

No parent of an autistic child needs to hear these...

1. He'll grow out of it

No, he won't. He'll get older and possibly learn to manage his autism, if he gets all the help and support he needs.

But he will *always* be autistic.

2. He looks normal to me

That's the thing – if my son is in what (to him) is a safe environment, he will appear no different to a neuro-typical child.

Give it five minutes and he'll be screaming the house down because his fringe touched the side of his face and frightened him.

3. Why can't he get on the train, cross the road, be left home alone for a while at his age?

Because he's autistic.

How he reacts today is no indication of how he will act tomorrow.

Today he's perfectly capable of crossing that main road alone – tomorrow he might walk out in front of a lorry without a second thought.

4. Just make him do it!

Have you tried arguing with an autistic child?

They have a built in capacity for logic that can overrule the most brilliant of tactical minds.

My son can not only argue that black is sparkly white, he'll reduce you to tears of uncertainty in the process.

5. He could do with a good hiding

People have actually said this to me and somehow they are still alive.

You wouldn't try to beat cancer out of a child, so why suggest doing so to a child with an invisible condition?

6. Have you tried vitamins?

Have you tried getting as far away from me as possible before I hit you over the head with the endless supplements I use to try and keep him healthy because he will currently only eat white pasta, pizza and chocolate?

Don't worry – next month it will be fresh veg and fruit juice. I'm just hoping it will all balance out in the end.

7. He can't be autistic, he makes eye contact

Because he's learned to, in order to fit in.

He's almost certainly actually staring at the bridge of your nose and taking absolutely no notice of anything you're saying.

8. Friendships are always difficult with kids

Yes, and they're harder when you never seem to say the right thing and other kids don't understand when you can't play games because it means touching people.

9. I'll pray for you all

I'd rather you came over and did the dishes while I lie on the sofa and try to ignore the yelling for ten minutes, if it's all the same to you.

10. Did you vaccinate?

Oh DO shut up.

11. Ooh, like Rainman? What's his special talent?

Rainman was about *one* person with autism – they are all different.

My son's special talent is driving me to tears of frustration one minute then being so adorable the next that I can't imagine ever having him any other way.