

Hi and welcome to Autism Talk TV. This is the first of a new series of episodes featuring the PEERS Center at UCLA, which does social skills training. So in this episode, Alex learns to flirt, and Alex will be flirting with a real girl at a real doctor's office. Stay tuned. [Laughs] Okay.

**Alex:** Hi. We're here with Liz Laugeson, and we're talking about dating etiquette as part of our social skills series. Liz, thank you so much for joining us.

**Liz:** Thanks for having me.

**Alex:** Dating is a really important part of a lot of people's lives, and one thing that I think a lot of us have trouble with is letting the other person—your interest, your romantic interest—know that you're interested. I know there's flirting and other ways of making that happen, so could you give me some advice on that?

**Liz:** Well, it's really interesting. They've done all this research that actually kinda breaks down what people do when they're flirting and if they're flirting effectively. This is what it's supposed to look like. So you start by kind of making eye contact with a person, right? Okay, what do you think you do once you've sort of engaged them in the eye contact? What should you do?

**Alex:** Wait until they look away.

**Liz:** Well, okay, so if we do that, that might make-make it look like we're sort of staring at them, right? When we, when they look over—let's say I'm looking over at you and you kind of look over at me, should I—should I do anything...?

**Alex:** Smile.

**Liz:** I should smile, right? Absolutely. Do I wanna do a big toothy smile or do I wanna do maybe just kind of a casual, kind of nice and friendly smile.

**Alex:** Probably a casual.

**Liz:** Yeah, probably like a little casual, kinda nice little half smile maybe. One of the things that you're gonna need to be doing before you ever ask the person on a date is assessing whether or not it seems like they're interested in you at all. And so by this point, we should have been trading information and finding some common interests with this person, and that's typically how it starts when you ask someone out on a date. You're just kinda casually talking, you're trading information back and forth, you're talking about something that's interesting to both of you.

**Alex:** Are you watching *Midnight in Paris* on your iPhone?

**Girl:** I am. Do you know of it?

**Alex:** Yeah, I love Woody Allen.

**Girl:** Oh, so do I. This is one of my favorite movies.

**Alex:** Do you have a favorite?

**Girl:** Oh, um, I don't know. What's yours?

**Alex:** It's uh, called *Manhattan*.

**Girl:** I've never seen that one.

**Alex:** Oh, man, that's his best movie.

**Girl:** I should definitely check it out, then.

**Liz:** Let's say we find out that we both are interested in seeing some movie that's coming out soon. You might say, "Well, so what are you doing this weekend?" So you're kind of assessing before you ever ask them out how they react to that kind of question. So if they say, "Oh, nothing..."

**Alex:** Yeah, that's a sign that they want you to ask them to do something.

**Liz:** That's a good sign.

**Alex:** Actually they're playing it at that art house theater next week.

**Girl:** Oh, really? Oh, well that seems interesting.

**Alex:** Yeah, what are you doing next week?

**Girl:** Actually, I don't have any plans as of right now.

**Alex:** Oh, well, you should come with me and watch it.

**Girl:** That would be really fun.

**Liz:** And that's also where you would ask for things like contact information: cell phone numbers, things that you didn't already have.

**Alex:** Right. Well, do you wanna exchange numbers, or—

**Girl:** Of course.

**Liz:** So basically those are the steps for, you know, asking someone out on a date. You just wanna be trading information, find some common interests, ask them if they're sort of available and whatever time. If they seem interested, maybe ask me out related to that common interest, and then, you know, exchange the contact information and all that.

**Alex:** Now, is there something to be said about practicing these things?

**Liz:** Definitely. I mean, all the skills that we teach in PEERS, we not only go over these-these rules and steps of social etiquette, but then we actually want to demonstrate what they look like to our kids and then have them practice.