Creating Successful School Experiences for Children and Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Brenda Smith Myles

www.asperger.net
Theory of Mind

- Difficulty in ...
  - Predicting
  - Reading intentions
  - Understanding emotions
  - Explaining own behavior
  - Perspective or reference
  - Reading and reacting to others’ interests
  - Understanding social interactions
Language and Social Challenges

- Nonverbal communication
- Initiating and maintaining social interactions
- Literalness
- Perspective taking
- Hidden curriculum
- Cause/effect relationships
- Difficulty conveying own thoughts
- May not use social “niceties”
Central Coherence

- Idiosyncratic focus
- Preference for the known
- Difficulty in choosing and prioritizing
- Difficulty seeing connections
- Lack of compliance
Do Not Understand the Seemingly Obvious

- Expectations
- Assumptions
- Unstated social rules, mores, guidelines
- Get the facts and draw the wrong conclusion

This is often called the Hidden Curriculum
Problem Solving

• “One way of viewing a problem”
• Stuck thinking
• Sees facts instead of a whole
• Problems with cause and effect
• Does not see problems as having more than one option
• Problem solving is often literal
Pseudo-Logic

• Is extremely logical, but the logic is very unique based on that student’s perspective
  • Spencer and his exams
Executive Function

• Difficulty in …
  • Perceiving emotions
  • Imitating others
  • Planning
  • Starting and stopping
  • Organizing (time, self, space)
Special Interests and Obsessions

- Narrow interests
- Not permanent
- Often appear “uncontrollable”
- Role of the interest: interest; fun; security, comfort; relaxation; stress reduction
Filtering

What is in the head comes out of the mouth -- sometimes with disastrous effects
The Sensory Systems ...  
(it all starts here)
Mirror Neurons & Imitation

• One of the most basic modes of learning
• Imitation is used across the lifespan and across environments
• Mirror neurons impact imitation
  • When attempting to engage in an activity by modeling
  • When observing someone engaging in an activity
Volatile

Oppositional

Impulsive

Inattentive

Oppositional

Defiant

Unpredictable

= Mislunderstood
### Comprehensive Autism Planning System (CAPS)

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Why Was CAPS Developed?

- Teams were changing and training would be needed again each year.
- During transitions knowledge was not shared.
- Students often move.
  - What works for the individual was not being shared.
  - Reinventing the wheel is not fair to the student or educational team.
What Does CAPS Do?

- Provides a venue for individualized team planning combining effective and diverse strategies as needed.
- Provides consistency of programming across time and setting
- Bridges IEP with core curriculum to effectively use daily teachable moments.
Who Is Involved in CAPS?

• Suggested Team Members
  • Parents
  • General Education Teacher
  • Special Education Teacher
  • Para-professional
  • Speech Language Pathologist
  • Occupational Therapist
  • School Psychologist
  • School Based Administrator
  • Student
COMPREHENSIVE AUTISM PLANNING SYSTEMS (CAPS)
(Henry and Myles, 2007)

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CAPS is the framework tying the daily schedule to interventions.
### Comprehensive Autism Planning System (CAPS)

#### Child/Student: Ginny

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Targeted Skills to Teach</th>
<th>Structure/Modifications</th>
<th>Reinforcement</th>
<th>Sensory Strategies</th>
<th>Communication Social Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:05-8:20</td>
<td>Independent Morning Work</td>
<td>Independent work of mastered math problems</td>
<td>Visuals to break-down task (1-5, raise hand, finished)</td>
<td>Complete 5 problems - get a break of her choice</td>
<td>Ginny needs block construction paper box around problem to write in box</td>
<td>Follow general education classroom rules</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-monitoring</td>
<td>Visual focusing aids</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Review lunch choices</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lunch Count Prep</td>
<td>Review menu for lunch choices</td>
<td>Visual Schedule</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Print legibly (ss)</td>
<td>Priming for lunch count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Data sheet for transitions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Collect and organize data (ss)</td>
<td>Trained peer buddy</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Follow two and three-step oral directions (ss)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Data sheet for transitions

- Ginny will ask peers if they have one of the lunch choices by holding the choice up and saying the name (e.g., Hamburger, Home lunch)
- Interpersonal skills (proximity to peer)

Using peers' names throughout the school day
# Time and Activity

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Time and Activity

• This includes:
  • All classes
  • Transitions that require supports of any nature
  • Home bases built into the schedules
Skills/STO

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Skills/STO

• Global academic subject matter to be mastered
  • May be IEP item
  • May be regular curriculum
  • May be modified curriculum
  • A skill or objective that will be worked on for an extended period of time
  • General curriculum standards
How Learner Should Spend Time

70% Practicing known skills*

20% Establishing new skills

10% Testing and Charting

*generalization and fluency

Fabrizio, 2003; Houghton, 1978
Intervention Categories for Student with ASD

- Structure
- Modifications
- Reinforcement
- Sensory
- Social Skills
- Communication
## Structure/Modifications

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Time Tracker Tower
Your Best Visual Schedule

Materials

• Post-its
• Notebook
• Cell phone with camera
• Velcro
• Pictures out of magazines
Strategies to Balance the Agenda

• Begin the day with a favorable activity, including a calming activity
• Alternate difficult and less difficult activities
• Build in down time before and/or after a stressful activity
• Use “simple errand running” to give the student a break
• Ask an OT to identify calming and alerting activities
Manage the Environment

- Establish routines for all tasks in the classroom
- Write them down
- Videotape them
- Take still pictures of the routines
- Model the routines
Routines That Need to Be Directly Taught

- How to ask for help
- When and what to throw away and where
- How to obtain school supplies when the student forgets to bring them
- How and when to hand in work
- How to pass out papers
- How to organize materials so that they are accessible in desk, locker, backpack, cubby
- How to make up missed work
- How to line up for lunch, recess, music, etc …
- How to walk down the hall with other students
Routines That Need to Be Directly Taught

• How to get ready to move to another activity that is within the same class
• How to get ready to move to another activity that is in a different class
• How to get ready for recess
• How to get ready to go home

• What do do during free time
• How to navigate lunchtime
• What to do if you are bullied
• Where to go to take medication
• How to ask to go to the bathroom -- *BTW*
Operate on ASD Time

• Individuals with ASD have a unique internal clock
  • One speed
  • The time allocated should adjust to the individual; the individual cannot adjust to the time in most cases
  • Twice as much time, half as much done
Extra Time is Needed

- Take out and organize books, paper, materials on desk
- Put away materials
- Find homework
- Turn in homework
- Move from class to class

- Pack, unpack, and organize backpack
- Eat lunch
- Dress out in physical education
- Get ready to go home
Strategies for ASD Time

• Reduce the number of problems
  • Tear the worksheet into smaller sections
  • Fold in half
  • Circle problems to be completed
  • Masking the problems that should not be done
Handwriting

• Alignment, formation, size, and spacing significantly different than in same age peers
• No significant difference in these handwriting factors across age
• *IF YOU WANT THE STUDENT/CHILD TO SHOW YOU WHAT SHE KNOWS, DO NOT PUT A PENCIL IN HER HAND!*
Home Base

• A place where the student can go to escape the over-stimulation of the classroom
  – Not time-out
  – Not a punishment
• Work goes with the student to Home Base
• May be scheduled or occur on an as-needed basis
• May be used for completing assignments or taking tests
Reading Websites

- Antistudy.com
- Sparknotes.com
- Cliffnotes.com
- Teachnology.com
Prereading Strategies

• Before reading:
  – Define vocabulary
  – Identify purpose for learning.
  – Link to prior knowledge.
  – Discuss headings.
  – Review questions at the end of the chapter.
  – Look at figures, charts, photographs and their captions.
  – Discuss the point of review of the author.
Anaphoric Cuing

• After reading a paragraph, ask the reader to identify the person that each pronoun (i.e., he, she, it, they) refers to.
Reciprocal Questioning

- After reading a paragraph, have the reader ask the teacher questions about the paragraph.
- When the teacher responds, have him model clarifying the question. Provide reinforcement for questions.
- Then exchange roles and have the teacher question the reader. Provide reinforcement for answers.
- Gradually extend to page, section, chapter.
Use Books on Tape

- www.getaudiobooksonline.com
- www.booksontape.com
- www.simplyaudiobooks.com
- www.audiobooks.com
- www.amazon.com
- www.learnoutloud.com
- Itunes (including some free applications)
Priming

• Preparing the student for daily activities
  – Can occur
    • At home for the next day
    • The morning of in school
    • At the end of the school day for the next day

• Overview of schedule changes, assignments and activities
# Reinforcement

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Types of Reinforcement

- Natural
- Social
- Activity
- Tangible
- Token

Coffin, 2006
Sensory Strategies

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Ways to Incorporate Special Interests

- Special interest-designed stickers
- Color, cut, paste
- Write a report
- Make a speech
- Read book
- Design an art project
- Identify music that could match a special interest
- Conduct research using the Internet
## Sample Activities Around Dinosaurs

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<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Research and write a paper on the Apatosaurus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>Learn to spell names of dinosaurs or write words in a sentence about dinosaurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>Present life of paleontologist, George Simpson, Ph.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Write math word problem about consumption of millions of tons of leaves by Triceratops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Research the Asteroid Cretaceous Extinction Theory</td>
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# Sample Activities Around Dinosaurs

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<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Design and build a clay or paper mache model of the Stegosaurus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Skills</td>
<td>Research the Smithsonian Paleontology Wing (Washington, DC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consult with paleontologists online</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Sensory Diet

• A planned and scheduled set of activities designed to meet individual needs
• Incorporates naturally occurring opportunities for children to get the sensory stimulation they need

Miller & Robbins, 2005; Willbarger (1995); Yack et al. (1998)
How Long Does it Last?

- Tactile: 1 to 1 1/2 hours
- Vestibular: 4 to 8 hours
- Proprioception: Up to 1 1/2 hours
- Auditory, Gustatory, & Olfactory: Transitory

Brack, 2007
The Secret of School Success

• Want your kids to master books? First they need to master themselves. Fortunately, new research is finding that self-control can be taught.

Laura Vanderkam

The Secret of School Success

• … one of several findings in the growing body of research on “self-regulation” -- people’s ability to stop, think, make a plan and control their impulses. … it turns out that “these are really the same skills you need to do well in school” and potentially in life.

Professor Megan McClelland
Oregon State University
Teach Self-Calming/Self-Regulation

- Individuals with ASD often cannot tell when they are becoming upset or overly excited.
- They don’t know how to self-calm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Setting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Screaming</td>
<td>Emergency only</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside voice</td>
<td>Recess, ball game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Talking voice</td>
<td>Classroom, lunchroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Soft voice/whisper</td>
<td>Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No talking</td>
<td>When someone is talking to me, movies</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHECK IN</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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Poster-size, 2-sided, laminated Check In/Anxiety (Buron, 2009)
When My Worries Get Too Big
By Buron

My Calming Sequence

This is when I need to fight back!
First, I can squeeze my hands together.

Next, I can take three really slow, deep breaths. Slow in – slow out, slow in – slow out, slow in – slow out.

Then I can sit down, rub my legs and close my eyes. Now I feel more like a 3 or a 2.

I can think about happy things, like my dog or my stuffed lion, or our family cabin in the summer. Now I am at a 1.
Paul’s Train and How It Runs

**Starting Out**
- Something unplanned happens
- Something is done differently than the way it is usually done
- Too many things going on at the same time
- Appears irritated
- Appears overwhelmed

**Picking Up Steam**
- Blaming
- Absolute statements
- Black-and-white thinking

**Point of No Return**
- Protese arguing without let-up, often not making sense
- Incorporates non-relevant ideas that spin into new arguments
- If you agree, he switches sides and keeps arguing
- Sweating and name-calling without let-up

**Explosion**
- Opens car door to jump out, even though car is moving
- Escapes through door or window (not to run, but to get away)
- Attacks: hits, bites, kicks, chokes, throws objects, chases w/weapon in hand
- Throws furniture, tries to bash in locked doors, breaks whatever is at hand

Outsmarting Explosive Behavior, Endow, 2009
<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>My Response</th>
<th>More Positive Response</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bumped in hallway at school by a friend</td>
<td>Call the person a bad name</td>
<td>Ignore it or say “excuse me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hit bare toe on a door frame</td>
<td>Slam the door and yell</td>
<td>Rub my foot, get ice, ask Mom for help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Missed school bus, late for school</td>
<td>Cry, throw books on the ground, blame Mom</td>
<td>Wake up earlier, watch clock closely in the morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ask a girl on a date and she turns you down</td>
<td>Become depressed, think you are stupid, get angry at the girl</td>
<td>Try to understand her reason, hide in room all weekend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Get fired from first job</td>
<td>Scream at the boss, hate yourself, give up trying to work</td>
<td>Understand what happened, improve work habits, find another job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social Skills/Communication

COMPREHENSIVE AUTISM PLANNING SYSTEMS (CAPS)
(Henry and Myles, 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Skills/STO</th>
<th>Structure/Modifications</th>
<th>Reinforcement</th>
<th>Sensory Strategies</th>
<th>Social Skills/Communication</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Generalization</th>
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</thead>
</table>
Research Shows That ...

- Individuals with “soft skills”, including good social skills, sociability, good work habits, punctuality, conscientiousness and those who participated in extra curricular activities are more likely to make more money, be employed, and attain high levels of education than those with good grades and high standardized test scores.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (2009, March 26). Social Skills, Extracurricular Activities In High School Pay Off Later In Life.
Drawings

- Combines words with simple drawings in order to explain a simple concept
  - Cartooning
  - Comic Strip Conversations™ (Gray)
  - Pragmaticism (Arwood)
Her mouth is turned down and her arms are crossed. I think she is mad and is waiting for the students to stop talking.
Scripts

• Provides verbatim or near verbatim structure
• Uses child/adolescent-friendly language
• Targets one social situation
  – Increases predictability
  – Decreases stress
Conversation Starters

• List of topics generally discussed by peers
  – Eavesdropping
    • In hall, between classes, at lunch, at recess
  – Asking high status peers

• Generally written on a card the size of a business card or trading card

• Can be overtly displayed when used
Multi-Media

• Watch videos and television and pause to discuss how people are feeling and how you can tell
• Draw pictures of faces and label emotions
• Keep an emotions dictionary of people
• Complete the Mindreading program, Modelmekids, Videojug
• Look at pictures in magazines
• Videotape and analyze
Click on the surprised train!

Communication Systems Should Travel with the Child

*Proloquo2Go: AAC in Your Pocket*

*Communication on the Go for iPhone and iPod touch*
Video Modeling

• Video self-modeling
• Peer videomodeling (let’s see how it is done)
  – Commercial
  – Home made
Trained Social Peer Group

- Develop “lunch bunch” with chosen peers
- Define new skill for student (i.e. topic maintenance, giving compliment)
- Demonstrate how peers can encourage and demonstrate social skills during “lunch bunch”
- Generalize skills throughout day
Social Narratives

• Social scripts
• Power Cards – Gagnon
• Social Stories™ – Gray

POWERCARD

When I feel I am getting angry, I can:

1. Count to 10 in my head and tell the adult I would like to negotiate.

2. Write my feelings in my special journal while the adults gives me my space.

3. Tell the adult I need a break. I can get a drink of water and chill until I am ready to work again.
Clean Out Your Desk

• Put all graded papers in your backpack
• Put all books on the bottom shelf
  – Make sure the binders are facing out
  – Make sure you can read the titles
• Put pencils, pens, erasers, crayons in your school supply box
• If you have other items, please ask the teacher what to do with them
Let’s Go to Music
Time for Lunch

• Time to get ready for lunch
• Put your workbooks in your desk
• If you’ve brought your lunch, go get your lunch box
• Sandy is the line leader today
• Line up at the door
Literalness

Students with an ASD

– Interpret words literally
– Do not know to ask if there is an alternate meaning
– Need to be directly taught idioms, metaphors, slang -- all nonliteral language terms
Hidden Curriculum Items

• If one small incident occurs and the teacher corrects you, it does not mean the entire day is bad.

• You should talk to teachers in a pleasant tone of voice because they will respond to you in a more positive manner. They also like it if you smile every once in a while.
More Hidden Curriculum ...

• When your teacher gives you a warning about behavior and you continue the behavior, you are probably going to get in trouble. If you stop the behavior immediately after the first warning, you will probably not get in trouble.

• Do not tell other students they smell and need to wear deodorant.
More Hidden Curriculum …

• When a teacher tells another student to stop talking, it is not a good idea to start talking to your neighbor since the teacher has already expressed disapproval of that action.

• When hearing someone speak using incorrect grammar, do not correct him every time, especially in a critical manner.
Hidden Curriculum On The Go!

Most of the time when something is labeled “adult,” it means pornographic. This is NOT the case with this application!

Will this item be useful to me?

yes ✓ no ✗

Back Next

Fav’s Email

Hidden Curriculum On The Go!

Fair means that everyone gets what everyone needs. It does not mean that everyone gets the same thing. Equal is when everyone gets the same thing. Fair is when everyone gets what he or she needs.

Will this item be useful to me?

yes ✓ no ✗

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Fav’s Email
# Data Collection

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Data Collection

- How to determine if the adult is doing well on the job
  - May include weekly or daily meetings, notes, job evaluations, etc..