

INCLUSIVE VALENTINES DAY

It's easy to dismiss Valentine's Day as just a "Hallmark holiday," but for many individuals, February 14th is a special date with great significance.

For individuals on the autism spectrum and those with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, symptoms can vary widely. Sometimes holidays like Valentine's Day can be a struggle for these individuals as there is more commotion, increased sensory input, heightened emotions, and more.

Below are some tips and craft ideas - along with FREE printable inspirational valentines - to make sure all individuals feel that warm and fuzzy feeling this Valentine's Day!

Tips for an Inclusive Valentines Day

- Practice exchanging valentines and celebrate the holiday at home.
- Have your loved one create a list of special people in their life and ask what they like about each individual.
 - Ask them what it means to be a friend and how they can show appreciation for others.
- Ask your loved one's teacher (if they are in the school) how they have handled Valentine's Day in the past and ask if any individuals have special food diets and/or allergies to be made aware of when exchanging goodies.
 - Instead of candy, we recommend tokens like pencils, crafts, etc.
- Talk to your loved one about Valentine's Day - it's not a popularity contest but a time to spread positivity, celebrating and discussing love, friendship, and kindness.
- Tips about love, dating, relationships and disability - click [HERE](#).
- Looking for inclusive date ideas? Click [HERE](#).

Craft Ideas and FREE Printable Valentines

- [Heart Sensory Matching](#) - A hands-on matching activity that is engaging for all ages and made with simple household materials.
- [Love Calm Down Jar](#) - An easy craft designed to help refocus attention and promote emotional regulation. Fully customizable for any holiday or theme.
- [Marbled Salt Dough Hearts](#) - A playful sensory experience that dries into an ornament after practicing color-mixing and fine motor development.
- [Valentine Sensory Writing Tray](#) - An engaging, low-pressure way to practice writing skills, letter recognition, and spelling.
- [Valentine Sensory Bin](#) - An adaptable sensory bin using materials from around your home to encourage learning and exploration through play.
- Download FREE printable Easterseals MORC Inspirational Valentines [HERE](#).