

Flap Your Hands

written and illustrated by Steve Asbell

About the Book

Genre: Realistic Fiction

Format: Hardcover
40 pages, 11 x 8

ISBN: 9781643792002

Reading Level: Grade 2

Interest Level: Grades PreK-5

Guided Reading Level: K

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:
N/A

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

*Reading level based on the ATOS Readability Formula

Themes: Childhood Experiences and Memories, Disability, Diversity, Empathy/Compassion, Five Senses / Body Parts, Identity/Self Esteem/Confidence, Kindness/Caring, Optimism/Enthusiasm, Overcoming Obstacles, People In Motion, Realistic Fiction, Self Control/Self Regulation

Resources on the web:

leeandlow.com/books/flap-your-hands

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.

SYNOPSIS

This fascinating, groundbreaking picture book by an autistic creator celebrates stims – the repetitive movements that provide focused stimulation to people on the autistic spectrum.

*When you're feeling overwhelmed
And the world's too much to bear...
If your feelings bubble over
But they have no place to go...
Maybe it would help to move!
Want to try a stim?*

When four neurodivergent kids face some stressful moments, they use body movements called stims to self-regulate their emotions. One boy tickles the space next to his face; a girl flutters her fingers by her ears; another boy kicks his feet like splashy flippers; another girl directs her hands like a conductor! As the children say fun words, flap their hands, and engage in other stims, their actions build in energy and joyousness until their inner calm is restored.

Delightful text and color-drenched illustrations by debut author-illustrator Steve Asbell invites other neurodivergent readers to join in on the action. *Flap Your Hands* is a wonderful celebration and reminder that stimming is a natural and healthy thing to do!

BACKGROUND

Author's Note from Steve Asbell

Have you ever impatiently tapped your feet, paced nervously back and forth while talking on the phone, or anxiously twirled your hair? If so, you've done something called "stimming." That is, you've used repetitive, self-stimulating behavior to channel your energy, cope with stressful situations, and regulate your emotions. It's a natural and healthy thing to do!

Autistics like myself stim for all those same reasons, but because we are more likely to struggle with sensory overload and emotional regulation, our stims may appear more dramatic. So instead of discreetly tapping our feet, you might see us rocking our bodies back and forth. While some people only jump for joy occasionally, an autistic child might leap up, tiptoe in place, or flap her hands to show she is happy in that moment.

Stimming is not just natural and healthy but even necessary for autistics. It is an important part of our everyday behavior, and inseparable from our self-identity and culture. Unfortunately, more overt stims are often discouraged and stigmatized by adults and peers, simply because they look different. Imagine getting scolded for simply being yourself!

I wrote *Flap Your Hands* as a celebration of autistic expression and culture, in the hopes that autistic children can feel pride and self-acceptance. Parents, caregivers, librarians, and educators are invited to stim along and help normalize what already feels so normal for autistics. Come celebrate stimming with us!

Explaining Autism to Children

The National Autistic Society defines Autism as "a lifelong developmental disability that affects how people perceive the world and interact with others. Autistic people see, hear and feel the world differently to other people. If you are autistic, you are autistic for life; autism is not an illness or disease and cannot be 'cured'. Often people feel being autistic is a fundamental aspect of their identity. Autism is a spectrum condition. All autistic people share certain difficulties, but being autistic will affect them in different ways. Some autistic people also have learning disabilities, mental health issues, or other conditions, meaning people need different levels of support. All people on the autism spectrum learn and develop. With the right sort of support, all can be helped to live a more fulfilling life of their own choosing."

It's important to emphasize and recognize strengths and interests of all children, as opposed to labeling and solely focusing on the differences amongst Autistic people compared to non-Autistic people. When speaking about Autism with young people who are or are not familiar with Autism, consider showing the video "Amazing Things Happen" by Alexander Amelines, published by the National Autistic Society. The four-minute animated film simply and concisely explains the various types of differences that people have, and that those variations are also our strengths. All brains work differently, and that's why people are good at all sorts of things (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbwRrVw-CRo>).

Neurodiversity

The Child Mind Institute's "What is Neurodiversity" (<https://childmind.org/article/what-is-neurodiversity/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CNeurodiversity%E2%80%9D%20is%20a%20popular%20term,to%20be%20embraced%20and%20encouraged.>) explains neurodiversity as the way people's brains work. Harvard Health's definition of neurodiversity is "the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; that there is no "right" way of thinking or doing things" (<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/what-is-neurodiversity-202111232645>).

People who are neurodivergent have variations in the way their brains work outside of the mainstream, and have many strengths and talents that are critical to recognize. The University of Edinburgh's LEANS (Learning about Neurodiversity at School) has recommended reading, resources, and information dedicated to teaching about neurodiversity at school (https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/leans_recommended_neurodiversity_readings_for_educators.pdf). The Salvesen Mindroom Research Centre also has a list of more resources about neurodiversity (<https://salvesen-research.ed.ac.uk/leans/more-resources>).

Organizations for Autism

The following organizations provide resources and more information about what Autism is, how to discuss Autism and the variations on the Autism spectrum, and more:

- Love is Autism: loveandautism.com
- Autistic Advocacy: autisticadvocacy.org
- Different Brains: differentbrains.org
- ChildMind: childmind.org
- National Autistic Society: autism.org.uk

More Information about Stimming

Raising Children, the Australian Parenting website, has more information about stimming, the importance of stimming for autistic children in overwhelming situations, and how to engage with children regarding stimming (<https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism/behaviour/common-concerns/stimming-asd>).

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's article, "Stimming: What Is It and Does it Matter?" (<https://www.research.chop.edu/car-autism-roadmap/stimming-what-is-it-and-does-it-matter#:~:text=Many%20adults%20and%20children%20on,need%20for%20more%20sensory%20stimulation.>) also provides additional context behind the biological reasons for stimming. The National Autistic Society explains that stimming is not something that should be stopped; that it's often very enjoyable and a way to reduce stress (<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/behaviour/stimming/all-audiences>). The Child Mind Institute explains more ways to engage with stimming, and the right and wrong questions with stimming (<https://childmind.org/article/autism-and-stimming/>).

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

- What are some things you do when you're feeling overwhelmed or anxious? How do you manage your emotions if you're feeling this way? What makes you feel better or helps you to calm down? Why do you do those things?
- Do you know what "stimming" means? What do you think it means to stim? If students are unfamiliar with stimming, let them know that it means to use repetitive, self-stimulating behavior to use your energy and cope with your emotions. Afterwards, have students reflect on what stimming is. Have they noticed themselves stimming before? What are some repetitive actions that they do when they're feeling nervous or anxious?
- What are some situations that overwhelm you? When do they happen? How do they make you feel? What are some ways that you calm yourself?
- What are some ways that you use your body to help you calm yourself? If you are upset, or happy, or nervous, what are some ways that you use your body? Are there some behaviors that you notice that you do, like tapping your feet?
- Why are differences important? What would it be like if everyone was the same? Why is it important to be unique?
- Why is it important to be respectful of everyone? How do you show your friends and family respect, even if they may not do the same thing that you do?
- **Note:** Consider introducing neurodiversity and Autism to students using the information provided in the Background section of this guide to help familiarize children who may not know or have encountered an autistic child or adult and/or a neurodivergent child or adult. This is not necessary to engage students in the story but may be helpful for your particular set of students or classroom.

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1; Craft & Structure, Strand 5; and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

- **Book Title Exploration:** Talk about the title of the book, *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?
- **Read Steve Asbell's Biography:** Read about author and illustrator Steve Asbell on the back flap as well as on his website (<https://www.steveasbell.com/>). Encourage students to think

about what the writing and artistic processes are like and how Steve came up with the ideas for his book. What do you think inspired him to write *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*?

- Encourage students to stop and jot in their reading notebooks during the read-aloud when they: learn new information, see a powerful image, have an emotional reaction or an idea, have a question, or hear new words.
- Have students quickly write a feeling in their notebooks during reading. After reading, ask students why they wrote that feeling down and have them write a journal entry about it.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- how we can be accepting of all people, no matter our differences
- how you can express yourself any way that you want
- how and what makes you feel overwhelmed and how you respond
- how and why it's important to express yourself
- how the joys of everyday life can inspire creativity and imagination
- what neurodivergence is and what it means
- the different ways that you use your body to help you feel calmer
- the different ways that you use your body when you feel happy and excited
- how movement is powerful

Encourage students to consider why the author, Steve Asbell, would want to share a story about self-expression and the joys of stimming.

VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

Many words can be found in the glossary at the end of the book, but there are also some that are not included. Students could be encouraged to create a log of these words—they will not be listed here.

Content Specific

overwhelmed, stim

Academic

bear, bubble, sparkling, flutter, briskly, splashy, squeal, orchestra, sway, flow, jarring, allowed, celebrate

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite textual evidence with their answers.**

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What emotions do the children experience during the story? What do they do to express themselves and their feelings?
2. How does the story begin? How do the characters appear? What do the illustrations look like?
3. What are some of the ways to move your body, as suggested by the text?
4. What are some of the ways to use your mouth and different words, as suggested by the text?
5. What are the funny words that the author says to experiment with?
6. How does the story end? What do the illustrations look like?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. How can you connect what you like to do with the characters in *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*? Are there times when you've felt overwhelmed or anxious? How did you use your body to calm yourself? What about when you feel excited or happy? How do you use your body during those times?
2. What are the different scenarios in the beginning of the book that are overwhelming to the children? How do they respond to being overwhelmed?
3. How do the characters from the beginning appear at the end? How do the illustrations reflect the changes that the characters experience?
4. Why do you think the word "Autism" or "neurodivergence" is never mentioned in the story?
5. How do the illustrations reflect what the characters are feeling in the book? What colors do you notice? How do the colors reflect the movement and feelings of the different children?
6. After reading the Author's Note, how does author Steve Asbell use his own experience to write this story? What about his life contributed or inspired this story? Do you think this makes his story more powerful or effective? Why or why not?
7. Why is it sometimes difficult to express yourself when you're feeling overwhelmed? How can you use your body or words to show that you're feeling anxious or overstimulated?
8. How do you move your body when you're happy or excited? What are some different bodily movements that you do during those times? Why is it also important to move your body when you're feeling happy, in addition to feeling stressed?
9. Describe a time that you were overwhelmed, either by a sound or something else in the outside world. How did it make you feel? What advice might you give to someone who is overwhelmed? After reading *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*, what are some things you can do when faced with an overwhelming situation?
10. How does Steve Asbell show that neurodivergent children are all different? What are some of his techniques to show the children's individuality throughout the book?
11. How do the children in the book have fun with their bodies?
12. What figurative language do you notice in *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*? Why do you think the author uses figurative language in the story? How do you think the figurative language helps you to picture what the author is describing in the story?
13. What does it mean to "be yourself" or "be you"? Why is it important for people to feel comfortable and free to express themselves? Why should we respect how other people choose to express themselves?
14. What is the message of this story? What do you think author Steve Asbell wants to share with his readers?

Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. **Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion.** You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. What is one big thought that you had after reading this book? Think about all the different things the children do to help them feel calmer.
2. What do you think author and illustrator Steve Asbell's message is to the reader? Think about possible motivations behind Steve Asbell's intentions in writing and illustrating this book. What do you think he wanted to tell his readers?
3. Have students make a text-to-self connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to your own life? What do the children's experiences, thoughts, and feelings mean to you?
4. Have students make a text-to-text connection. Did you think of any other books while you read *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*? Why did you make those connections?
5. Have students make a text-to-world connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to what you have seen in the world, such as on television or in a newspaper? Why did this book make you think of that?
6. What does body movement mean to students after reading? After reading *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming* what does it mean to move your body? Why? How might your understanding of moving your body have changed after reading *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*?

Multilingual Learners Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign Multilingual Learner (ML) students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading: 1) Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing. 2) Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about how they connected to the story and ways that they like to calm themselves when they're feeling anxious or overwhelmed.
5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to

students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose ML Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

Social and Emotional Learning

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4-6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 6)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships.

Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of this book.

1. Select an illustration and describe what emotions are being conveyed. How can you tell that particular emotion is being shown in the illustration? Why?
2. Identify the spreads from the story where the children are expressing emotions. How do they handle their feelings? How do you express yourself when you're experiencing feelings? How does that help you?
3. What are some different things you do that help when you're feeling overwhelmed? What are different words that you can say, or repeat in your head? Create a chart in the classroom so that students can refer to it throughout the year. Why do students think those things are helpful?
4. What are ways that you like to express yourself? What does it mean to express yourself? What makes you feel good? Students can share the ways that they like to show their identities through art, dance, movement, a writing piece, or any other kind of visual or written presentation.
5. Is there a way that you can move your body when you're feeling overwhelmed in the future? What would you like to do? Why? How do you think it would make you feel?
6. Which illustration in *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming* do you think best shows an emotion? Explain which emotion you think it is. How do you think author and illustrator Steve Asbell portray that emotion in the story?
7. How does the illustration style reflect how the characters feel in the story? Why do you think Steve Asbell decided to illustrate the book in this way? How does he use colors and movement through his art?
8. Did *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming* help you to think differently about yourself? What do the children in the story inspire you to appreciate about yourself?
9. Choose an emotion that interests you: happiness, sadness, frustration, anger, etc. Discuss or write about what that emotion looks like in *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

English/Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Learn about stimming.** Consult the resources in the Background section of this guide for students to read more about stimming and why people stim. Have students answer the following questions: why is stimming important? How does it help autistic people feel? Why do some neurodivergent and/or autistic people stim? What are some stimming behaviors? How can we educate other people about stimming and why it's helpful for stress reduction and emotional regulation? Students can create informational posters that they can share within the classroom and the school community at large.
- **Have students listen to author Steve Asbell's NPR interview, "New children's book 'Flap Your Hands' celebrates stimming as expression"** (<https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2024/03/18/flap-your-hands-book>). What did students learn about Steve? What did they learn about *Flap Your Hands* from this interview? What did they find out about stimming and self-regulation from Steve's interview? What about how Steve used colors to create the illustrations? Students can discuss with a partner, small group, and/or whole class.
- **Choose a spread from *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming* and create thought bubbles for the characters.** Steve Asbell, author and illustrator, also creates comics. What do you think the characters are feeling in their thought bubbles in the story? What do you think the characters would say if they had an opportunity to speak? Have students reflect on why they wrote that text in their thought bubbles and reflect on the experience with a partner. Consult Harvard Graduate School of Education's "Making Students' Words Visible: Speech Bubbles" (<http://www.makinglearningvisibleresources.org/uploads/3/4/1/9/3419723/makingstudentswordsvisible-speechbubbles.pdf>) and ReadWriteThink's Multiple Perspectives lesson plan (<https://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/seeing-multiple-perspectives-introductory>) for more ideas on extending students' thinking.
- **Have students select a quote or a few sentences from the book and write a reaction to it.** Why did they choose to write about that quote? What are their reactions to those statements? Have students choose additional quotes from the beginning, middle, and end of the book.
- **Ask students: What can *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming* teach us?** Have

students share their findings. What lessons did the book teach readers over the course of the story? What did they learn from the story's message? Students can talk with partners, in small groups, or with the whole class. Consider creating a word cloud to find out what words came up the most often (<https://www.wordclouds.com>). Then students can come up with a big idea or statement about what they learned from *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*.

- **Come up with questions to interview the author and illustrator, Steve Asbell.** What was his process in creating *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*? What was his inspiration for the book? How did he decide to create the illustrations to go along with the text? Why did he use that artistic style? Read the Author's Note with students in the front of the book and have them discuss what they learned and how it made them think about the book differently. Why did he write this book for young readers? Consider reaching out to Steve Asbell for an author visit.
- **Read other Lee & Low titles about children expressing themselves in different ways, including *I Can Be...Me!* ([leeandlow.com/books/i-can-be-me](https://www.leeandlow.com/books/i-can-be-me)), *Sparkle Boy* ([leeandlow.com/books/sparkle-boy](https://www.leeandlow.com/books/sparkle-boy)), and *Benji the Bad Day and Me* ([leeandlow.com/books/benji-the-bad-day-and-me](https://www.leeandlow.com/books/benji-the-bad-day-and-me)).** As students read the titles, have them think about the following questions: are there similar themes in both books? What do you think the author's message is in each of the books? How do these books show readers that it's important to be true to who you are? How do the characters use their bodies to express themselves? What are some of the things that the characters do when they're feeling sad or overwhelmed? What about when they're feeling happy? What did students learn from *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*, *Benji the Bad Day and Me*, *Sparkle Boy*, and *I Can Be Me...!*? Start with a graphic organizer outlining the details, and then have students discuss in small groups or write or draw a reaction piece to their experience after reading *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*, *Benji the Bad Day and Me*, *Sparkle Boy* and *I Can Be...Me!*
- **Encourage students to write a piece about something that is meaningful to them about their identities.** Using inspiration from *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*, have students think about what they want to communicate about themselves. What do they want to share and why did they pick that thing to write about? What makes them proud to be who they are? Students can share their work with a partner, a small group, or the whole class. Consider creating a class book with illustrations and have the book available to students in the classroom library.
- **Conduct a figurative language study with students. Have students go on a figurative language scavenger hunt in *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*.** Refer to Read Write Think's "Figurative Language Resource Page" as a tool for students to use during their search (http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson79/figresource.pdf). Create a chart with different rows for figurative language terms (i.e. simile, metaphor) and students can fill it in with specific examples from *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*. Afterwards, students can experiment using figurative language in their own writing piece or poem inspired by the book.
- **Have students write an essay or reaction to the Author's Note at the beginning of the book from *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*.** Afterwards, have students

reflect on the following guiding questions in an essay: What did they learn from the Author's Note after reading *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*? What additional information did they learn that was new about Steve Asbell and the book. And stimming? How did this affect what they thought about the book? Why do you think author Steve Asbell decided to include this Author's Note featuring more information about stimming and his experience with stimming?

Science/STEM

(K-PS2-1 Motion and Stability: Forces and Interactions: Plan and conduct an investigation to compare the effects of different strengths or different directions of pushes and pulls on the motion of an object.)

- **Have students learn about neurodiversity.** What does it mean to be neurodivergent? The University of Edinburgh's LEANS (Learning about Neurodiversity at School) has programming, resources and other information dedicated to teaching students about neurodiversity (https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/leans_recommended_neurodiversity_readings_for_educators.pdf). Show students the video from Differing Minds, "What is Neurodiversity" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsfm13yVh1g>) to get started on learning about neurodiversity. Consult The Child Mind Institute's "How Schools Can Support Neurodiverse Students" (<https://childmind.org/article/how-schools-can-support-neurodiverse-students/>) to create a welcoming community for all students. Have students discuss what they learned about neurodiversity, how neurodiversity is represented in *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*, and why it's important to recognize neurodiversity in the classroom and in the world at large.
- **Use *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming* to discuss how stress reduction and bodily movements are connected.** The Oakland School District and Edutopia have a list of physical activities that help students to reduce stress and anxiety (<https://www.edutopia.org/sites/default/files/resources/stw-glenview-stress-reduction-activities.pdf>). The Center for Disease Control (CDC) also has "Classroom Physical Activity Ideas and Tips" (https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/pdf/classroom_pa_ideas_and_tips_final_201008.pdf) that provide movement integration ideas for classroom settings. Have students experiment with different actions that help reduce their anxiety or stress. What made them feel better? How does using your body help you feel calm when you're feeling overwhelmed? How does physical movement affect both your body and mind?

Art/Media

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Play different sounds similar to what's in the story (traffic, sounds in the grocery store, etc.) and have students use paint, crayons, markers, or anything else available in the classroom, and have them react to the sound, similar to what they see in the story.** What colors do they visualize with this sound? How does this sound appear to them in their head? Students can create an artistic piece reflecting how they interpret this sound and then share their findings with a partner or the whole class.

- **Have students use color to represent emotion** (<https://theartofeducation.edu/2019/11/how-to-connect-color-and-emotion-in-the-art-room/>). The Primary School Art's Blog, "My Many Coloured Days" (<https://primaryschoolart.com/2019/08/23/feelings-emotions-and-colour-art-lesson/>) shows how a teacher used color and paint to teach students about emotions and the ways that they feel throughout the day. Students can experiment with different colors and the different emotions they associate with that color. Students can create a series of paintings and label the different emotions that they portray in that painting. Students can share with a partner, small group, or whole class about what it was like to paint emotions and why they associate that emotion with a specific color.
- **Have students look at Steve Asbell's comics on his website** (<https://www.steveasbell.com/#/comics/>). What do they notice about the comics? What other comics have you read? What are the comics about? How do they think Steve Asbell's writing and artistic style from his comics are reflected in *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*?
- **Encourage students to analyze Steve Asbell's artistic style used in *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*.** Ask students the following questions to think about how Steve Asbell created the illustrations: what do they notice about the illustrations? Do you think Steve used paint, pencil, crayon, or another type of medium? Why? What books do you know that use a similar type of art style? How do you think the art style influenced how you read and thought about the book? BrainPop also has a "Styles of Art" Lesson Plan for more information on how to get students thinking about the different types of art (<https://educators.brainpop.com/lesson-plan/3-5-1-styles-of-art-lesson-plan/>).
- **Have students create a piece of art that reflects themselves.** What are the things that make them different and unique? How would they create a self-portrait that reflects the things that they care and are passionate about? How did the children from the story inspire them in creating their artwork? Students can use whatever materials are readily available, including collage, paint, crayons, etc.
- **Encourage students to select an illustration that resonated with them the most from *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming*.** Have students write a reflection about the illustration. What stood out to them? How did it make them feel? What did it make them think about?

School-Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

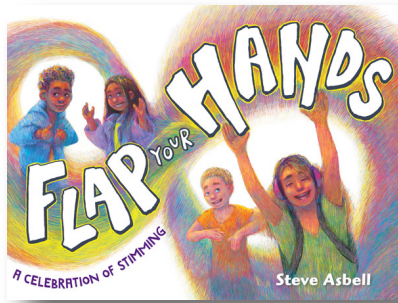
(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Provide students with the list of organizations from the Background section in this Teacher's Guide.** Caregivers can learn more through resources about how they can advocate for stimming and having autistic students express themselves.
- **Have students and caregivers brainstorm how they can demonstrate respect and acceptance of all people.** What are some ways that you can show respect to people? How do you show that you're understanding of people and their different needs? Students can

discuss with caregivers and families.

- **Ask students to interview family members about how they use their bodies when they're feeling anxious or overwhelmed.** What are some instances that make them feel overwhelmed? How do they use their body to help them calm down? Have students share what they learned about *Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming* and what things they do to help them feel good.
- **Reach out to families or their networks to find adults to invite to your classroom who are neurodivergent and/or autistic.** Ask students to prepare questions for the visitors about their experiences, including challenges, obstacles, and personal achievements. What advice do they have for others struggling to challenge norms and stereotypes?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

Steve Asbell was diagnosed with autism and draws a comic strip called *Stimmy Kitty* that shares childhood experiences through an autistic lens. As a member of SCBWI, he was won the Rising Kite Award for illustrations. He lives near Jacksonville, Florida, where he can be found drawing and gardening with his family. You can also find him online at steveasbell.com.

REVIEWS

"Relying on [an] emphatic visual manifestation to contextualize feelings of dysregulation, this aptly experiential representation of stimming foregrounds the idea that "no feeling is too huge to handle—// No noise too jarring to bear—// When everyone's allowed to stim—// And celebrate who they are!"—*Publisher's Weekly*

"Children on the spectrum may well recognize some of the comforting and expressive actions described here...Vibrant, impressionistic illustrations created in Photoshop introduce four preliminary scenes of children experiencing sensory overload or overwhelming emotions before launching into gorgeous double-page spreads...The short second-person sentences give the text an inviting tone that furthers the book's uplifting and inclusive messaging."—*Booklist*

"This is truly a celebration of neurodiversity that goes against decades—perhaps centuries—of stigma and tells kids that stimming isn't just OK; it's liberating. A beautiful book with an important message for autistic children and those who know them."—*Kirkus Reviews*


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