

Flummox and Friends

For Families



FLUMMOX LABS

We created the *Flummox and Friends* curriculum because we saw the need for a unique and engaging way for kids to learn to navigate the social and emotional world. The philosophy behind the show is based on our years of clinical practice as speech-language pathologists, drawing on approaches that focus on the developmental milestones vital for children to complete in order to maintain fulfilling relationships with others.

Each episode focuses on one or more of the goals within our Tune in, Connect, Have fun! curriculum. This guide gives you ideas for extending the themes from the show into conversations, play, and everyday moments at home so your whole family can have a shared vocabulary for the social situations that can “flummox” everyone from time to time.

We recommend you introduce *Flummox and Friends* to your child as a fun show to watch, rather than a teaching tool. When children enjoy the story, the characters, and the jokes, they’ll watch it again and again and the important concepts will sink in over time.

You also may notice that the themes of the episode pop up naturally so you can refer to them throughout the day—whether in the car, at dinner time, in play dates, or in sibling interactions.

Above all, we hope you and your family enjoy watching and laughing together!

Liesl *Jordan*

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..... Include others in the fun!

Sharing *Flummox and Friends* with your child’s teachers, therapists and extended family can lead to even more positive support for your child’s social development—and more laughs!

..... Visit us on the web

For additional resources for your family and more information about the show, visit our website: www.flummoxandfriends.com

About this episode

"The Party"

In this episode, Suzie Swizzler attempts to host a party for Professor Flummox, Milo, Wanda and Dex Brickerson, but things don't go exactly as she was expecting when some of the friends have trouble tuning into the group.

This episode focuses on why and how to tune in to others during a group activity: we can use our eyes, ears, bodies, and even our ideas to show we're part of the group.

Tuning out of a group activity is rarely an act of intentional "misbehavior." If your child struggles with this, he or she may simply need extra help to understand what's expected when interacting with others. Some children feel overwhelmed in a group, or have difficulty perceiving what others think of them. For example, they may not be aware of what their body language is communicating or whether their conversational topics are interesting to others.



In "The Party," the characters learn they can observe the people around them to know if they need to be part of the group, and that they can use their eyes, ears and bodies to tune in to what the group is doing.



Tune In

Build self-awareness with these quotable moments:

"But I feel happy when I talk about things I like."

Everyone feels like Milo sometimes when "his body is in the group, but his brain is in the Cretaceous Era." But learning to keep others' likes and dislikes in mind and taking turns with conversation topics is an important part of being in a group.



"Do you like pudding?"

Like Wanda, sometimes our mind wanders. It can be hard to follow a conversation or process what people are saying. Let your child know it's okay to ask people to repeat themselves, slow down, or say you need a moment before you answer.



"My mind is focused like a laser!"

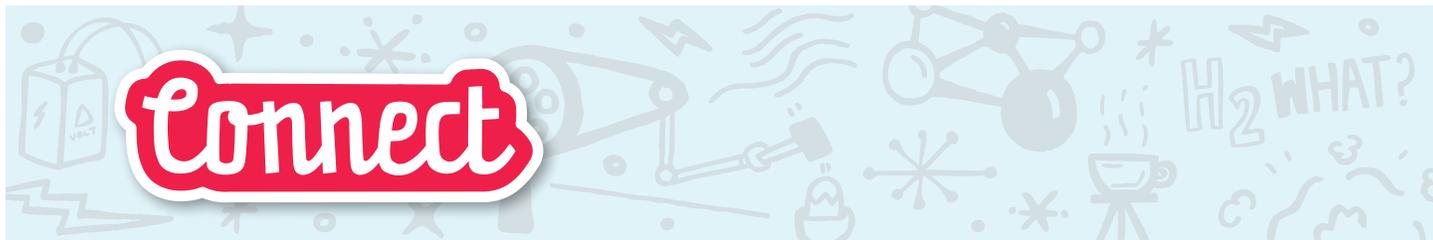
It takes concentration to stay focused and aware of what the group is doing and saying and to respond when others are speaking. You can help your child by acknowledging that these things are difficult, but with practice, get easier over time.



"We can observe the people around us and see what they're doing."

Suzie's idea is a great way to recognize those times when you're expected to tune into the group. You can model this kind of observation for your child.





Help connect themes from the episode to your child's experience.

Pause the show after a scene and talk about what happened. Stepping into these characters' shoes can help family members understand each other better, and help children learn to see others' perspectives—or their own social habits—in a new light.

Look at your child's favorite books, TV shows, and movies and see if you can spot challenges that other characters are having being in the group. When they aren't part of the group, are there any consequences? When they are tuned in, what are the benefits?

Talk about social situations your child finds him or herself in such as birthday parties, lunchtime, recess, or classroom activities. When is it easiest and hardest to stay in the group? How does your child get back in the group when he finds himself outside it? Does your child know other kids who tend to stay outside the social group? Could your child do anything to make that child feel welcome to join in?



Try out what you're learning with family and friends!

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Flummox and Friends Playdate
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Invite a friend over to watch the show. Make a yellow cake or invent a new kind of cookie! After the play date, talk with your child about how it went. Did he or she have any Wanda moments? Milo moments? What did he or she do to stay tuned in?

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Act It Out
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Pick a scene from the show and re-enact it at home. Switch roles to take different perspectives through playing different characters. Take the scene in a different direction by making different choices. You can even make up your own "In the group dance!"

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Social I Spy
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When you're at the park or playground, encourage your child to use, as Professor Flummox says, "observation—the very foundation of science!" and pay attention to groups nearby. Is everyone staying in the group? Who is out of the group? Why do you think that might be? How do they get back into the group? What works? What doesn't work?

Stages

This episode's learning goals are relevant across your child's developmental stages.



To Tune In with their minds and bodies children need to be able to keep their bodies calm and organized most of the time, recognize and respond to the emotions of others, and show a desire to socialize with peers.



To Connect with peers, children begin to be able to infer the underlying intentions of others, engage in social problem solving, emotional thinking and logic.



To Have Fun and maintain deeper connections with others, children begin to develop the perspective-taking skills required to talk about and reflect on their thoughts and feelings and those of their peers. They also increase their self-awareness and begin to decide on their own standard of behavior. Children will need to be able to maintain conversations with others on a variety of topics, even those that aren't of great interest to them.

"I think those who attempted to help me with group activities, while well-intentioned, reinforced the message that, 'This is not okay, this is something you need to overcome.' I would encourage parents and teachers to try to find out what specifically concerns the child about group activities, but not to make the child feel 'less than' others for being different. In the child's own mind, their own behavior is logical and everyone else is behaving illogically."

– **Matt Friedman**, Creator, *Dude, I'm an Aspie*



Tune in to the group!



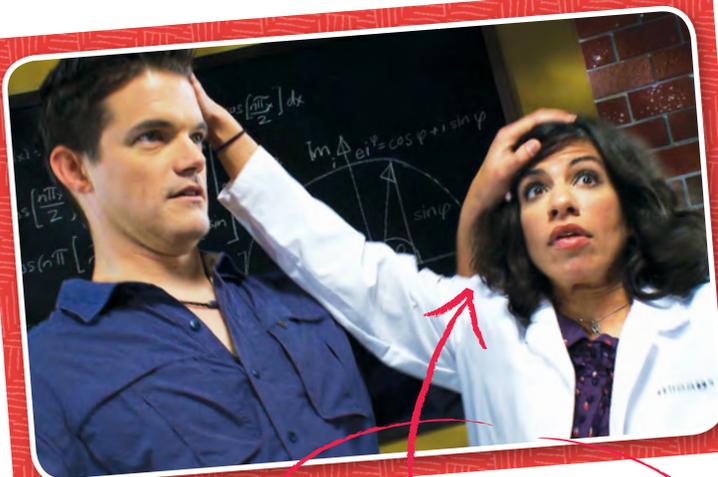
I use my eyes to look at what you're doing!



I notice your face and your expression!



I use my ears to listen to what you're saying!



I connect my ideas to your ideas!

"Learning that you're supposed to tune in was kind of a lightbulb moment for me. Knowing people who are into the same things was really helpful for me, too. As an adult, I've learned how to use conversation exit strategies so I can say to myself, 'Okay, if this is still boring me in three minutes, I've been polite and can excuse myself without hurting anyone's feelings.'"

– **Kasianne Sibley**, blogger, autistic advocate, and mentor to autistic youth

