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The Lighter Side of Social Skills
A new TV project uses comedy to help kids on – or near – the autism spectrum

Ever since Christa Dahlstrom's eight year old son was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, he's benefited greatly from extra support at school for those things that just don't come naturally for him, particularly the unspoken rules of social interaction.

One thing that **does** come naturally for her son is engaging with, acting out and creating stories. "One of his favorite activities is enlisting the whole family to act out scenes from movies and TV shows. He has memorized entire episodes and can recreate them perfectly or combine elements from different stories to create something all his own."

Dahlstrom found herself wishing there was a way to incorporate the ideas about perspective taking, give and take in conversations, or managing emotions into the shows her son loved. And she wondered why there wasn't a television show to help teach social skills, the way other shows helped kids learn to read, or do math or learn about science.

So she decided to make one herself.

Dahlstrom teamed up with Jordan Sadler and Liesl Wenzke Hartmann, experts in social communication with a wealth of experience working with children on these issues. They too had been looking for lively and engaging ways to help families reinforce the learning from therapy sessions and social groups they conducted with kids with social communication challenges.

The result is [Flummox and Friends](#), off-beat, live-action comedy that helps kids navigate the social and emotional world. The team just released the pilot episode, which was funded in part by a grassroots Kickstarter campaign.

"There are products targeting social emotional teaching on the market," explains Sader, a speech and language therapist. "But it's hard to find something that adults and children can really enjoy together. This show gives families kid-friendly

language to demystify and normalize social challenges, showing that everyone is 'flummoxed' by social rules at one time or another."

"I wanted to create a show that really connects with kids' intelligence and sense of humor," explains Dahlstrom. "I hope families will think of this show first and foremost as a comedy. If kids enjoy the jokes and the characters, they'll watch it again and again and the educational messages will sink in naturally."

The program focuses on the adventures of three quirky inventors and their neighbors. The show intersperses musical and animated segments with the live-action storyline.

Families and educators can watch or download the pilot episode for free from the Flummox and Friends website. They can also download companion guides - for families or professionals - that have ideas for ways to integrate ideas from the show into conversations and activities at home and in the classroom.

The **Flummox and Friends** team hopes the pilot episode will generate sufficient viewership and enthusiasm for investors and broadcasters to take notice. "We want to turn Flummox and Friends into a series, and I think our pilot will show there is a large audience that's been waiting for this kind of show."

You can watch the pilot episode of **Flummox and Friends** and find out more about the show at www.flummoxandfriends.com.

[Watch a trailer for the show](#)

[More about the show](#)

[Meet the team](#) and [the cast](#)

[Watch the Kickstarter pitch video](#)