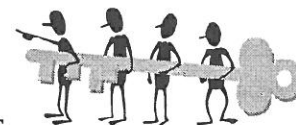


What Can I Do?

When asking the question, "What can I do for the student with autism?" you must remember that no one knows all the answers at any one time. You will be part of a team. The team will continually strive to determine what works best for each student. Over many years, research, parent reports, teacher interventions and therapist interventions have given teams good techniques to use with many students. All strategies cannot be provided to you in a small handbook. Students with autism may benefit from information listed in this book, but most important is the continual planning that the team will do for individual students. The following pages list some strategies your team may use with a student.



In the Environment

(Look at your environment.)

- Provide visual organization with anything you teach or do.
- Provide a schedule of the day for the child. The schedule may include pictures and/or words. Allow the child to take the picture to the location, or to cross off the word when the task is finished.
- Prepare the student for changes in routine.
- Provide preferential seating.
- Provide an "extra" book for the student to follow as the teacher reads.
- Avoid visual clutter when possible.

In Teaching

(The way you teach.)

- Break tasks down.
- Teach with visual cues.
- Review what the lesson and content will be; when the lesson will be over; and what will happen after the lesson.
- Emphasize proficient skills of the student.
- Use the student's interests to teach and broaden their interests.
- Teach social cues within the environment.
- Provide a structured time to teach social skills.

In Communicating

(The way you communicate.)

- Be clear. Speak in shorter sentences.
- Avoid jokes, sarcasm.
- Remember, emotions, facial expressions and gestures are difficult.
- Be concrete. Avoid the abstract.
- Avoid "Why" questions.
- Have a student repeat a direction to organize his or her thoughts.
- Help to "translate" social, emotional reactions and interactions. "Josh walked away because he was finished talking."
- Help the child access/learn communication systems.

Sensory Needs

(The student may need one or more of the following. An occupational therapist can advise in this area.)

- A large therapy ball to sit on.
- A rocking chair.
- A "fidget" item when listening.
- Special Lighting
- Something to chew or candy to suck.
- A weighted vest or lap pad.
- Beanbag chairs

More Things to Do from Another Angle

It is *important* and even *imperative* to understand that there is a reason for any behaviors you see displayed by a student with autism. Do not take behaviors personally. At a conference presented on autism at the Western Regional Resource Center in 1998, a list of "Causes of Negative Behavior" was presented. Seven causes were listed, with signs, symptoms, and solutions for each. These are listed below. Your teacher or consultant will review these. Again, keep in mind that these are quick interventions. The best answers lie in team planning for individual students.

Causes of Negative Behavior

- Communication Frustration
- Sensory Issues
- Expectations Too High
- Confusion
- Need for Things to Remain the Same
- Attention-seeking
- Boredom



Communication Frustration	
Signs & Symptoms	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Repeats behavior/persistent. 2. Frustration/Anger 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make communication system more accessible 2. Provide choices 3. Reinforce attempts
Sensory Issues	
Signs & Symptoms	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Covers ears/eyes 2. Moves away from sound source 3. Cringes 4. Seeks enclosed spaces 5. Engages in self-stimulatory behavior 6. Mouths objects 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove difficult sensation 2. Introduce sensation in small doses 3. Reduce background noise 4. Use barriers (i.e., partition, earphones) 5. Provide substitutions
Expectations Too High	
Signs & Symptoms	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Avoids Tasks 2. Frustration/Anger 3. Extremely Slow Progress 4. Confusion 5. Increase in stereotypic behavior 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Break skill down further 2. Choose new teaching strategy 3. Temporarily discontinue