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KENTUCKY AUTISM  
TRAINING CENTER 

Supporting Individual with Autism In the General Education Setting

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# Objectives

**Autism characteristics in the educational setting**

**Strategies for the general education setting**

# What is Autism?

Autism is a complex developmental disability that has a neurological basis that causes impairments in social interactions, communication, and the presence of unusual behaviors and interests.

A. Persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts, not accounted for by general developmental delays, and manifest by all 3 of the following:

- Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity
- Deficits in nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction
- Deficits in developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships

## Difficulty in SOCIAL INTERACTION in the classroom

- Turn taking
- Interrupting adult and peer non-verbal cues
- Using symbolic play skills to *pretend*
- Partner work; cooperative group work
- Effectively navigating social situations (discussed later)

B. Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities as manifested by at least 2 of the following:

- Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, use of objects, or speech
- Insistence on sameness, inflexible adherence to routines, or ritualized patterns of verbal or nonverbal behavior
- Highly restricted, fixated interests that are abnormal in intensity or focus
- Hyper- or hypo-reactivity to sensory input or unusual interest in sensory aspects of the environment

## Difficulty in COMMUNICATION in the classroom

- Staying on-topic
- Interrupting, blurting out, and always telling the truth
- Partner work; cooperative group work
- Engaging beyond the surface during non-individual activities

## Difficulty in RRS BEHAVIORS in the classroom

- Staying on-task
- Seeing the big picture during academic activities
- Listening without dominating the conversation with own interest
- Turning peers off by “odd” behaviors
- Meltdowns with schedule changes



## What characteristics cause our students to have difficulties in school?

- Working Memory
- Executive Functioning
- Low Self-Esteem
- Not able to self monitor
- Lack of emotional regulation at times
- Lack of ability to read social cues/understand
  - Expands beyond peer interaction—
    - answering questions, waiting, turn taking, raising hand, flexibility

# Strategies that Work

# Antecedent Interventions

- *Setting clear behavioral expectations*
  - ✧ Consider the individualized needs of learners when delivering expectations
- *Placing specific demands*
  - ✧ Example: “Hang your coat on the hook next to the door”  
vs. “Hang your coat over there”
- *Manipulating the learning environment*
  - ✧ Pairing the learning environment with reinforcement
  - ✧ Providing visual supports in environment
  - ✧ Purposefully setting schedule structure

- *Manipulating the learning environment (cont.)*
  - ✧ Location of instruction (is the table an aversive?)
  - ✧ Providing preferred items in instructional area prior to demands
  - ✧ Decreasing/altering the task demand
- *Priming*
- *Behavior Momentum*
- *Offering choice*
  - ✧ Reinforcers
  - ✧ Materials
  - ✧ Order of instructional tasks
  - ✧ Partners/Peers
  - ✧ Locations

Let's Explore (Positive) Reinforcement!!

# Positive Reinforcement

Something provided contingent on demonstration of a target behavior that increases the likelihood that the target behavior will occur again.

## **Example:**

When student raises hand, to be called on, without talking, the teacher provides him with behavior specific praise (“Nice job raising your hand” OR “You raised your hand so quietly”) and a small piece of candy. Next large group student quietly raises his hand again.

# Talk with the student

Ask them about their concerns.

Ask for solutions

Ask what can make the day better for them

Ask about reinforcers



# Think about time constraints

**“Twice as much time, half as much done”**

Students will need more time to:

- Complete assignments
- Gather materials
- Orient themselves during transitions

# Strategy: **MODIFY REQUIREMENTS**

- Reduce the number of problems on a page by circling items on the page or masking the items the student doesn't need to complete
- Change short-answer questions to true/false or multiple choice
- Provide a five-, four-, three-, two-, one transition reminder
- Provide early or late release from classes to ensure successful transitions between classes

## **Strategy: AVOID RUSHING**

- Time constraints add anxiety which can mean student freezes or could begin to meltdown
- Increased anxiety also means that difficulty with comprehension is magnified

Anxiety = no longer in “working” mode

# Manage the Environment

Students with Autism have a lack of organizational and planning skills so don't always navigate through their day successfully—

- Don't understand routines
- Struggle with handling change
- Has difficulty with predicting what happens next

## What does this mean for the classroom?

- Routines or rules have to be formally taught

(Examples: how to ask for help, how to ask permission to sharpen a pencil, how to ask to go to the bathroom, how and when to turn in homework, how to line up for lunch, recess, etc.)

This will:

- ✓ decrease anxiety
- ✓ increase attention
- ✓ increase work output

I Will Remember To:

 Put my hand up

 Work quietly

 Remain seated

<http://specialied.about.com>

Daily Goal Report:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Time	Behavior	Schoolwork
Morning Bell to Recess		
Recess to Lunch		
Lunch to Recess		
Recess to Home Bell		

Behavior Goals \_\_\_\_\_

Schoolwork Goals \_\_\_\_\_

<http://specialied.about.com>

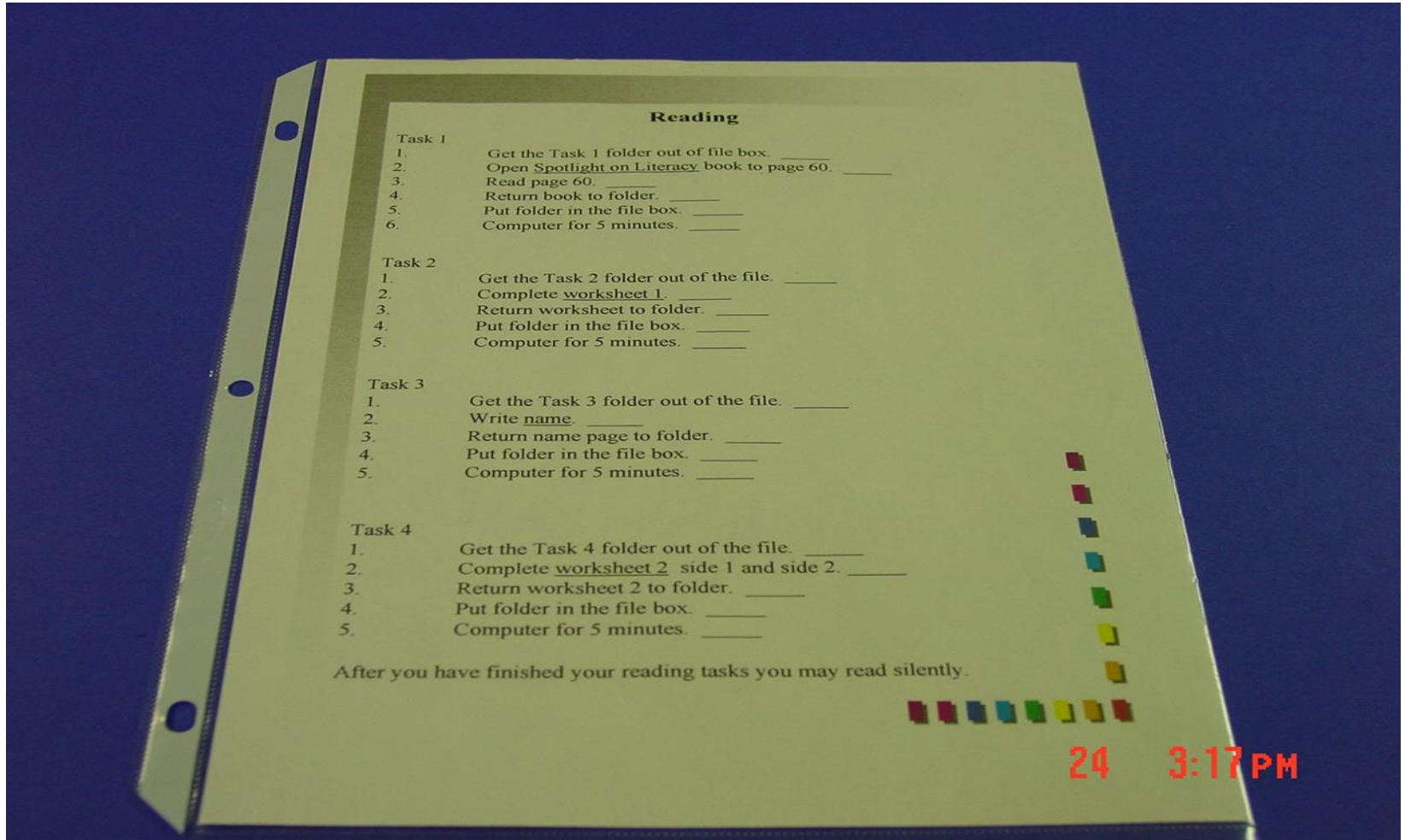


Ask yourself if you were:

- writing answers
- watching the teacher
- paying attention

If you answered yes to **any** of these questions put a check in the YES column. If the answer is no, put a check in the NO column

	YES	NO
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		



**Reading**

**Task 1**

1. Get the Task 1 folder out of file box. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Open Spotlight on Literacy book to page 60. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Read page 60. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Return book to folder. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Put folder in the file box. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Computer for 5 minutes. \_\_\_\_\_

**Task 2**

1. Get the Task 2 folder out of the file. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Complete worksheet 1. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Return worksheet to folder. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Put folder in the file box. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Computer for 5 minutes. \_\_\_\_\_

**Task 3**

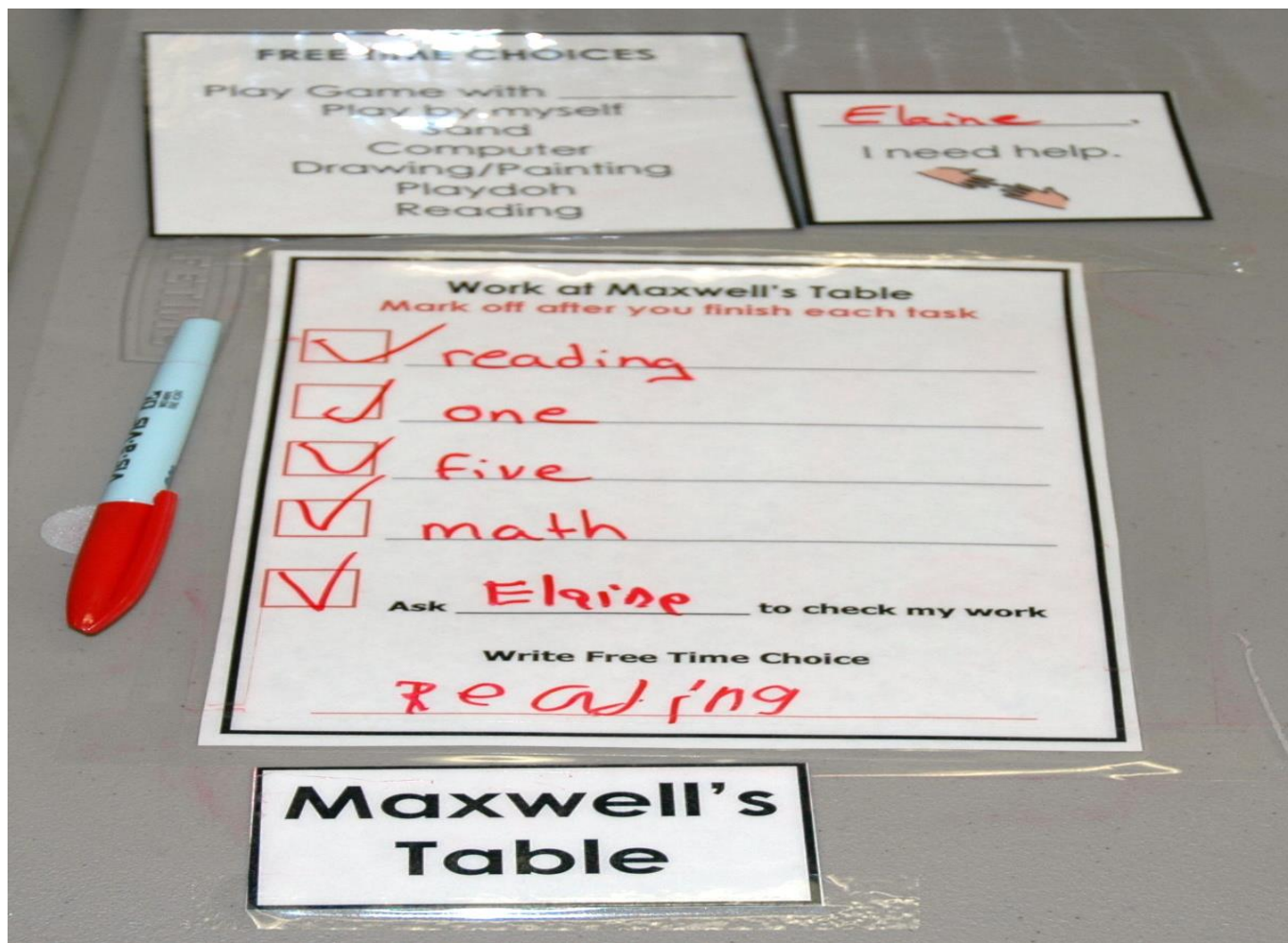
1. Get the Task 3 folder out of the file. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Write name. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Return name page to folder. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Put folder in the file box. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Computer for 5 minutes. \_\_\_\_\_

**Task 4**

1. Get the Task 4 folder out of the file. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Complete worksheet 2 side 1 and side 2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Return worksheet 2 to folder. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Put folder in the file box. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Computer for 5 minutes. \_\_\_\_\_

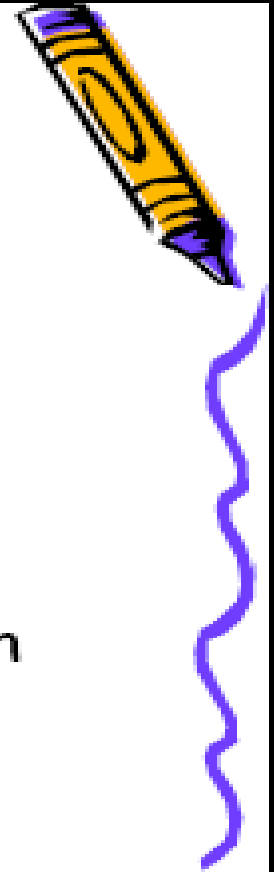
After you have finished your reading tasks you may read silently.

**24 3:17 PM**



## Science Class Rules

- Place all of your belongings under your desk or on the cabinet shelf behind you.
- Raise your hand if you need the teacher's assistance.
- You may quietly get up and sharpen pencil when needed.

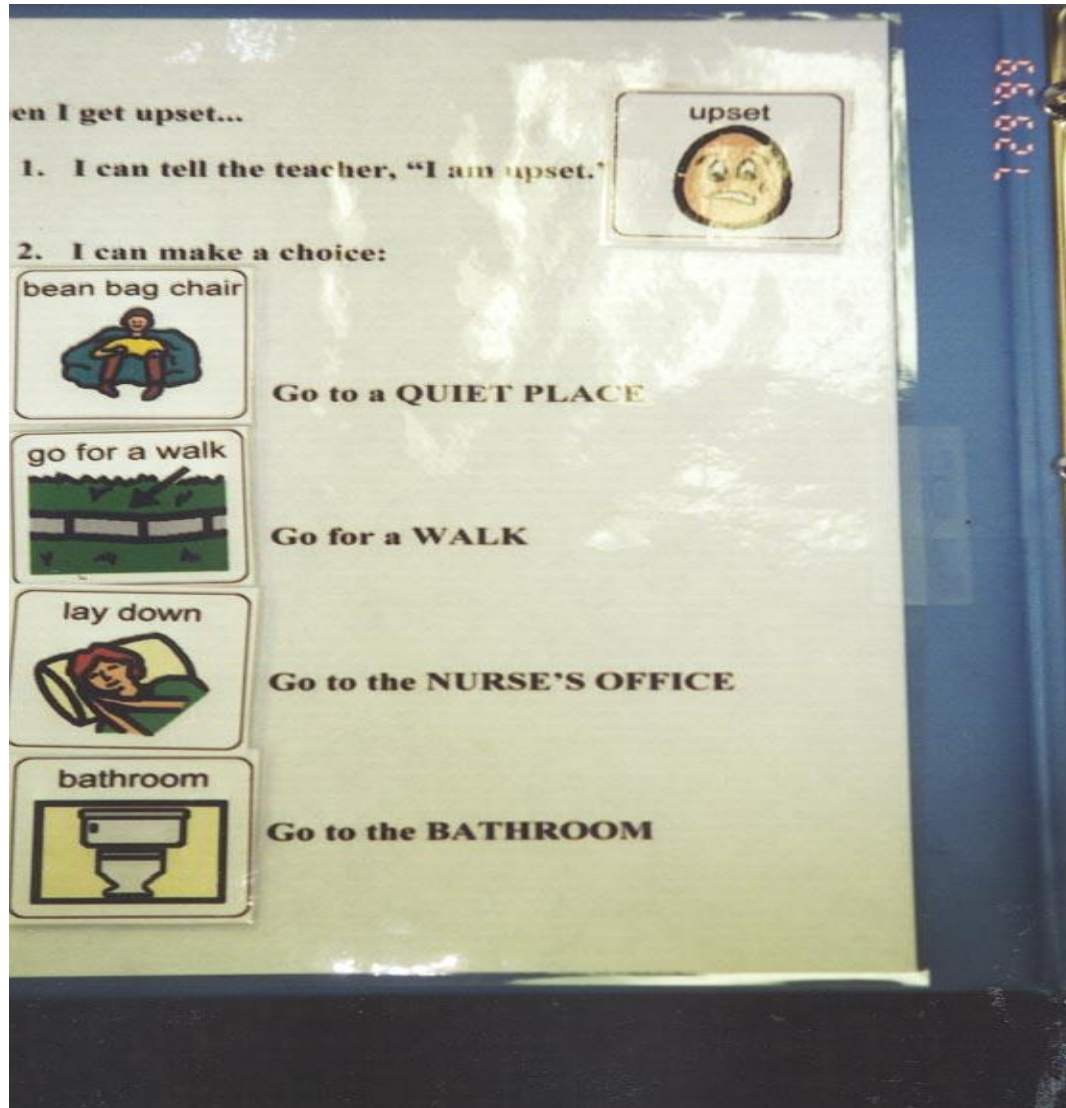


# Kentucky Autism Training Center



Visuals can be placed on top of activity materials, within academic tasks, and a variety of other ways to communicate "no"





## Self-management *Emotional Regulation*

# STRATEGY: PREPARE FOR CHANGE

- Avoid sudden changes
- If can't, tell the student about the change as soon as possible
  - ✓ Use “Change Card”
  - ✓ Use verbal cues
  - ✓ Use social stories

# **STRATEGY: INCORPORATE STUDENT PREFERENCES**

- What does the student enjoy?

# **STRATEGY: PROVIDE CHOICES**

- Give choice to do math group work or independent worksheet





**The Gingerbread man wants you to raise your hand before speaking.**

**Let students  
know when  
there is a  
change**

In many cases, if the student is not directly told what will happen next, they cannot predict.

So.....

# STRATEGY: USE VISUAL SUPPORTS

- ✓ Visual schedules
- ✓ Lists of materials needed
- ✓ Lists of activities to complete

# Types of Visual Supports

Pictures

Maps

Objects

Scripts

Written Words

Timelines

Schedules

**LABELS**

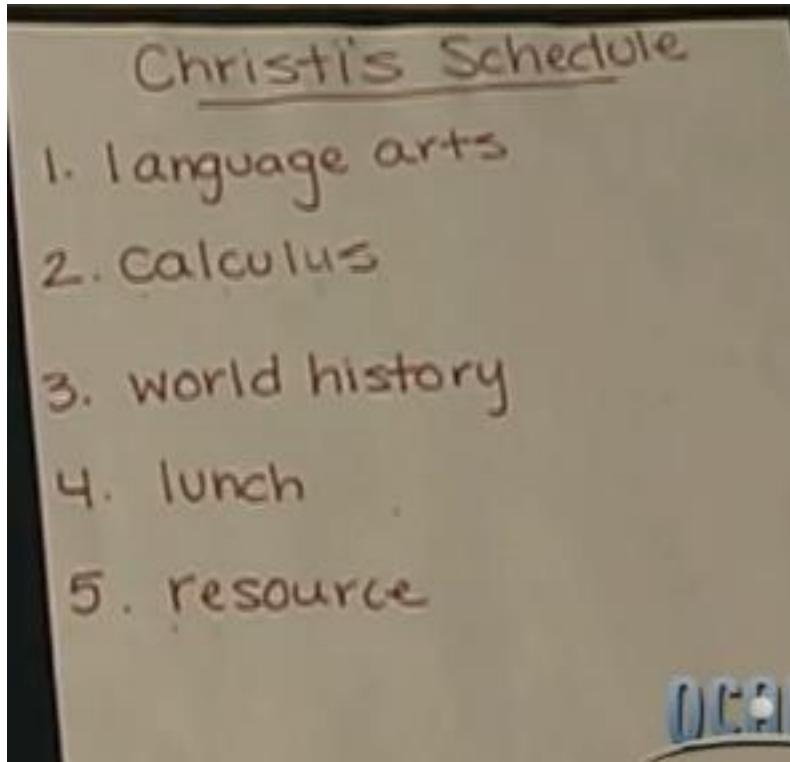
Environmental  
Arrangement

Organizational  
Systems

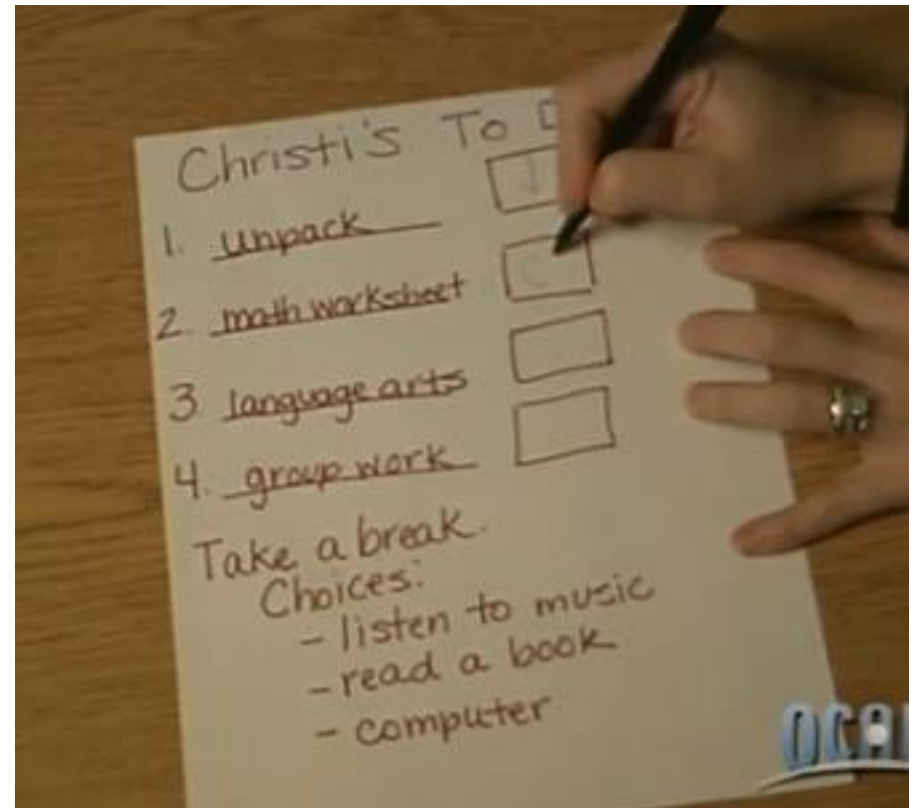


A good option for an older student – very age appropriate and facilitates independence

# Individual Daily Schedule



## To Do Schedule – Mini/Activity Schedule





- Get backpack
- Get lunchbox
- Go to room
- Get out pencils
- Get out green folder



## Fire Alarm Steps

If I hear the alarm I.....

Grab my headphones or cover my ears

Follow directions

Follow the students outside

Stay with class till the alarm stops

Go back into the school

# Simplify Language

- Students with Autism have significant difficulties with social and communication skills

(A lot of people forget because of good verbal skills.)

- Social communication means effective use and understanding of communication in social contexts

(nonverbal behaviors such as eye gaze, facial expression, body language, gestures, tone of voice)

## STRATEGY: WATCH FOR LITERALNESS

- ✓ Avoid metaphors, idioms, and sarcasm
- ✓ Can be misread as noncompliance

## Examples of good practice:

- Use student's name prior to giving a direction or asking a question
  - Tap gently on student's desk prior to giving a direction
  - Provide student with questions in advance
  - Combine verbal instructions with pictures, gestures, demonstrations, and written instructions
  - Have students demonstrate understanding by paraphrasing
- ★ Do not rely on Yes/No questions to indicate comprehension!

# Be Generous With Praise

## **STRATEGY: FOSTER UNDERSTANDING**

- Give specific praise often so students can see himself as a valued individual
- Find opportunities through out the day to tell students what they did “right”
- Compliment attempts, even if they fail.

Remember that....

- ✓ Students with Autism live in a world that is unpredictable, puzzling, and stressful.
- ✓ You are not only responsible for teaching content, but independence—no pressure!
- ✓ These are relatively easy-to-use strategies and considerations, but require thought and practice until they become more automatic.



Thank you so much for attending!!

**Questions??**

## Questions?

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