

The background of the entire image is a dense, repeating pattern of stylized botanical elements in various shades of teal and dark green. The pattern includes long, narrow leaves, clusters of small round berries or seeds, and larger, more complex leaf structures with prominent veins. The overall aesthetic is organic and textured.

How to bond with your Autistic child through your special interests

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Just be.

Don't ask them to join you. Autistic kids have a very sensitive coercion meter and may also be demand avoidant. This means if they feel it's a demand, they will decline even if they want to join.

Be patient.

Wait for them to ask questions or show interest. Don't try to force interactions beyond answering questions.



Be honest.



Just do what you *LOVE* in front of your child. Knit, garden, organize, make jewelry, build Lego castles, play Mario, etc. in their vicinity. You have to genuinely *LOVE* it. Don't act. Their coercion meter will go off.

Be factual.

Infodump with facts about your special interest. Do not slip up and "should on yourself" or on them. "I should do this better," or "You should try it."



Be passive.

If they seem like they want to try it, put what supplies are needed to the side and let them know they can try if they want. Don't ask them to.

Be easy.

CRITICAL: Narrate out loud what happens and how to fix it if they mess up or get it wrong. Anxiety about getting it wrong will prevent them from trying because other people's reactions are hard to predict.

"If you accidentally get eggshells in the batter, we can use this little fork to pull them out. It's no big deal if that happens."

Or, "Sometimes the paint gets on your clothes or skin. I have wipes here if that happens. That's easy to fix."



BE COOL.

Don't use emotions to coerce them into joining you. Don't thank them for playing with you, don't pout if they decline, don't cheer and praise them.

They will feel like they are being used or you're being inauthentic.



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Be trusted.

The fastest way to undermine and erode an Autistic child's trust and to teach them to ignore their instincts is to be inauthentic.

By creating unnatural scenarios, you will teach the child that they are supposed to comply to manage the happiness of others, not to build authentic, mutually-beneficial relationships.



Be a bridge.

Find ways to merge
your interest and theirs.

"When I plant things, I
like to give them a name
and toys or decorations.
Do you have any ideas?"

Be in community.

Share this mutual
interest with community.

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Be fun.

Merging interests is not about finding a way to combine knitting with train schedules-- though it could be.

It is about giving nods to things the other person enjoys, finds funny, or treasures as a sensory joy.

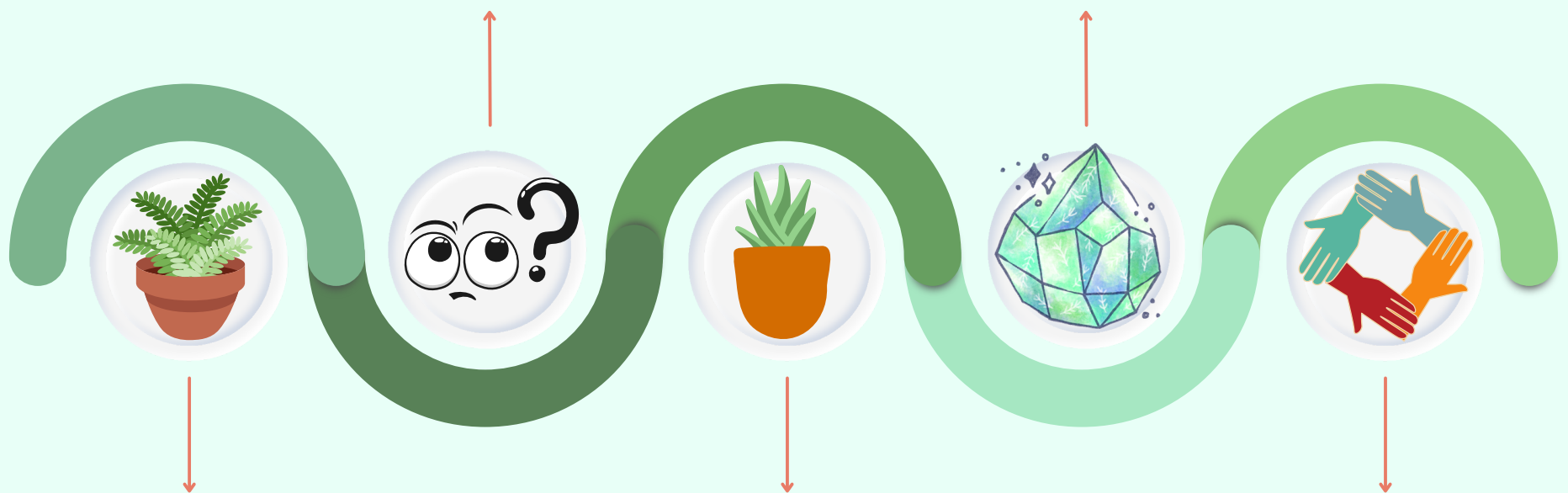
You build shared context that grows together forever.

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A budding journey from solitary to community

Child observes
passion and becomes
naturally curious.

Parent ties in other
interests: toys and
gemstones.



Parent engages in
a passion: keeping
and propagating
plants.

Parent makes
participation
optional. Answers
questions factually.

With consent,
shares passion.
Community builds
automatically.

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