

This is a section of [doi:10.7551/mitpress/14152.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/14152.001.0001)

Kids Across the Spectrums

Growing Up Autistic in the Digital Age

By: Meryl Alper

Citation:

Kids Across the Spectrums: Growing Up Autistic in the Digital Age

By: Meryl Alper

DOI: 10.7551/mitpress/14152.001.0001

ISBN (electronic): 9780262374002

Publisher: The MIT Press

Published: 2023

The open access edition of this book was made possible by generous funding and support from MIT Press Direct to Open



The MIT Press

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing this book primarily during the COVID-19 pandemic has been a solitary process in some ways, but I have never been alone. I mentally revisited past conversations with research participants as I reread their words. I shared chapter drafts with friends via email and enjoyed looking over their thoughtful notes in the margins. And I tried to spend as much precious time as possible with the loved ones in front of me instead of staring at a screen.

Many people have helped me to realize this book from start to finish. First, I want to thank all of the children and parents who allowed me into their homes and shared a part of their world with me. There would be no book without them. I am also indebted to the nonprofit groups and advocacy organizations that circulated my recruitment materials among families, including TILL (Toward Independent Living and Learning, Inc.) and the Autism Program at Boston Medical Center.

I am very appreciative of those at Northeastern University who provided funding for the project on which this work is based, including the Al Khalifa family and the Latifa Al Khalifa Grant, the College of Arts, Media, and Design (CAMD) Dean's Office, and Northeastern's Institute for Health Equity and Social Justice Research. I am also grateful to research assistants Adesewa Adekun, Madison Irons, and Erika Christiansen for their invaluable help with fieldwork, memo writing, transcription, and data analysis.

Thank you to everyone at the MIT Press, especially my editor, Susan Buckley, for her steady guidance and encouragement over the many years that we have had the pleasure of working together. I immensely appreciate the anonymous reviewers' feedback on the book prospectus and manuscript.

Various scholars generously provided me with comments on research materials, chapter drafts, and other work and ideas that appear in this book, including Morgan Ames, Linda Blum, Kristen Bottema-Beutel, Elizabeth Ellcessor, Elizabeth Fein, Kristen Harrison, Os Keyes, Paul Lichterman, Melissa Morgenlander, Dylan Mulvin, Jeff Nagy, Matt Rafalow, Kate Ringland, Beth Semel, and Olga Solomon. Over the years, I have also learned a great deal from autism advocates and autistic writers who shared their resources and insights, both on social media and in person. Thank you especially to Lydia X. Z. Brown, Alyssa Hillary, and M. Remi Yergeau.

I have had the honor of presenting in-progress work from this book at several conferences and workshops, including annual meetings of the International Communication Association (ICA), the Society for Social Studies of Science (4S), and the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR). Thank you to the attendees of those presentations and my copanelists. I would also like to thank the organizers and attendees of the Communicating Universal Design workshop at Lund University, particularly Aimi Hamraie and Bess Williamson.

This book has additionally been enriched by my participation in several fellowship programs. Thank you to the Northeastern Humanities Center Faculty Fellows Program and the 2018–19 “Cultures of Ability” cohort, led by Sari Altschuler and Lori Lefkowitz; the CAMD Dean’s Fellows Program and Dean Elizabeth Hudson; and Northeastern’s Institute for Health Equity and Social Justice Research Faculty Fellows group, especially Alisa Lincoln and Suzanne Garverich.

At Northeastern, it has been a great privilege to work, collaborate with, and teach among stellar colleagues in the Department of Communication Studies over the past several years, including Ryan Ellis, Dale Herbeck, Susan Mello, and Brooke Foucault Welles, and to have the departmental support of Angela Chin.

I am tremendously lucky to have wonderful friends in Boston, Los Angeles, New York, and beyond who have always been there to support me in my successes and cheer me on during challenging times. I am beyond blessed to have the family that I do, whose unconditional love and pride in me is a constant source of encouragement. And last, but never least, thank you to Glen for being my PPE (Pandemic Partner Extraordinaire).

© 2023 Massachusetts Institute of Technology

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means (including photocopying, recording, or information storage and retrieval) without permission in writing from the publisher.

The MIT Press would like to thank the anonymous peer reviewers who provided comments on drafts of this book. The generous work of academic experts is essential for establishing the authority and quality of our publications. We acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of these otherwise uncredited readers.

This book was set in Stone Serif and Stone Sans by Westchester Publishing Services, Danbury, CT.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Alper, Meryl, author.

Title: Kids across the spectrums : growing up autistic in the digital age / Meryl Alper.

Description: Cambridge, Massachusetts : The MIT Press, [2023] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2022033238 (print) | LCCN 2022033239 (ebook) | ISBN 9780262545365 (paperback) | ISBN 9780262373999 (epub) | ISBN 9780262374002 (pdf)

Subjects: LCSH: Mass media and youth. | Technology and youth. | Autistic children. | Youth with disabilities.

Classification: LCC HQ799.2.M352 A47 2023 (print) | LCC HQ799.2.M352 (ebook) | DDC 302.23083—dc23/eng/20221212

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022033238>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022033239>