



## The Kids on the Block Program on **AUTISM**

**Featuring: Eddy Franklin, David Franklin and Joanne Spinoza**

"Autistic? Wow!", exclaims 14 year old Joanne Spinoza when told about her neighbor, David Franklin's condition. "Is he a painter, a musician, or what?" Joanne has confused the words "autistic" and "artistic" and this is only one of the several misconceptions addressed in this program on autism. Through David, who is a fifteen year old boy with autism, his brother Eddy, and their friend, Joanne, children learn that David is a regular member of the Franklin family. In developing this program with the New Jersey Department of Developmental Disabilities, The Kids on the Block conferred with experts on the staff of the sponsoring agency, with educators and parents, and met with children with autism and their brothers and sisters. The package consists of large hand-crafted puppets, three scripts, props and follow-up activities and resources to form a comprehensive curriculum on the topic. The program features DAVID FRANKLIN and his brother EDDY FRANKLIN who together depict what it is like to have a family member who is autistic. Script material covers specific issues such as behavior modification and reinforcement, temper tantrums, extinguishing inappropriate behaviors, myths and misconceptions about autism and employment possibilities and independent living for a person who has autism.



**CALL OR WRITE TODAY  
THE KIDS ON THE BLOCK, INC.**

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# Script Summaries

## What a Hunk!

Joanne Spinoza has been catching quick glimpses of her new neighbors. She has been spying on them, just a little, and now she decides to deliver cookies to the Franklins so that she can meet the older Franklin boy face to face. Joanne, who has only seen David once or twice, from afar, is excited to meet "the handsome hunk" who has moved in next door. When she see Eddy (who is 11) teaching David how to play with a ball, she is faced with the fact that there is something very different about David. When they meet, she gets to know David and asks his brother about autism and the apparently strange behaviors David engages in. **(David, Eddy, Joanne)**

## Temper Tantrum

When Joanne brings cookies to Eddy's house, she shares them with Eddy and his brother, David, Who is autistic. David is stimulated by the food and lunges for Joanne's and Eddy's cookies, as well as his own. Eddy intervenes, emphasizing that although David is having a tantrum, it is best not to let him have cookies other than his own. Joanne, upset by David's loud shrieks and biting, begs Eddy to give in and allow David to eat anyone's cookies that he wants. Eddy is adamant. He explains about how his family works together on extinguishing inappropriate behavior for David, and has Joanne go to another room with him. There they talk about autism and Joanne shares the myths and isconceptions that she's heard about David's disability. **(David, Eddy, Joanne)**

## Sorting Socks

Joanne stops by Eddy's house. She is eager to show off her bag filled with socks. Since she and Eddy volunteer at the local community center, they often work on special projects together. Their current effort is the collecting of clothing for homeless people. When Joanne spills her bag on the floor, Eddy take the opportunity to show Joanne that his autistic brother, David, has skill in sorting items and that this skill is directly related to future job experience in the real world. When David is rewarded for his sorting work with a cracker, Joanne asks about the need for a treat after doing a simple task. Eddy discusses the way David is taught, and how that teaching is reinforced by parents and siblings at home. **(David, Eddy, Joanne)**

**NOTE: After each script the children in the audience are given the opportunity to ask their own questions directly to the puppet characters.**

**The Kids on the Block**, created in 1977, features life size puppets who, through the magic of live puppet theatre, teach children and adults about disabilities, medical and educational differences, and social concerns. Through the hard work and dedication of many community based groups, **The Kids on the Block** puppets are able to touch the lives of people all over the world.