

Increasing autism acceptance: The impact of the Sesame Street “See Amazing in All Children” initiative

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Sesame Workshop created the online initiative *See Amazing in All Children* to promote knowledge and acceptance of autism. It includes information about autism, as well as links to resources, videos, an electronic storybook (that features Julia, an autistic Muppet), and daily routine cards (to build independent living and community skills). We did an online evaluation of *See Amazing*. Survey responses were collected from: 1010 parents of children aged 6 or younger with and without autism before viewing *See Amazing*; from 510 parents 1-week after viewing *See Amazing*; and from 182 parents of autistic children 1-month after viewing *See Amazing*. We found that, after viewing *See Amazing*, parents of non-autistic children showed increases in knowledge of autism and greater comfort in interacting with autistic children. Parents of autistic children reported less strain, increased parenting competence, and more hope about involving their child in their community. The fact that the *See Amazing* materials produced positive changes in parents with and without an autistic child suggests that they could be an effective resource to increase acceptance of autism and reduce feelings of isolation felt by parents of autistic children. A weakness of the study is that our sample may not represent parents in general since these parents chose to participate, and a large percentage did not complete follow-up surveys. However, the results encourage further research to evaluate the impact of *See Amazing* as well as adaptation of the materials for use by schools and community sites, which may lead to greater increases in acceptance, inclusion and family empowerment.