



autism speaks®

CHOICE



RATING



LET'S VOTE!

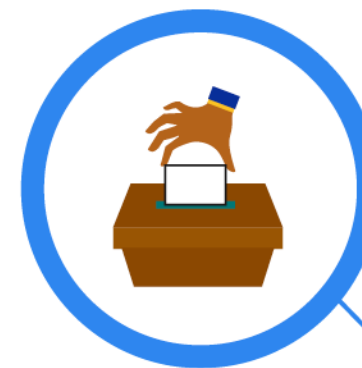


A teaching story

CANDIDATE



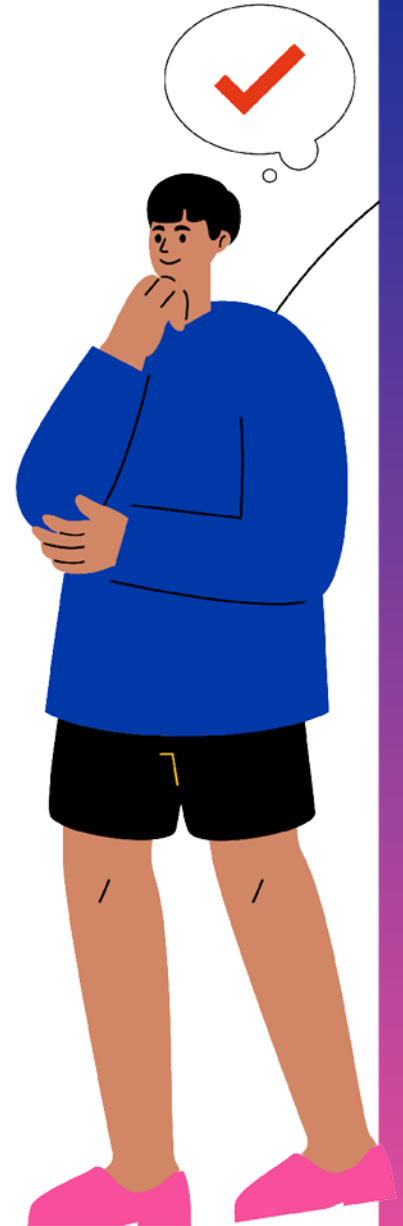
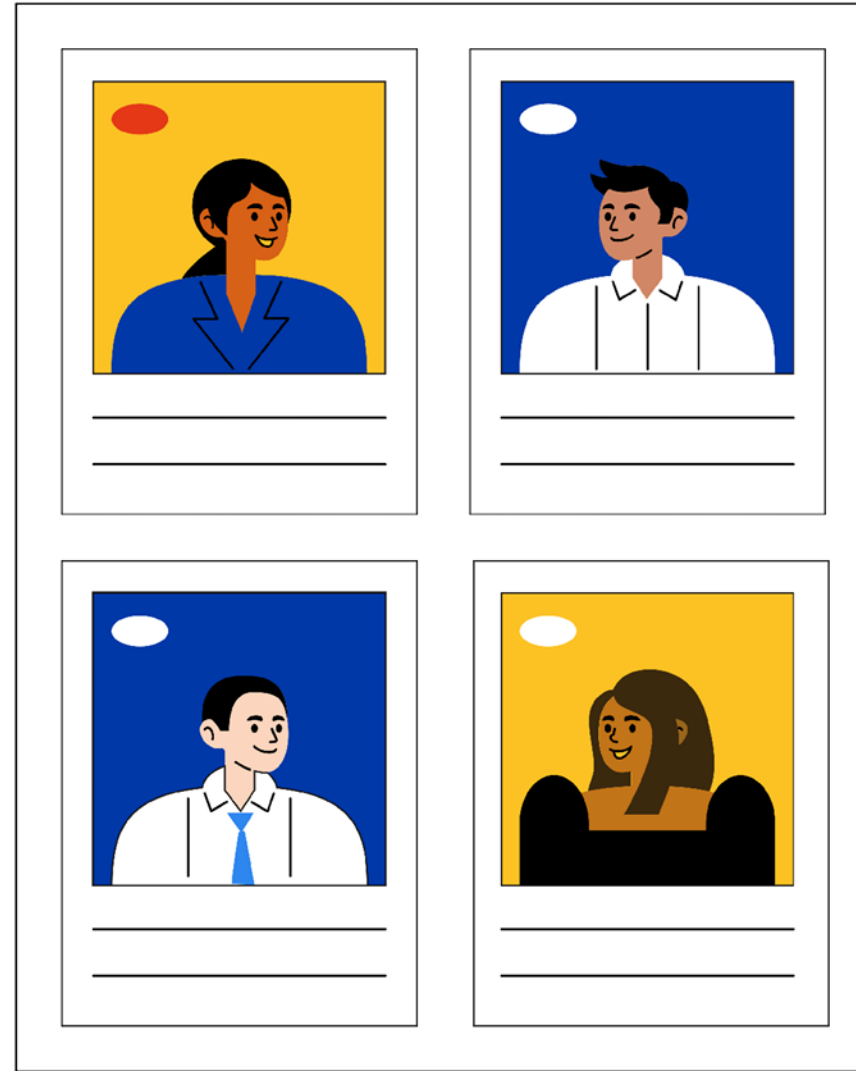
ELECTION





Voting means choosing.

It is a decision. Most of the time you are choosing the people who will lead your community, your city or town, your state or the country. Sometimes you vote to decide if a program is good for the public or if laws should be passed. Voting is done through a public event called an **election**.



You need to be registered to vote.

If you don't know if you are registered, you can ask someone you trust or [check your Voter Status here](#).

If you want to register to vote, you can find out how in your state here: autismspeaks.org/autism-votes.

Once you are registered, you can vote in elections.

Elections usually happen on a special day called **Election Day**.



LET'S VOTE! *A teaching story*

Voter registration guide by state

Over 35 million people with disabilities, including those with autism, are eligible to vote according to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC). Yet, only 17.7 million or half of them voted in the 2020 election.

What's at stake if you don't vote? Billions of dollars that gets allocated by federal and state elected officials every year for autism services, research and programs.

The number of eligible disabled voters in the United States, including the estimated 100,000 people with autism who turn 18 every year and become eligible to vote, are enough to help determine local, state and national elections, including who becomes President.

In other words, your vote impacts how decisions are made from a national level down to your local county - decisions that can either halt or drive forward resources for you, your autistic peers and the greater autism community. So, exercise your right and demand you be heard.

Your voice matters. Click on your state

- how and when to register to vote
- voting assistance for those with disabilities
- whether your state allows those with disabilities to vote
- and find more at Autism votes

Alabama | Alaska | Arizona | Arkansas | California | Colorado | Connecticut | Delaware | District of Columbia | Florida | Georgia | Hawaii | Idaho | Illinois | Indiana | Iowa | Kansas | Kentucky | Louisiana | Maine | Maryland | Massachusetts | Michigan | Minnesota | Mississippi | Missouri | Montana | Nebraska | Nevada | New Hampshire | New Jersey | New Mexico | New York | North Carolina | North Dakota | Ohio | Oklahoma | Oregon | Pennsylvania | Puerto Rico | Rhode Island | South Carolina | South Dakota | Tennessee | Texas | Utah | Vermont | Virginia | Washington | West Virginia | Wisconsin | Wyoming

CHECK YOUR STATUS



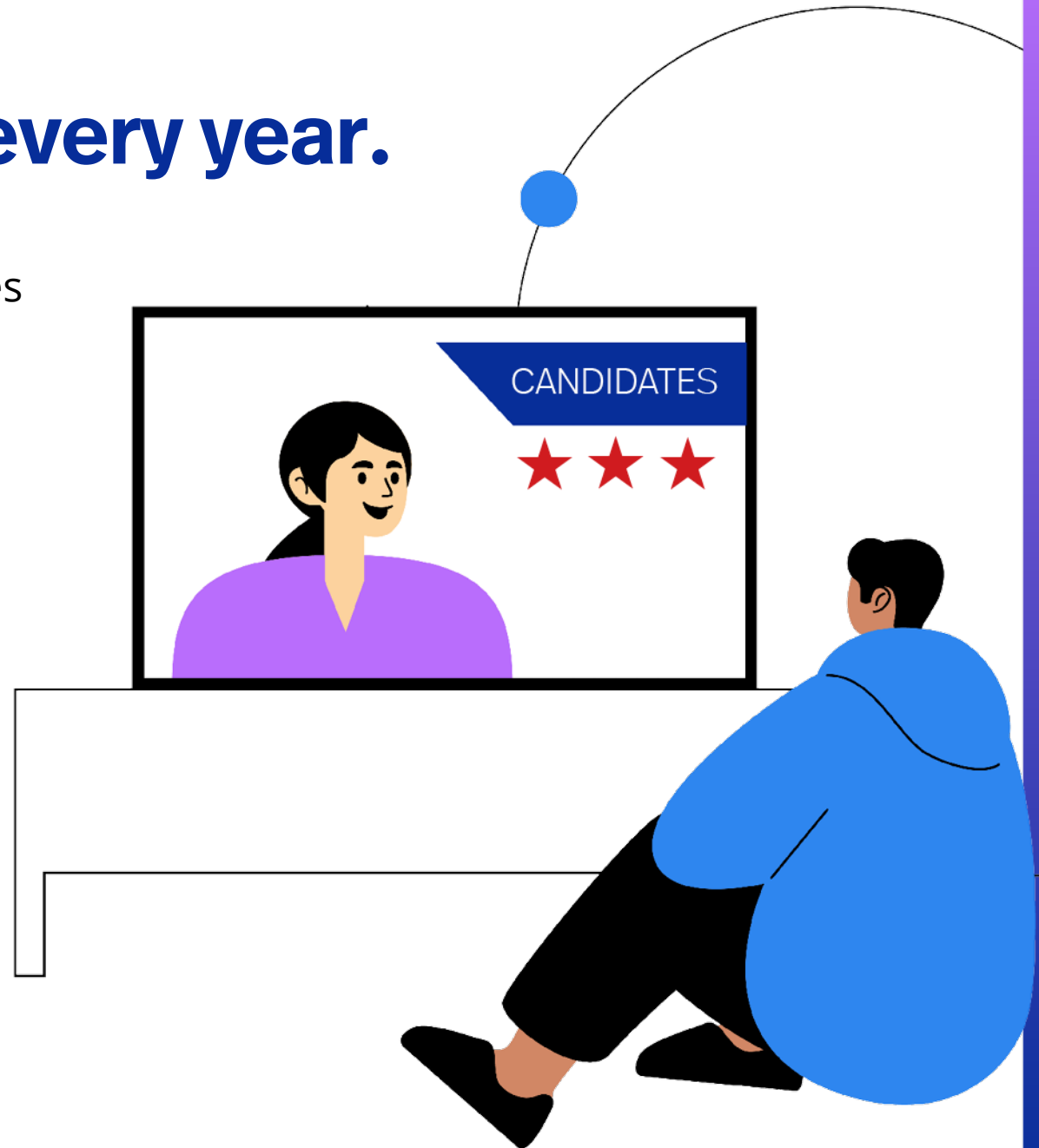
There is an **ELECTION DAY** every year.

We vote for different leaders at different times. For example, we vote for the President of the United States every four years. But you may be able to vote for your city council members ever year.

The people who want to be leaders are called **candidates**. Make sure you learn about them and any laws you will vote for before the election.

Learn more about the candidates running for office by visiting their campaign websites or watching candidate debates.

You can ask someone you trust or look up what elections are happening this year at [Ballotpedia.org](https://www.ballotpedia.org).





Voters go to a place called a **POLLING PLACE** or **POLLING STATION** to vote.

Sometimes this is a library, school, or community center near your house.

At the polling place, you will wait in line. When it is your turn, a volunteer will check to make sure you are a registered voter.

A volunteer will give you instructions on how to vote. You will be given your ballot.

A **ballot** is your official voting document. You can find a sample voting ballot for at [Ballotpedia.org](https://www.ballotpedia.org).





You may use a pen or machine to mark your ballot. You will probably do this in a booth behind a curtain or door so you can vote in private.

A trusted person can come with you if you need help. But nobody else can watch you vote.

No one can tell you how to vote.



In some states, people can vote early or by mail.

This is called a **mail-in or absentee ballot**. You can find out what your state allows at Autism Speaks [Voter Registration Guide by State](#).

To vote by mail, you will fill out a paper ballot. It will come with instructions to fill it out. It will also come with a special envelope so you can send your ballot back.

You can put your ballot in the envelope and put in the mailbox. Or you can take it to an official drop-off box.



Sometimes the deadline for mail-in votes is before Election Day.

The deadline should be on your paper ballot.

If you do not see it, you can ask for help or you can check your state's deadline at Autism Speaks [Voter Registration Guide by State.](#)

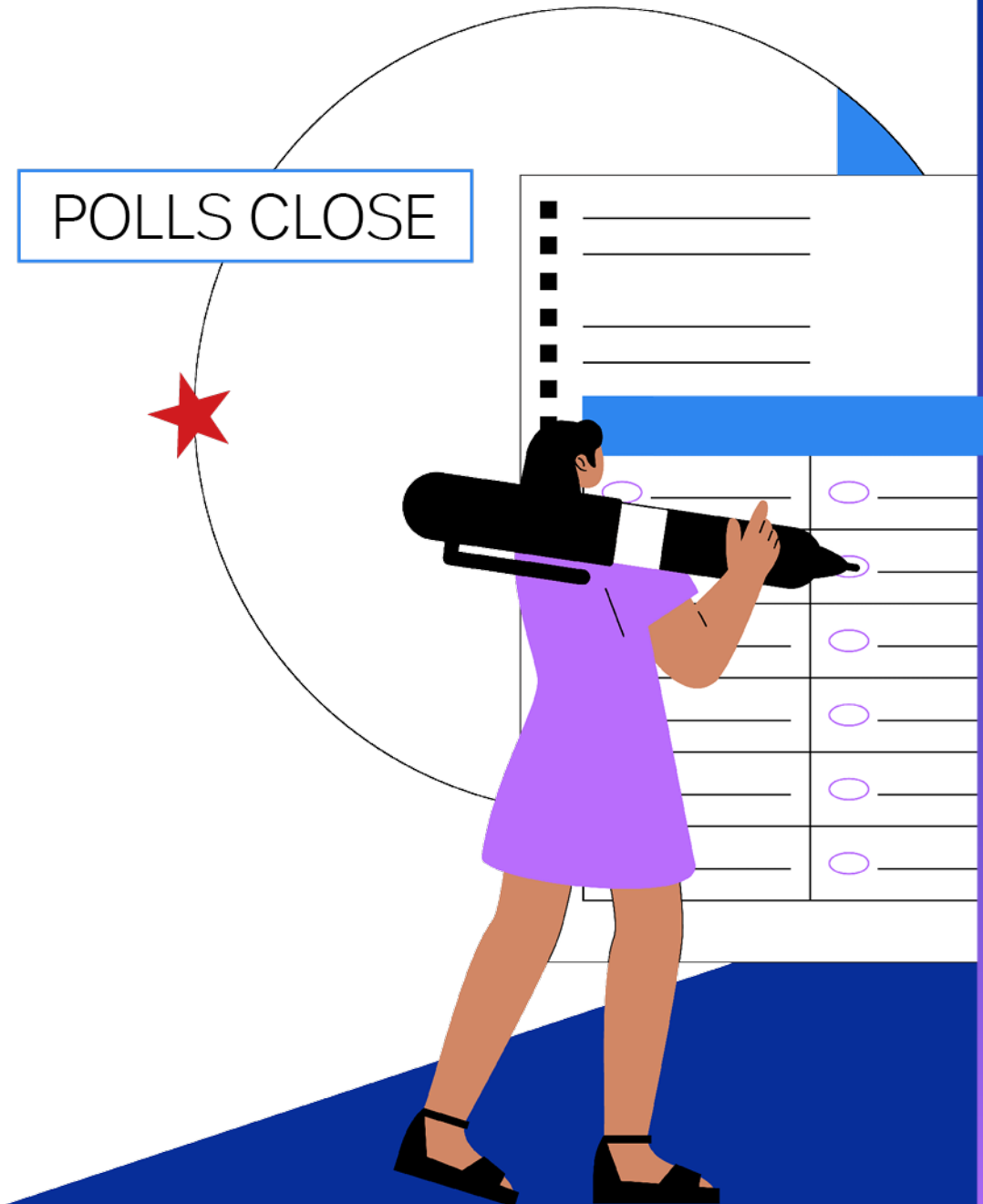


Polls close at a certain time on Election Day.

You can **check what time polls close** in your area at Vote411.org.

After polls close, all ballots are collected. The votes are counted. This can take a couple of hours or a few days.

The candidate or law with the most votes wins. The winner will be announced on the news and on government websites.



You have the right to vote.

All adults with disabilities, including autism, have the right to vote. This right cannot be taken away because of an autism diagnosis.

You also have the right to equal access to vote in every election.

You can learn about your rights at Autism Speaks [Laws and protections for voters with disabilities.](#)

