



Autism Speaks: Help Create a Kinder, More Inclusive World



Autism Spectrum Disorder Statistics

(Autism Speaks)

- In 2020, the CDC reported that approximately 1 in 54 children in the U.S. is diagnosed
- with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), according to 2016 data.
 - 1 in 34 boys identified with autism
 - 1 in 144 girls identified with autism
- Boys are four times more likely to be diagnosed with autism than girls.
- Most children were still being diagnosed after age 4, though autism can be reliably diagnosed as early as age 2.
- 31% of children with ASD have an intellectual disability (intelligence quotient [IQ] <70), 25% are in the borderline range (IQ 71–85), and 44% have IQ scores in the average to above average range (i.e., IQ >85).
- Autism affects all ethnic and socioeconomic groups.
- Minority groups tend to be diagnosed later and less often.
- There is no medical detection for autism.



Associated challenges:

(Autism Speaks)

- Nearly half of those with autism wander or bolt from safety.
- Nearly two-thirds of children with autism between the ages of 6 and 15 have been bullied.
- Nearly 28 percent of 8-year-olds with ASD have self-injurious behaviors. Head banging, arm biting and skin scratching are among the most common.
- Drowning remains a leading cause of death for children with autism and accounts for approximately 90 percent of deaths associated with wandering or bolting by those age 14 and younger.



Neurodiversity:

An approach to learning and disability that argues diverse neurological conditions are a result of “normal” variations in the human genome.

ADHD, ADD, Autism, Dyslexia

What is Neurodiversity Movement?

- Neurodivergent- a brain that diverges from the “typical” brain.
- Neurodiversity is an aspect of human diversity just like ethnic, racial, gender and sexual diversity.
- An effort to shift away from the pathology paradigm towards the neurodiversity paradigm.
- “Normal” neurocognitive functioning is a socially constructed idea.
- All brains are different and divergent does not equal bad or deficient.



Let's get Vermont's neurodiverse population out there!

Some challenges when working with individuals on the Autism Spectrum:

Motor Systems:

- Motor Planning; difficulty with imitation and reversal
- Decreased static and dynamic postural stability
- Higher postural instability in side to side versus forwards and backwards
- Reliance of visual input for postural stability

Sensory Systems:

- Difficulty in multi sensory processing = taking in information across multiple sensory systems then coordinating and integrating the information.
- Possible sensory sensitivities across all systems: visual, auditory, tactile, smell, taste, proprioception and interoception

Communication

- Scripted language
- Concrete thinking, take what you say literally
- Difficulty with social reciprocity ((give and take)
- Flexibility of thinking
- May focus on one thing and have difficulty refocusing on a task at hand
- Difficulty generalizing one concept to another/ get caught up in the details



**Motor challenges + Sensory challenges
+communication challenges = potential
behavioral challenges**

**Think about the function of behavior.
Behaviors serve as a form of communication.**

- Escape
- Avoidance
- Attention Seeking
- Sensory stimulation
- Control



What types of behaviors might you see?

- Crying
- shutting down
- asking lots of questions
- joking around
- feeling embarrassed
- using the bathroom a lot
- walking away

We should ask ourselves what is this behavior telling us?

- We may also need to recognize that some of our clients may not know what they are feeling. In those cases it's sometimes helpful to label it.
- Johnny you look frustrated, or “you look sad”
- In higher level functioning clients you can ask them “What’s going on?” “How are you feeling”



Okay, so now you know a bit about autism. How do you best instruct an autistic individual?



Be Yourself!

Best Practices:

- When possible Use Identify first Language-
Most individuals with autism prefer identity first language
(Autistic individual vs- person with autism)
- It's important to try not to make assumptions- check in with families and individuals.
- Presume competence
- Consider Autistic voices and input



Autism Level UP

Encourages us to shift up from awareness:

Acceptance

Appreciation

Empowerment

Advocacy

Tips that can help manage Behaviors

- Establish a relationship
- Provide reassurance and reward good behavior.
- Can you ignore some behaviors?
- Establish a routine that is predictable
- Manage **your** need to show progress or learning
- Set clear expectations: **let's think of an example that sets clear expectations that you might use.**



Other Strategies and Tips:

- People on the spectrum can be very concrete, be clear, use simple language.
- Less language the better.
- Lessons need planning and structure with a clear beginning, middle and end.
- Lessons should be predictable and have a routine that is predictable.
- Ask people if they need/want help; don't assume either way.

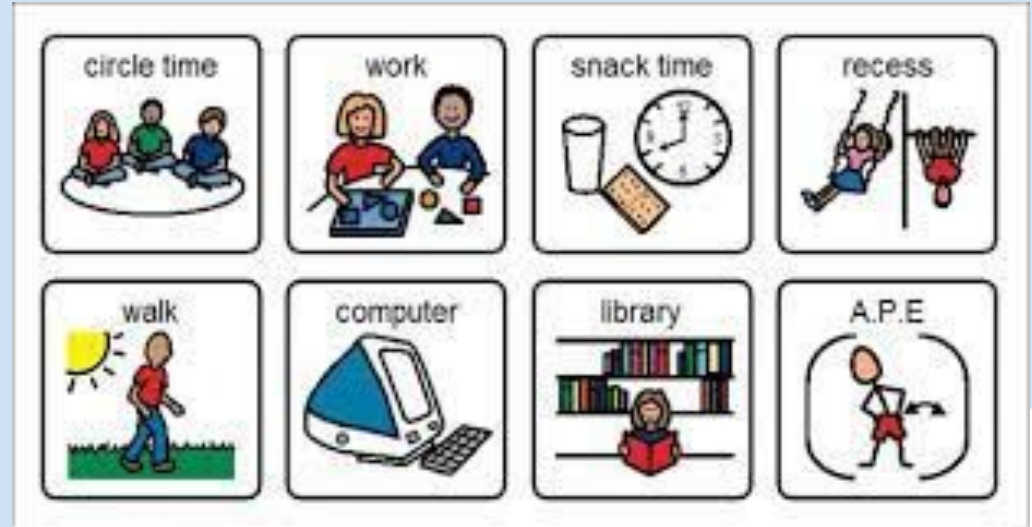
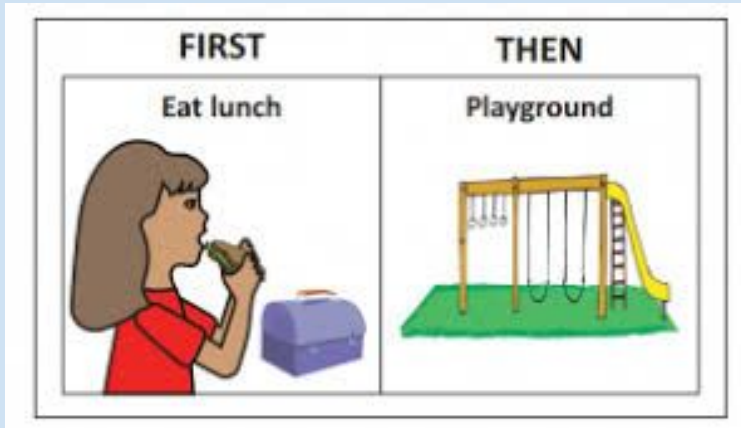


Visual Supports and Visual Schedules



What are visual supports? A visual support refers to using a picture or other visual item to communicate with a child who has difficulty understanding or using language. Visual supports can be photographs, drawings, objects, written words, or lists. Research has shown that visual supports work well as a way to communicate.

A **visual schedule** is helpful for breaking down a task that has multiple steps to ensure the teaching and compliance of those steps. It is also helpful in decreasing anxiety and rigidity surrounding transitions by communicating when certain activities will occur throughout the day or part of the day

Examples of Visual Supports



Template for First/Then

First	Then
	

Template for sequence

Boots



Jacket



Hat



Mitts



Skis
and
Poles




Visual Supports on a Lanyard






How does this help? What do you think?

May need to break down multistep directions

KIDS IN ACTION
(WITH VISUAL SUPPORTS)
FOR MULTI-STEP DIRECTIONS



 <p>Snap your fingers.</p>	 <p>Hop on one foot.</p>	 <p>Touch your toes.</p>
First	Next	Last

©2017 Teach in Talk SUN

Making a Schedule or List

Making a schedule or a list of what you want the Athlete to do helps them to:

- Understand what you expect them to do
- Helps to decrease anxiety by letting them know what they have to do
- Can be collaborative if you make the list together
- Can be satisfying if they can cross things off the list or put visuals in completed section in their schedule.
- Counting helps or counting down
- Timers

More Interventions that May Help

Social Stories- Social stories are a great way to teach children with special needs a variety of skills and behaviors, as well as outline special events and social situations. Basically, a story that teaches about a specific topic, event, or social skill.

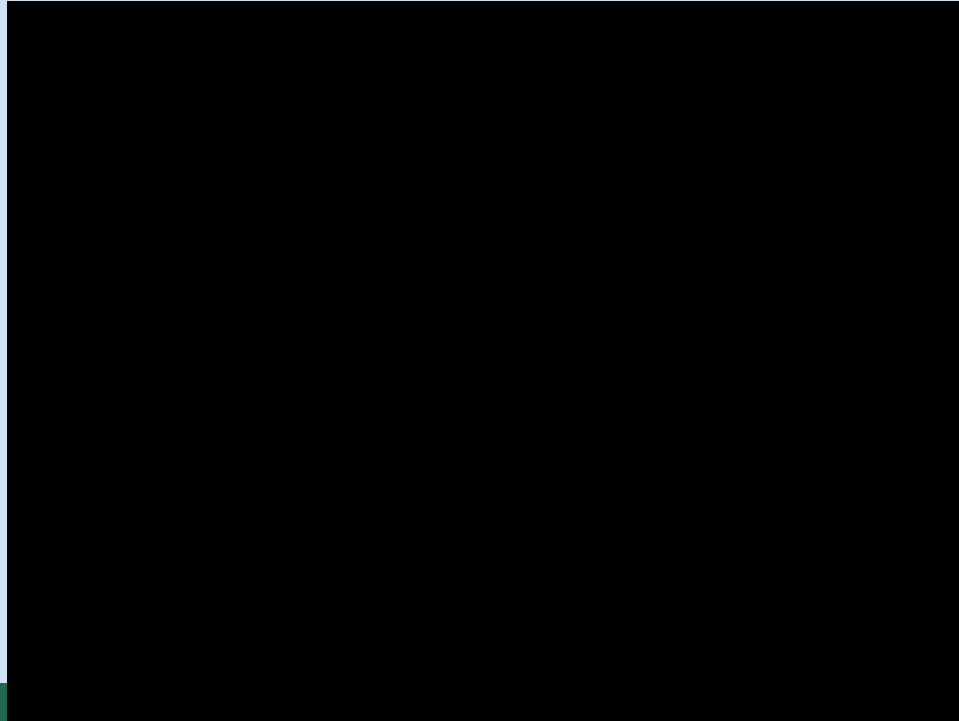
Here is an example of a social story

Example social story

Video Modeling- Video modeling (VM) is becoming a very popular and effective tool to use for teaching a variety of skills to students on the spectrum. Video modeling is just what it sounds like—you videotape a model (it could be the individual him or herself or a peer) doing the task / skill you wish to teach. Then they watch it and follow the model.



Video Modeling examples of putting on a boot:



Video modeling example of putting on skis:



Video Model of beginning Skiing





Periodic review - feedback after lessons

It's very important to ask the athlete for their opinion.

Did that feel more supportive? What worked? What didn't? Did you feel a difference when your coach asked you to_____?

Collaborate with the coach, athlete, family and other team members (PT, OT, SLP, Special educators)

Revisit goals and progress

Scholarship survey for coaches and families after 5 lessons.([Survey](#))



Things to remember

GMAS has therapists, special educators and coaches on staff that can help you problems solve if you have any questions, need assistance in coming up with a plan to help you athlete meet their goals or just want to brainstorm with another person.

Please feel free to reach out to us and we will connect you with the right person. You are not in this alone.



Release of Information

GMAS Application/Information

Hippa forms?

Release of Information to communicate with therapists, schools, doctors etc. if needed



Resources

- <https://autismclassroomresources.com/video-modeling-what-is-it-and-why-use-i/>
- <https://www.autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/Visual%20Supports%20Tool%20Kit.pdf>
- <https://autismlevelup.com/>
- <https://www.autismspeaks.org/>