his response was perfect, why she's asking questions that she already knows.

[00:48:48]

His responses are often exactly on, like that where we just don't go. Think of it differently. He's like, this doesn't make sense. I'm like, you're right, but that's what we do.

[00:48:57]

Yeah.

[00:48:59]

One of my favorite stories about him. This is off the topic of the question you asked, but when he was home for a week and I was going to work, I bought him macaroni and cheese, it comes in a round container, and it has a plastic film on the to. You're supposed to microwave it. The outside of the box said, peel away a corner of the film. The container is round, so there are no corners. But you and I know what that means.

[00:49:22]

Yeah.

[00:49:22]

He called me up, and he took a picture of it and he said, mom, there are no corners. What am I going to do? He's like, I can't eat this. He was completely serious. I'm like, you know what, you're right, there are no corners. He's like, why are people making my life more difficult? Why don't you just say what they mean?

[00:49:36]

Exactly.

[00:49:37]

A lot of his thoughts are very literal.

[00:49:41]

Yeah, specific about what it is.

[00:49:43]

The way our brain automatically would go, they just mean to peel off a little piece. We don't look for corners. We're not bothered by the fact that it's round. The vernacular of corner means a little piece.

[00:49:55]

Yes, exactly.

[00:49:56]

Versus an actual corner where he's like, there aren't any.

[00:49:58]

Yeah.

[00:49:58]

But he's right.

[00:49:59]

Yes.

[00:50:00]

But at the same time, can you imagine your whole life misinterpreting things because there's certain ways we talk about things that don't mean exactly what we say.

[00:50:10]

Yeah. Inside of that same question, because of Gabriel behavior and how he presented autism to the world was very, when you say between level 1 and 2, right in a way, and then gave you room for a certain professor to think that he was lazy or certain things.

[00:50:34]

He does not appear autism.

[00:50:36]

Exactly.

[00:50:36]

He does not appear to have a disability.

[00:50:39]

But people in general didn't notice as much or you were closer and you would pay attention details that's in your routine. But nowadays, that when you tell people you have an autistic child, how do they react?

[00:50:57]

It's interesting.

[00:50:58]

They try to say a lot about the kid or?

[00:51:02]

More often than when he was younger, people say, my grand-kid is autistic, or my brother's kid is autistic, or my cousin is autistic. Oftentimes, they know someone who is on the spectrum. There was a woman who I met dancing a few weeks ago, and one of my dance friends has a grand-kid on the spectrum who's three, and, my kid's 20, and we talk about this. We said to her, yeah, the three-year-old's autistic, and I have a 20-year-old, and she went, those people don't like to be touched, do they? I'm like, I don't really know what to say to that. Everybody's different. People who don't have someone in their family with autism, I don't know what they think autism is. I don't know what the general population thinks autism is. I just can't tell because I know I've been dealing with it, and when someone says to me, my kid is autistic, I'm like, what are they like? Let's talk about it. I don't say they don't like to be touched. I say, I know your kids has certain disabilities, and mine does too. How are they same? How are they different? What are you dealing with? What am I dealing with? Do you have any tricks that I can use or what are some things that have made your life different and what are some things that have made my life different? This woman who said that, I was like, I didn't really know how to start. My son loves to cuddle.

[00:52:12]

He does.

[00:52:14]

He could spend the entire day on my lap, even now. He'd be like, I can't hug you enough, mom.

[00:52:19]

That's adorable.

[00:52:20]

We also had to teach him not to hug people that weren't in your family. Because he wanted to hug everybody. He wanted to hug his teachers when he really liked them.

[00:52:26]

He needs to have more Latino friends.

[00:52:27]

Well, yeah. Our culture doesn't think it's appropriate, so you have to train it out of him. Autism also has this, one of the definitions is or the Greek version, the Greek word auto means self, and it means someone who has retreated into themselves. They don't interact with the outside world. The typical thing is, they don't want to talk to other people, they don't want to make eye contact with other people, they don't want to touch other people. Gabriel's not like that. He makes eye contact. He touches people. He likes to hug people. It's like you never know. He has things like, I don't like this texture of the food, and I don't like the tags on my clothing, and the sun's too bright or whatever. There's that thing. I think it's common for people on the spectrum to be delayed in fine or gross motor, and he has some of those things. But his intellect also, too, is way off the charts in terms of imagination, in terms of pretend play. Sometimes kids on the spectrum don't do that either.

[00:53:22]

Yes.

[00:53:22]

It depends on where their brain kind of plugs into the world and what makes sense and what doesn't.

[00:53:28]

That's why I think our conversations are going to be very thinking about the two Melissas and then Allison that have kids in different ages and also in different range of the spectrum.

[00:53:41]

Yes.

[00:53:42]

I really wanted to talk to you because you have Gabriel is already 20-years-old, so you have gone through the whole affair with experience and now trying to find jobs and placement in a workplace that would be beneficial for him and how that would be in a society that we're still fighting for accessibility for wheelchair and any other physical disability.

[00:54:16]

I can tell you, I'll try and keep it, a brief story of he was going to work at a grocery store that I will not say the name of again.

[00:54:25]

He did an internship program, and they decided to hire him. We're like great. He needs a job coach. This rule about being showing up 10 minutes earlier 10 minutes late get rid of that. He needs flexibility there. If you miss a certain number of hours per week that adds up to something per month and if it goes over a certain number of hours you're fired, he can't have that rule, either. He needs a quiet place to go when he gets overwhelmed or some of the other things. He needs to work only during the day. They wouldn't give us any of those accommodations. That's against the law. But it's not enforceable because there's this big supermarket chain that does whatever the heck they want. He was not able to do that job because he was not given these accommodations. It was very frustrating because he could do the work he was doing, which was organizing and fronting. He loved that, and he loved talking to the people there. He was just thinking like, what if somebody he needs a job coach, so if someone approaches me and I don't know what they want, the job coach can help me, and I won't. The first time someone approached him, he jumped. Because he wasn't expecting anyone to talk to him. He needs like a translator to help with some of the communications. It would have been a great learning experience, but they were not able to be flexible enough for him. I could just imagine him getting fired because he didn't show up in time or he forgot his uniform or he was crying because he couldn't figure out what they wanted him to do. It was just very different from what we expected as a company that wanted to hire somebody with a disability. The other side of that is we're working with an organization to help him find a job, and the library job they found for him is him putting stickers on books. He's way more capable than putting stickers on books, but not capable enough to do a grocery store type job without assistance. He slips through the cracks all over the place because he's got some strengths in some areas that he doesn't need help with. But then other areas that don't make sense, need some support, and it's not clear what exactly that is. I mean, we gave them all the documentation. We had all of his doctors signing, we told him everything that he wanted, and they were like, we can't do this. The only thing we can do is reduce his hours. Instead of 15 hours a week, he can do 10. What was the other thing? I can't remember what the other thing was like they gave us two accommodations out of the 10 we asked for. They have all of these rules because they don't want anyone to take advantage of their system, which I totally get. But Gabriel's not going to do that. He doesn't even care about the money. He just wants to work with people and do something useful. It's frustrating that you really have to get to know him to see what he's like, to know what job he could find meaningful. He doesn't want to do work that isn't meaningful. Who of us does? But when you're a teenager, I made sandwiches, my first job. Gabe dad drove a forklift his first job. It's like, you got to do something that isn't your life's dream in the beginning. I think Gabe's afraid he's going to be pigeonholed into putting stickers on books for the rest of his life and I don't blame him. The folks who are with this organization that help people with disabilities find jobs don't really know him enough to figure out where his strengths and weaknesses are and what would be a good fit. I think it's also difficult to approach a library, for example, and say, we got this kid. He's on the spectrum. He's really good at this, he's really good at that. What do they know? How are they going to understand what that means? You have to get to know him. See what he's like, see what he can do. See what happens when he can't do something, and what struggles does he have while he's at work and then figure out how to fix those, which is a job coach. When a job coach is there, they probably wouldn't be doing much. Except if Gabriel was like, my boss said something, what does that mean? Or somebody asked me to there's a cleanup in Aisle 5. I don't know what that means. It's complicated.

[00:58:31]

What do you hope for the future? What is the idea or.

[00:58:37]

What I would like and this is interesting for me to think about this out loud. I would like him to be able to support himself and be independent and be happy and have meaning in his life. I have told him that he can live with me forever if he wants to, although it's probably not the best for either one of us, and we'll build a house for him in the backyard or something. I want him to get as much out of life that he wants to enjoy. He doesn't like to do things that don't mean anything. He likes to have meaning. He's very angry about the war in Gaza, even though it doesn't affect us on a daily basis. He'll wake up in the middle of the night and come to my room crying, What are we going to do? People are dying. What are we going to do? I only have so much energy. I'm going to go to work. He gets very upset politically about things, and I'm like, well, if you want to do an activist thing, you can do that. It's not for me 'cause I've got other stuff. Yes. Because I got a 2-year-old autistic kid to take care of. But if that's what's calling you, great. He's very upset about like recycling and all the resources and climate change. I mean, I think kids today are more than we were.

[01:00:01]

He reads a lot.

[01:00:02]

He reads a lot.

[01:00:03]

There you go.

[01:00:04]

He does Internet surfing. He listens to music. I mean, he spends his days surfing the web or looking at YouTube or teaching himself about philosophy or teaching himself about whatever he wants to learn about on the Internet. He's not watching cartoons or playing video games. He's doing his own little research. But that's not necessarily a good thing with the Internet because you can find all scary stuff. He's like what about children that are being killed in the war. It happens. Nobody wants that, but what are we going to do? We can't. You can send them your allowance if you want. I would like him to be able to focus on the things in life that are pleasurable for him and that give him joy and that he can find people that appreciate him and that respect him and allow him to be him. Hopefully there's a way to monetize some of what his skills are so that he can support himself.

[01:00:59]

That would be wonderful. I hope these new generations are going to be more involved. I think the way that they are seeing the future. We need to leave some questions for 4 minutes.

[01:01:14]

It's 3 hours later.

[01:01:16]

That's what we do. You always do that.

[01:01:18]

I know.

[01:01:19]

Ellen, thank you very much.

[01:01:21]

Thank you.

[01:01:22]

I think it's wonderful to hear your experience, to hear about Gabe and everything that has been through.

[01:01:31]

I thank you and if anyone has questions about kids on the spectrum or any questions about autism, I'm happy to help. I try and give all my elementary age books to somebody else who has an elementary age kids now so that they can learn about what their kid needs. I'm happy to talk about it.

[01:01:44]

That's great.

[01:01:46]

If we are left to our devices, we end up blaming ourselves for things our kids do and don't do correctly.

[01:01:52]

How many, like yourself, had to learn a lot of things on your own because that's the daily routine that you have to go through?

[01:01:58]

I met somebody in Kentucky. I was in Louisville, Kentucky, and my partner has a cousin there, and his one of their relatives has a 16-year-old daughter on the spectrum. I said, how's it working out? What is she getting? Talked about the services, talked about how she was flourishing and she gets better services than my son was ever offered in Louisville, Kentucky.

[01:02:17]

Louisville Kentucky.

[01:02:18]

I thought New York City, Boston. San Francisco, LA, Louisville, Kentucky, who knew?

[01:02:24]

Is giving more.

[01:02:26]

It depends on the school district. It depends on how people define autism. It depends on their budget.

[01:02:29]

Exactly. It depends on how are the laws being enforced. It's not consistent anywhere.

[01:02:34]

Exactly.

[01:02:35]

After you listen to all of us talk, you probably have a lot more questions for her.

[01:02:39]

Would be nice. Thank you very much.

[01:02:41]

Thank you Aughe.

[01:02:41]

I'll see you around.

[01:02:43]

For everybody out there, I'll see you soon. Bye bye.