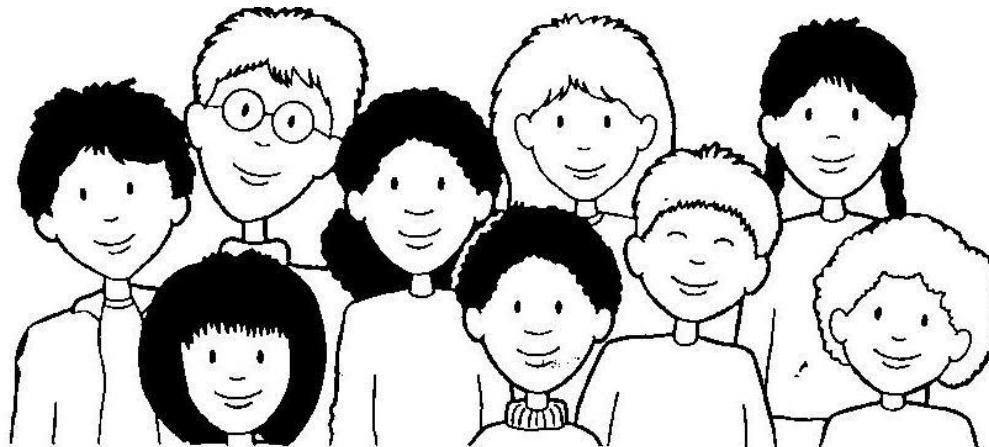


Supporting the Student with Autism Spectrum Disorder in your Classroom



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What is Autism?

Autism is a life-long developmental disorder varying in range and intensity. All individuals with ASD have noted difficulties in the specific areas of communication, social skills, and behaviour. We, as educators must provide these students with the tools that they need to succeed in leading fulfilling and productive lives.



Triad of Impairments

Impairments in
Communication

**Autism
Spectrum
Disorder**

Pattern of
Restricted,
Stereotypic
Behaviours

Impairments
in
Socialization

Childhood
Disintegrative
Disorder

Rett's
Syndrome

Autism

PDD
Not
Otherwise
Specified

Asperger's
Syndrome



Neurology

Neurology plays a large role in the etiology of ASD. The areas affected include:

The Limbic System
The Cerebellum

As a result of this neurological involvement, the student with ASD differs from the typical child in the way that they learn.



Learning Styles

- Gestalt learners (use chunking, rote learning, and repetition)
- Marked difficulty with generalization (analysis and synthesis of novel information)
- Learn best when anxiety is low (routine and ritual)
- Visual thinking (literal and concrete, auditory weaknesses)
- Attention shifting difficulties (get “stuck”, can’t separate whole picture from the detail)



Academic Strengths and Weaknesses

Students with ASD demonstrate strengths in the areas of procedural knowledge and weaknesses in the areas of declarative knowledge.

Strengths:

- Rote memorization
- Word recognition
- Spelling
- Reading Decoding

Weaknesses:

- Complex information processing
- Concept development
- Language/Reading comprehension
- Problem solving
- Inferring
- Analyzing and synthesizing information

Promoting Individual Strengths

ABOUT ME

I like to:

Some feelings I have are:

I feel sad when:

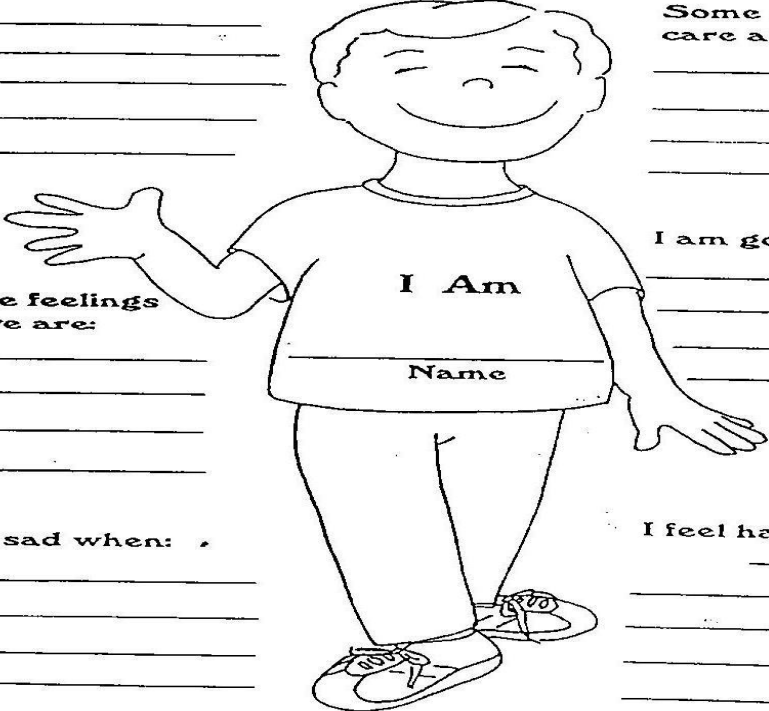
I Am

Name

Some people I care about are:

I am good at:

I feel happy when:



Let the individual write out information about themselves.

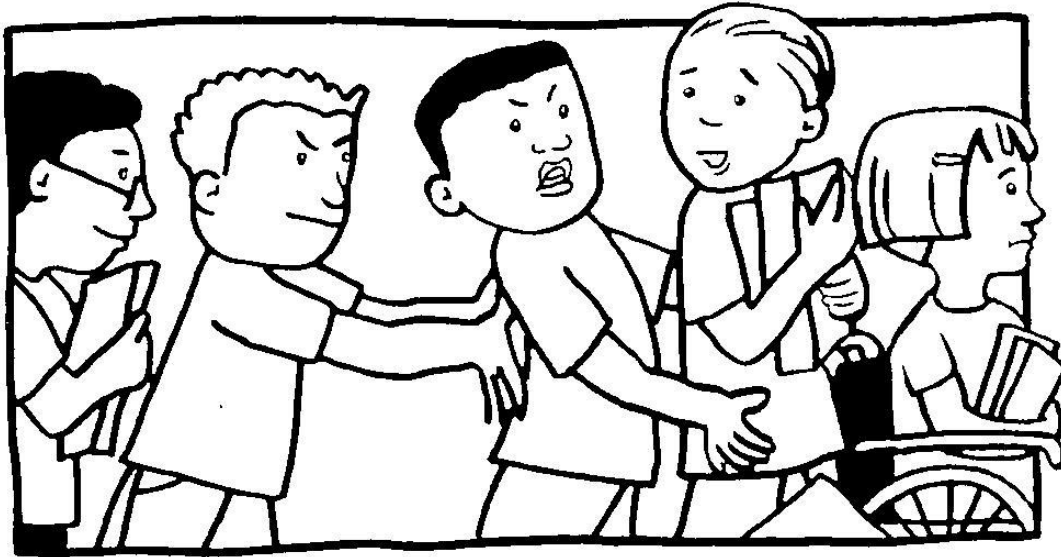
Make it into a game – Don't put a name on it, guess whose paper belongs to who.



Differences in those with ASD



1. Behaviour



Behaviour is functional and related to communication.



Understanding Behaviour

- Be aware that typical development and individual personality contributes to behaviour
- Research indicates that an increase in communication skills ultimately leads to a decrease in inappropriate behaviours
- Consider carefully your influence on the child's behaviour (reaction, expectations, control)



How do I support appropriate behaviour?

- Determine the function of the behaviour
 - Escape
 - Attention
 - Sensory
 - Tangible
- Manipulate the antecedents and consequences
- Reinforce alternative skills
- Explain the DO, as well as the DON'T



Hypothesize the Function

Consider a specific and recent behavioural incident involving a student from your classroom.

Can you hypothesize the function of this particular behaviour?

- Attention
- Escape
- Sensory
- Tangible



The ABC's

Antecedent (what happened, who was present, where, when)	Behaviour (operationally define target behaviour)	Consequence (what did you do, what did peers/ others do)	Function (what was the communicative intent?)



Antecedent

- Object taken away
- Transition
- Requested to do something
- Invasion of personal space
- Environment change
- Routine change

Behaviour

- Hit
- Self-injury
- Self-stim
- Verbal
- Tantrum
- Throwing
- Flopping
- Screaming
- Walks away
- Running



Consequence

- Redirected
- Natural consequence
- Ignored
- Shown picture/rule
- Time-out
- Differential reinforcement

Function

- Escape
- Attention
- Sensory
- Tangible
- Multiple

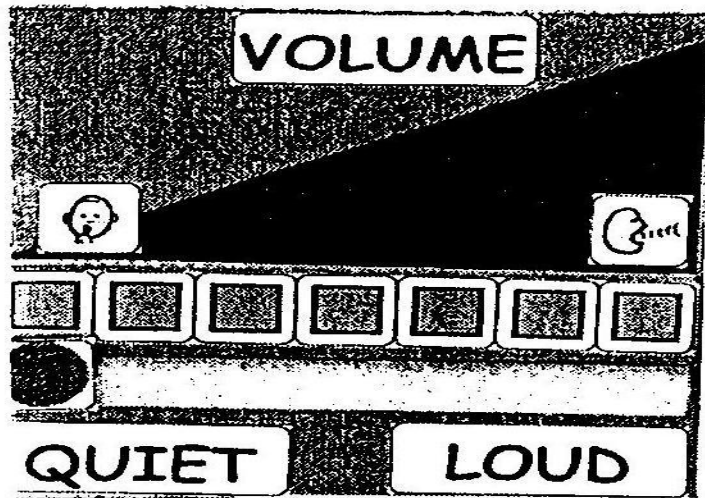


Reinforcement

- Vary the reinforcer
(social, activity, sensory, edible, and token reinforcers are a few examples)
- Reinforce immediately
- Reinforce consistently
- Pair a tangible reinforcer with social praise
- Evaluate the effectiveness

Self-Management Tools

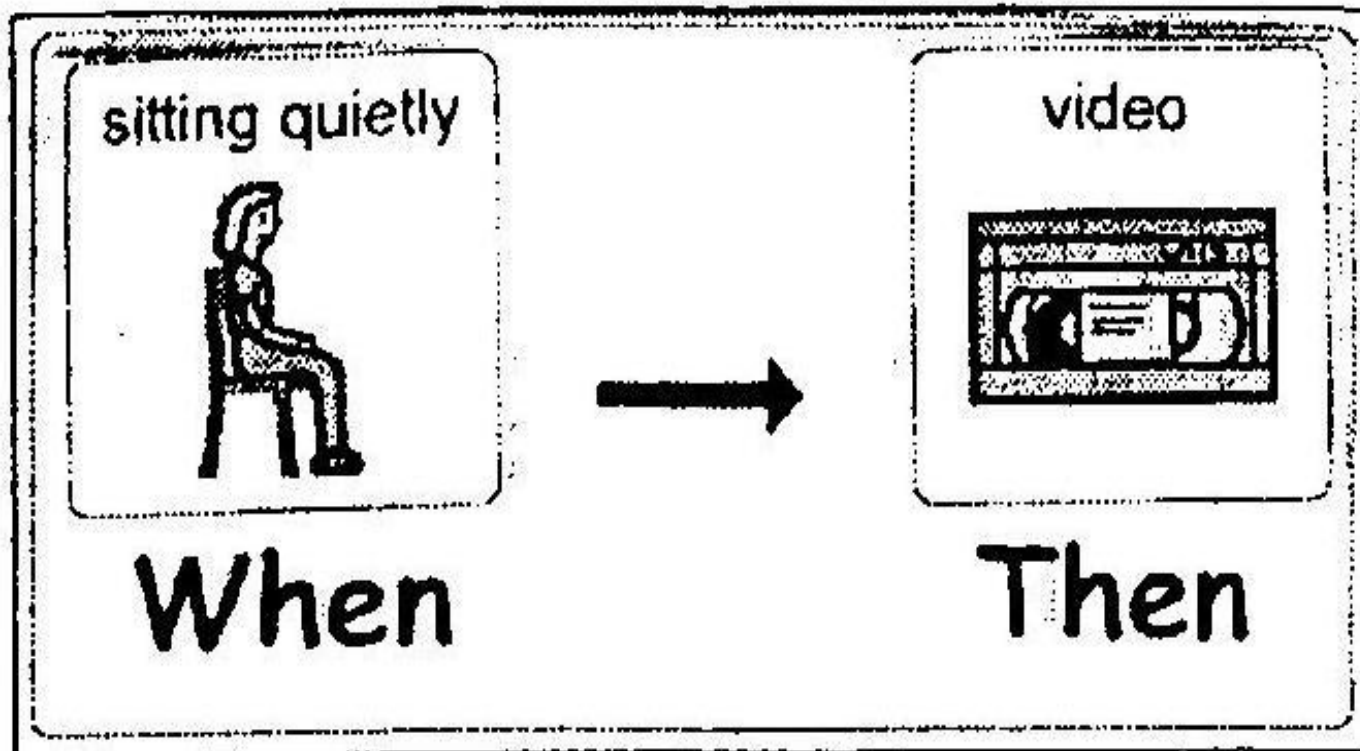
Developing independence is extremely important for ASD students. Developing self-management tools assists them with this goal.



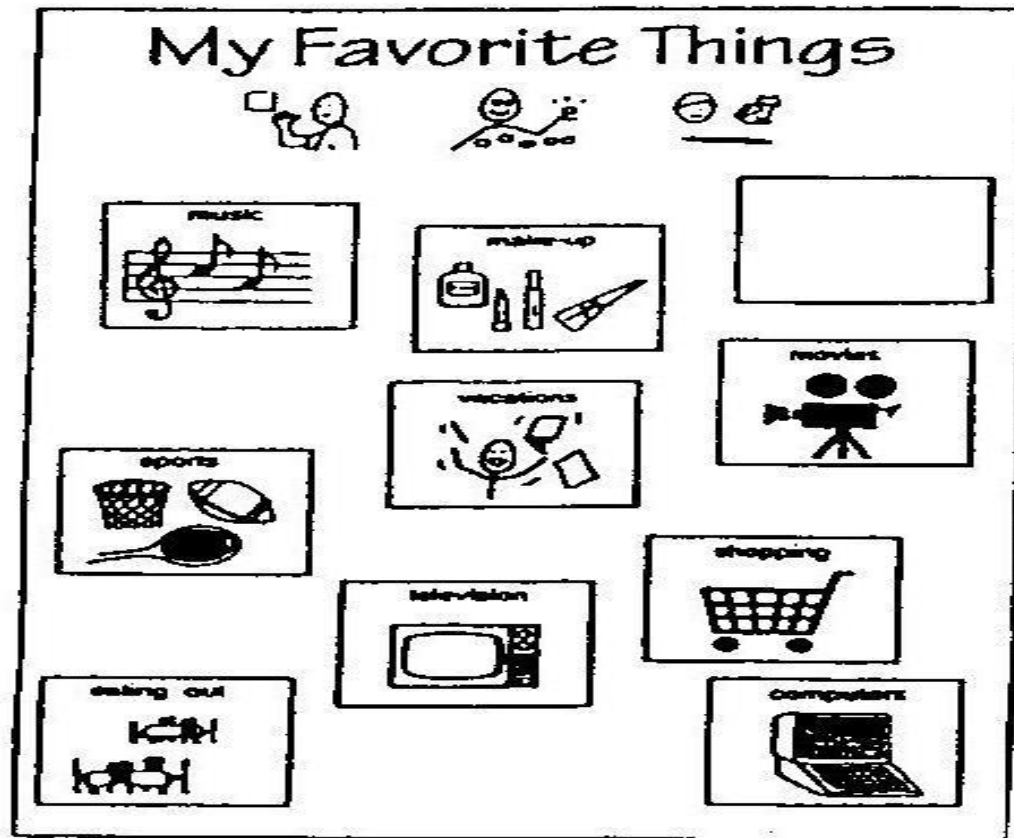
I am upset because the children are too loud.

- I can go the quiet centre and read a book.
- I can go put my earphones on and listen to my favorite tape

Transition Helpers



Offering Choice





2. Communication

Don't assume that a verbal student understands you and that a non-verbal child lacks understanding!





Expressive Communication

Focus on functional language that is both meaningful and motivating.

Methods may include:

- speech imitation
- sign language
- picture systems
- oral language.

A multi-system approach is considered ideal.

Teaching pragmatics or social language including body language, inflections, and the rules of conversation.



Receptive Communication

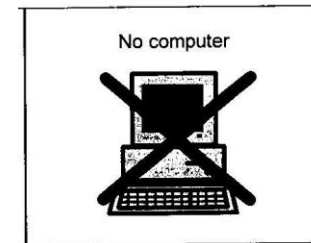
Visual Aids assist student in many ways by:

- Helping to clarify expectations
- Providing ongoing organization and structure
- Decreasing processing time
- Decreasing reliance on adult prompts and cues.



Examples of Visual Aids:

- Schedules and Calendars
- Choice Boards
- Communication of "No"
- Transition Helpers
- Task Organizers





Consider Carefully...

- Use 3-5 word simple sentences
- Avoid double meaning and sarcasm
- Allow 10 seconds processing time
- Demand only social eye contact
- Increase hands-on life experience
(a student with ASD cannot imagine that which he/she has not experienced)
- The developmental progression of comprehension



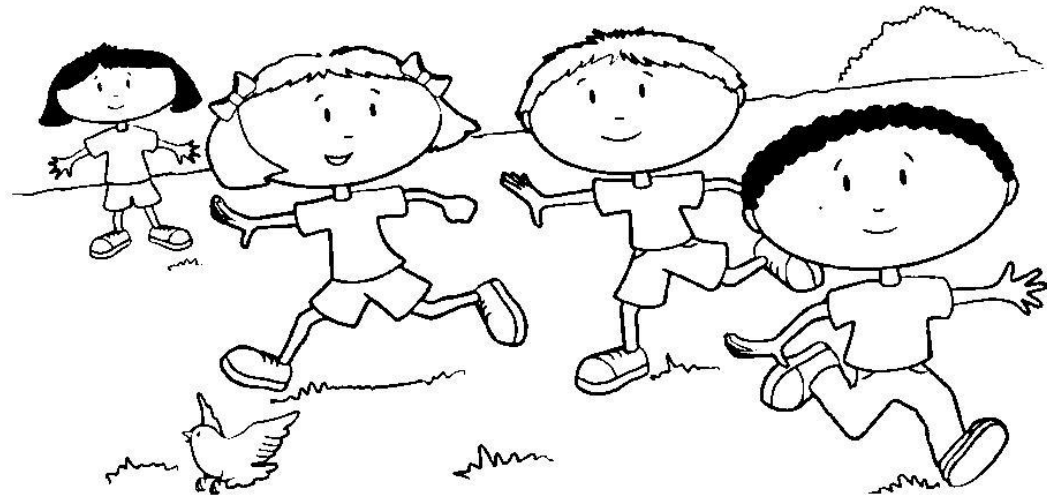
Comprehension Development

- Yes/No?
- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- How?
- If/Then?



3. Socialization

Social skills are the best predictor of positive, long-term outcomes for students with ASD.





What is Theory of Mind or Mindblindness?

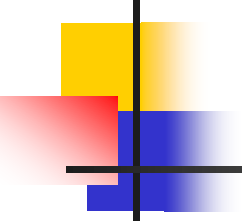
This "...is defined as the ability to infer other people's mental states and the ability to use this information to interpret what they say, make sense of their behaviour, and predict what they will do next."

Simon Baron-Cohen. 1995



Activities requiring Theory of Mind

- Reading non-verbal cues
- Pragmatics
- Imagination
- Sizing up social situations
- Inferring the intentions of others
- Predicting behaviour
- Empathizing
- Making adjustments in one's own behaviour to match a situation
- Making sense of the social world



We, therefore, have to provide direct social skills instruction:

- Greetings
- Asking for and offering assistance
- Turn-taking
- Initiating conversations
- Empathy
- Giving compliments
- Sharing
- Accepting criticism
- Joining others
- Listening with interest
- Farewells

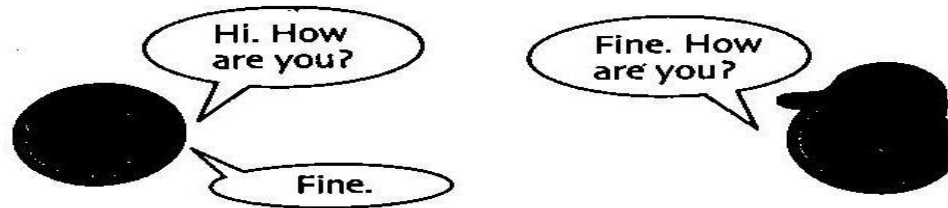
Tony Attwood



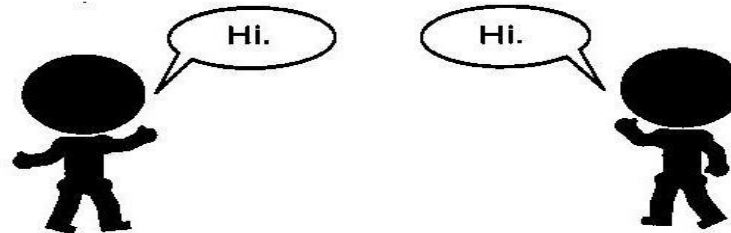
Social Scripting

Greetings

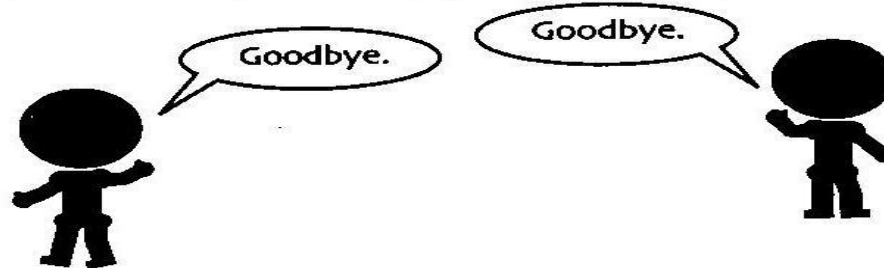
1. The first time you see someone during the day, you say, "Hi, how are you?"



2. When you pass someone in the hallway, you say, "Hi."



3. When someone is leaving for the day, you say, "Goodbye."

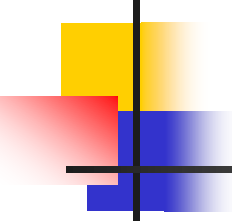




Social Stories

- A. Describe a social situation and indicate the social expectations (i.e. what to say, what to do)

- B. Clearly explain the social reasoning behind the suggested behaviour (i.e. the feelings of others)



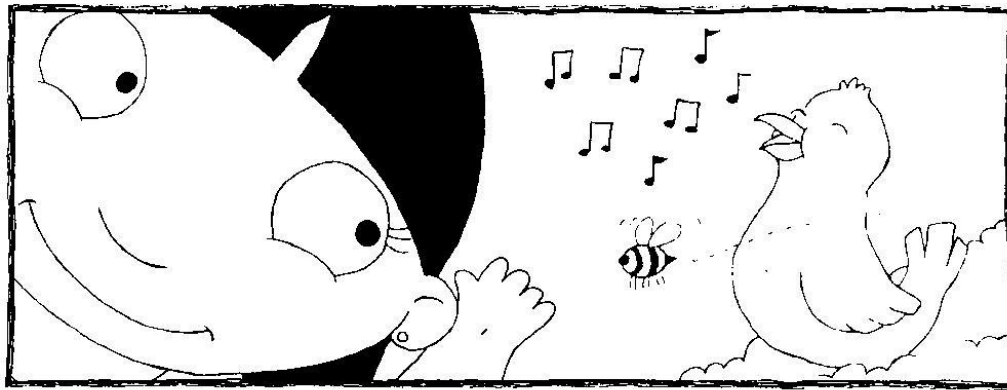
Interrupting a Conversation

My name is Sally. I go to Wembley Public School. Sometimes I want to talk to an adult when the adult is talking to someone else. I will try to wait patiently and count to 5 in my head before saying, "Excuse me." This is important! Adults are happy when I am polite.



4. Sensory Differences

Sensory differences are found in 90% of individuals with ASD. Whereas, only 10% exhibit sensory differences in the typical population.





Sensory Accommodations

Sense	Observations	Accommodations
Hearing	Shouting, humming, constant noise, banging	Headphones, items that make noise
Touch	Wedging body, avoiding touch, hand flapping	Deep pressure, beanbag chair, tight clothing, brushing, fidget toys
Smell	Sniffing hair, skin, objects, smearing feces	Smelling jars



Sensory accommodations

Sense	Observations	Accommodations
Taste	Eating inedible, mouthing, sucking	Textured foods, chewy candy, electric toothbrush, "chewelry" (chewable jewelry)
Visual	Finger flicking, twirling objects	Pinwheels, bubbles, kaleidoscope, toys with moving parts



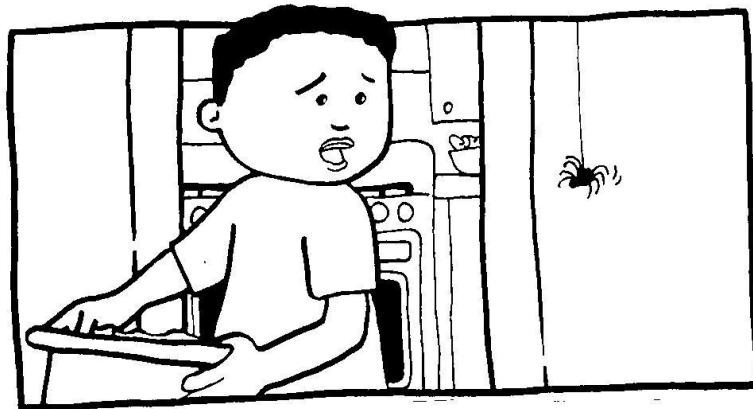
Try:

- Imitate the actions of the child to try to get some insight into the possible sensory functions
- Reinforce alternative behaviours that achieve the same sensory function
- Provide an unstructured time in which the student may participate in needed sensory activities (i.e. self-stimulating behaviours)

5. Anxiety

“Even for the most capable people with ASD, anxiety can be such a problem that they are unable to complete a simple task that they are physically able to do.”

www.autism.net





Signs of Increasing Anxiety

- Avoidance of anxiety producing activities
- Increase in ritualistic, explosive or self-stimulatory behaviours



Anxiety Management

- Develop an IEP Safety Plan
- Teach relaxation methods
- Encourage self-management "Breaks"
- Use social stories and cognitive picture rehearsal

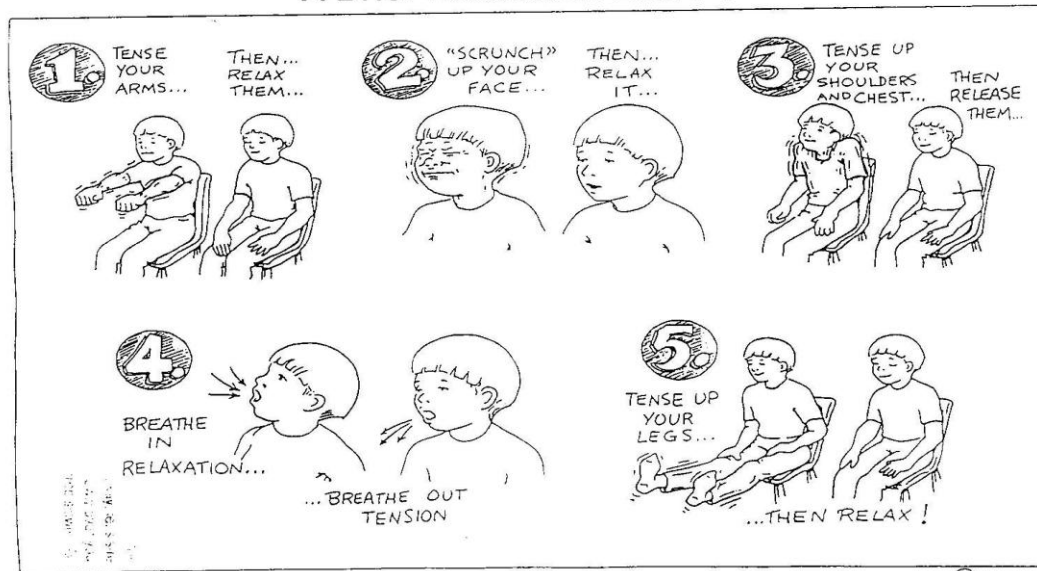


I.E.P. Safety Plan

- Ensures that all staff members react to the evidence of increased tension in a similar manner
- Develop and implement the plan as a team
- Re-assess the plan as required
- Include the student whenever feasible
- Rehearse the plan prior to using it

Tension-Reduction

A Brief Relaxation Exercise





References



- The Geneva Centre for Autism
www.autism.net
- The Autism Society of Ontario
- www.do2learn.com