

Ten Keys to Supporting a Student with Autism

Alyson Beytien

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Assume Competence

- Used to believe that 80% of individuals with ASD were mentally retarded
- Now believed to be 30% or less
- Allow peers to model
- Verbally encourage prior to attempt
- If at first you don't succeed....make it more visual!!

Prepare Ahead

- Environmental Analysis if possible
- Calendars, schedules
- Signal or icon for “change”
- “Turn around” time
 - More for an “unpreferred change”
 - Less for a “preferred change”

Prepare ahead

- Preview Activities and Assignments with actual materials
 - Preview literature and worksheets
 - Overview a test
 - Show the visual schedule prior to activity
 - Practice with art supplies
 - Show a work sample or project sample

Have a Schedule

- Diagrams, Maps
- Written instructions
- Review verbally, but put in writing
- Advance warning of changes
- Information and Knowledge, Information and Knowledge!!

5 Point Scale



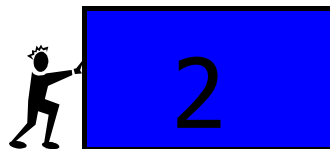
Emergency



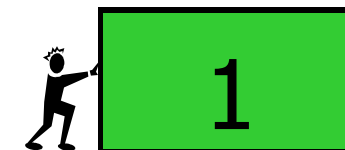
Outside/Gym Activity



Classroom Voice



Whisper



Silence

Teaching Options

- Grading options—what's the priority?
- Project options—computer research?
Dictation? Powerpoint?
- Homework—reduced quantity, time limits,
copies of lecture notes, verification of
assignment?
- Visual, Visual, Visual!
- Match curriculum to special interests
whenever possible

Support Team

- Know your players-SLP, OT, MSW
- Use your resources--Guidance Counselors, prior teachers
- Peers are fabulous teachers!
- Behavior Problem? Look at
 - Environment first
 - Visuals second
 - Then call in the experts

Family Support Team

- Get connected
 - Support groups
 - Online information
 - Other families in your area
- Extended family
- Everyone needs a friend!
- Create relationships with professionals

Modeling and Friendship

- We WANT to have friends, we just don't know how!
- Look for related interests
- Not just girls!!
- Will struggle to just “talk”—need scripts, projects to share, and conversation starters

Classroom Support

- Group work vs. schoolwork—what's the priority?
- Assign groups with care—may not volunteer
- Specific assignments within group
- Challenges asking for help

Social Interactions

- Look for peer models and support
- Vocal tone and words may not match emotion
- Facial expression may not match emotion
- Concrete, literal thinkers
- Frequently does not respond well to sarcasm and teasing—a learned skill
- Targets for bullying

Sensory Needs

- Hypo or Hyper Sensitive
- May struggle to process all the senses at once
- Environmental challenges
- Seasonal challenges—look out for winter!
- Need to take breaks to support sensory system

Time to relax

- Need breaks during the day to calm—cannot handle heavy demands for a whole class period
- Need some sensory input—jumping, rocking, walking, running, something to hold, 10 minutes reading, etc.
- May need a “safe” place to go when struggling
- During a meltdown, DO NOT try to teach!

Communication System

- In times of stress, language decreases.
- Communication System should support the student's worst day
- Communication between staff and family of utmost importance
- “But he's done so well with the schedule, he doesn't need it anymore.”

All Behavior is Communication!

If we do the prior “keys” then we reduce or eliminate inappropriate and troubling behavior.

CONTACT ME!

www.alysonbeytien.com