



NCDC
NATIONAL CURRICULUM
DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

RESOURCE BOOK FOR SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES

**TEACHING AND SUPPORTING
LEARNERS WITH AUTISM
SPECTRUM DISORDERS**



RESOURCE BOOK FOR SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES



**TEACHING AND SUPPORTING
LEARNERS WITH AUTISM
SPECTRUM DISORDERS**



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FIRST EDITION

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List of Acronyms

ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder

IE: Inclusive Education

IEP: Individualized Education Programme

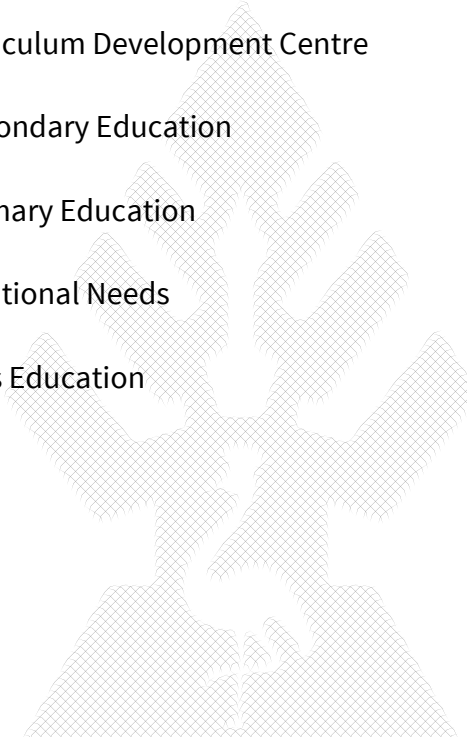
NCDC: National Curriculum Development Centre

USE: Universal Secondary Education

UPE: Universal Primary Education

SEN: Special Educational Needs

SNE: Special Needs Education



Foreword

The development of this resource book is a timely fulfilment of the government policy on Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) as it is stipulated in the government White Paper on Education (1992) and Persons with Disability Act (2006) besides, equal access to quality education is the value that underpin the Sustainable Development Goals Particularly Goal 4 on education.

This resource book has been designed for Special Needs Education (SNE) interventions in Uganda's education system and as a crucial support to the curriculum for learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

The resource book is intended to create awareness and educate teachers and other key stakeholders on the learning challenges of learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder so that they are more confident and able to plan for these individual learners. It will also help teachers in understanding learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder including; identification, causes, characteristics, effects on learning and development and the possible measures or interventions to minimize or overcome such learning challenges. This will enable learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder to access, participate, and achieve their full academic potential by providing them with opportunities to excel in academics and to be resourceful and industrious members of society.

I believe this resource book will be a valuable resource in your efforts to support learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).



Hon. Janet Kataaha Museveni
Minister of Education and Sports

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NCDC recognizes the work of the editors and design team who worked with the writers through the development of this document.

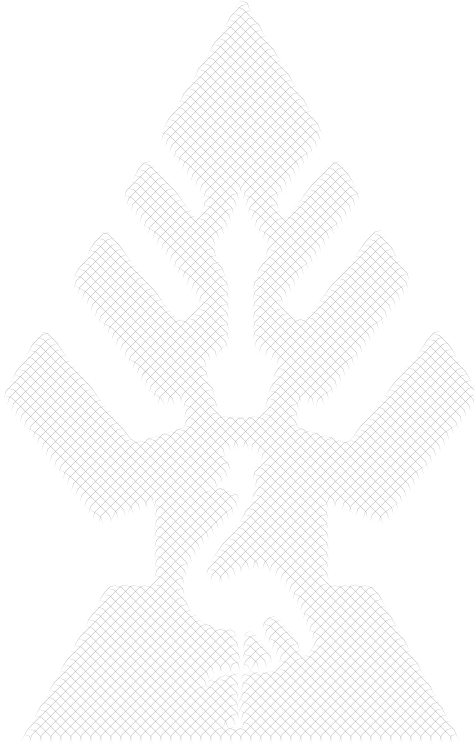
NCDC takes responsibility for any shortcomings that might be identified in the publication and welcomes suggestions for effectively addressing the inadequacies.

Such comments and suggestions may be communicated to NCDC through: P.O. Box 7002, Kampala or e-mail admin@ncdc.org.ug or www.ncdc.org.ug.



Dr. Grace K. Baguma

Director
National Curriculum Development Centre



Introduction

The introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997 and Universal Secondary Education (USE) in 2007 in Uganda led to an increase in enrolment of learners including those with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

There are different categories of learners with different learning needs. Indeed; learning needs are as many as the numbers of learners because we are individuals with different needs.

However, it is not easy to identify learning needs because of the wide variations. There is no symptom of a learning need. Some warning signs are more common than others at different ages.

If you are aware of what they are, you will be able to identify a learning need early and take steps to help the learner.

Teachers should observe their learners as they teach and interact with them. Also, teachers and parents should be sensitive to observe unexpected situations and events so as to obtain information about individuals and groups.

This will help both teachers and parents to identify learners with various learning needs and be able to assist them.

It has been observed that many teachers and parents have limited knowledge and skills in supporting learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN). All learners those experiencing challenges in learning, development and participation, including those with disabilities have a right to quality education that suits their age and ability.

Hence, National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) has developed this resource book for all personnel that interface with learners with this unique Special Educational Need in schools and at home.

This resource book highlights the diverse educational needs of learners with autism spectrum disorder.

It provides information to enable teachers, parents and other stakeholders to discover learners with ASD, their potentials and needs thus providing them with necessary support.

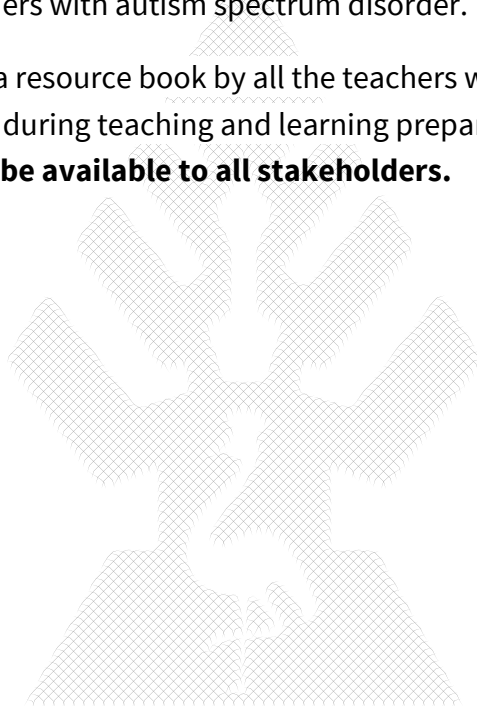
It also offers strategies for teachers as well as family members who have an autistic child to offer specific interventions that would benefit the child both socially and academically

How to Use this Resource Book

This resource book is informative and has been developed to help someone who has little experience in the area of autism.

In particular, the book is developed to guide all key stakeholders in teaching and supporting learners with autism spectrum disorder.

It should be used as a resource book by all the teachers working hand in hand with other resources during teaching and learning preparations. Both the **hard and soft copies will be available to all stakeholders.**



UNIT 1: Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism is derived in the Greek word “auto” which means “self”. Autism is known as a ‘spectrum disorder’ because symptoms can range from a mild learning and social disability to more complex needs with multiple difficulties and often very unusual behaviour (Laura, 2005)

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a life-long developmental disability that prevents people from understanding what they see, hear, and otherwise sense. This results in severe problems with social relationships, communication, and behaviour. ASD is defined as a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction (Abhiyan, 2007).

1.1. Signs and Symptoms

1.1.1. Symptoms during Childhood

Symptoms of autism are usually noticed first by parents and other caregivers sometimes during the child's first 3 years. Although autism is present at birth (congenital), signs of the disorder can be difficult to identify or diagnose during infancy (Geschwind 2008). Parents often become concerned when their toddler does not like to be held; does not seem interested in playing certain games and does not begin to talk. Sometimes, a child with autism will start to talk at the same time as other children of the same age, and then loses his or her language skills.

In most cases parents may not easily understand their children’s behaviour. A child with autism may appear as having hearing problems, yet at times responds to sounds. However, these children when given early intervention and treatment, most of them can improve their ability to communicate and to respond to instructions

1.1.2. Symptoms during the Teen Years

The behaviour patterns of children with autism during teen age sometimes change depending on the level of intervention and the onset.

The adolescence stage may be more difficult for these children with autism than others of the same age. Sometimes teenagers with autism develop problems related to depression, anxiety and nervousness.



This is Ethan with Autism. He has an infectious smile, gives the best hugs ever, and struggles every single day to do the things others might take for granted (by Back up Uganda)

1.1.3 Symptoms in Adulthood

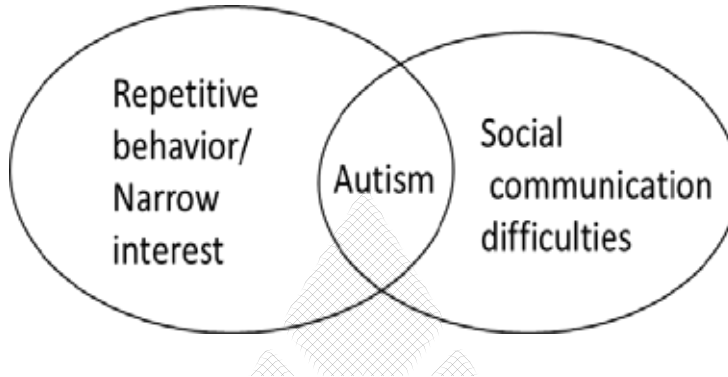
Some adults with autism are able to work and live on their own. The degree to which an adult with autism can lead an independent life is related to intelligence and ability to communicate.

Some adults with autism need a lot of assistance, especially those with low intelligence who are unable to speak.

On the other hand, adults with high-functioning autism are often successful in their professions live independently, although they may have some difficulties relating to other people.

Therefore, Individuals with Autism usually have average to above-average intelligence.

The British Psychological Society & the Royal College of Psychiatrists (2012), mentions the two main dimensions in the diagnosis of the autism's below :(reproduced with permission, Baron-Cohen, 2008).



1.2. Characteristics of Learners with ASD

The National Institute of Neurological disorders and stroke (NINDS) indicates the facts on the characteristics of ASD as follows: autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is characterized by marked difficulties in behaviour, social interaction, and sensory sensitivities. Some of these characteristics are common among people with ASD; others are typical of the less able but not necessarily exhibited by people with ASD. Below are the details:

1.2.1 Difficulties in Behaviour

People with ASD may exhibit unusual behaviour due to the difficulties they have in responding to the environment. The behaviour is generally an attempt to communicate their feelings or to cope with a situation.

Behaviour problems may occur because of their sensitivity to sound or something they may have seen or felt.

Other behaviours may include but not limited to:

- Rigidity to change such as:
 - i) sticking to routines and spending their time in repetitive behaviours
 - ii) travelling to and fro along the same route each day and doing things in the same order every time
 - iii) Bedtime routine.
 - iv) Need for sameness (eating the same foods, wearing the same clothes.
- Use of objects such as repeatedly switching lights on and off or lining up toys.
- unusual mannerism, such as sniffing objects or staring intently at moving objects, repetitive body movements such as hand flapping spinning, and shoulder shaking
- being extremely passive if an activity of interest is not available or initiated by someone else

1.2.2 Difficult in Social Interaction

People with ASD have difficulty establishing and maintaining relationships. They are often unable to understand and express their needs just as they are unable to interpret and understand the needs of others. This deteriorates their ability to share interests and activities with other people. For this reason, they may appear unfriendly and reserved. Because they are often delayed in their speech and struggle to make sense of other non-verbal forms of communication, they may withdraw into repetitive play, behaviour and avoid interaction with peers.

ASD learners have difficulties with social interaction which may manifest in the following ways:

- Limited use and understanding of non-verbal communication, such as eye gaze, facial expression and gestures
- Difficulties forming and sustaining friendships
- Inability to share his/her enjoyments, interests, and activities with other people for example, s/he may want to interact, but does not know how.
- Have trouble understanding other people's feelings or talking about their own feelings

- Avoid eye contact
- Have narrow, sometimes obsessive interests
- Talk only about themselves and their interests
- Seem nervous in large social groups
- Intrusion into others' personal space (standing too close to someone else, talking very loudly or touching people inappropriately)
- Difficulties understanding other people's behaviour, motives and intentions
- Difficulties taking turns in conversation or tendency towards monologue
- Difficulties anticipating what might offend others (faux pas)
- Difficulties keeping track of what the listener or reader needs to know
- Difficulties judging what might be relevant or irrelevant to others
- Difficulties coping with or interacting in social groups
- Unable to tell white lies
- Reduced empathy

1.2.3 Difficulties in Communication

People with ASD often have communication difficulties in one form or another. Some speak fluently, others with speech impairment to a varying degree and others still, who are unable to speak at all. Of those who can speak, they will often use language in a very limited or unusual way. Their line of conversation may involve repeating your phrases or words back to you or asking the same questions repeatedly. Some people with ASD will usually only talk about topics that are of interest to them which makes 'give' and 'take' in communication difficult. They have difficulty interpreting non-verbal forms of communication like facial expressions, hand gestures and other body languages.

Impaired communication is characterized by:

- Delayed language development
- Difficulties initiating and sustaining conversations
- Stereotyped and repetitive use of language, such as repeating phrases from teacher, radio, peers, television, etc
- Speak in unusual ways or with an odd tone of voice.

- Atypical eye contact (staring at people for very long or not maintaining eye contact) Bryson et al (2008), (www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/signs.)

1.3 Causes of Autism Spectrum Disorder

According to Geschwind 2008, the cause of ASD in learners is unknown, but generally, suspected causes include:

- A malfunction of the central nervous system
- Environmental factors such as emotional deprivation or the way a person is brought up
- It is inherited and associated with molecular genetics. Although it is opined that it is not 100% genetic, its heritability is estimated at 40 to 90% leaving room for a gene-environment interaction.

Other suspected risk factors

- Deficiency in the mother in defensible weeks 8–12 of pregnancy that can lead to thyroid problems hence ASD. For example, inadequate iodine in the diet when the mother is pregnant or some interference with iodine in take can act against thyroid hormones.
- Possible environmental factors such as food, tobacco smoke, and most herbicides.
- When a mother has been diagnosed with diabetes during pregnancy can one of the risk factors for Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- When an expecting mother gets exposed to stress related factors that distress her can contribute to Autism Spectrum Disorder, possibly as part of a gene-environment interaction (HallGmayer et al., 2011; Lancet, 2010; Taylor et al., 1999).

Persons with autism may possess the following characteristics in various combinations and in varying degrees of severity.



(Source: Autism Speaks, 2015)

UNIT 2: Facts about Learners/People with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Learners and young people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) face many issues and challenges on a day-to-day basis. However, it is important to note that each learner with ASD is a unique individual, with unique needs and abilities. Because of this, he or she will experience those issues in a unique way or may not experience them at all.

While every learner with ASD presents unique needs and behaviours, it is important for teachers to understand the types of concerns they are likely to encounter.

2.1. Challenges Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder face in their learning

2.1.1 Delays in Cognitive Processing.

In a classroom, learners are expected to put up their hands in response to questions. If a learner with ASD does not raise his/her hand to respond to questions, the teacher may call on him/her rather than wait. This may elevate his/her stress. When a teacher repeats the question or expresses impatience, the pressure on the learner becomes much and he/she may simply withdraw or respond with inappropriate behaviour.

What to do.

- Give the learner the time needed to process a fact or a question before expecting a response. Some learners can be taught various methods to buy the needed time, including restating of the question, asking for a few seconds, or simply putting up a finger to signify they are thinking.
- For oral information, learners can be permitted to use a recording device or given summary notes before.

2.1.2 Sensory Perception Issues

Some learners with ASD may be sensitive to certain sounds, have a poor sense of balance and lack depth of perception, and / or be unable to tolerate certain tastes and textures of foods. For example, the scratching of a pencil on a piece of paper or taste of a mango can irritate their nerves.

What to do

- The teacher needs to speak with the learner and encourage him or her to tell the teacher without shame about any environmental distractions. By doing this, the teacher and administrators may learn to appreciate and alleviate many problems that can interfere with the learner's ability to learn.

2.1.3 Social Skill Deficits

Social skill deficits such as isolation and withdrawal from activities can make a learner with ASD an odd learner. Without sufficient knowledge on ASD and mindfulness, teachers might slip into intimidating and sometimes even bullying behaviour the learner who is always lagging and odd.

Some learners with ASD may prefer solitary activities, have problems with group work and interactive lessons, have trouble making friends and may be easy targets for bullying and teasing.

What to do

The teacher should be careful to interpret the meaning and feelings implied in the learner's emotions, expressions, words and other actions. This will guide and encourage other learners to be tolerant when interacting with him/her.

2.1.4 Expressive Challenges

Learners with ASD may be very direct individuals, have trouble following directions, and have trouble with jokes, sarcasm and use of figurative language. Written and oral responses may not reflect true knowledge; they may not know how to ask for help, and may take long to process verbal instructions (getting started).

For those learners with ASD who possess the intellectual capacity to function in the general class, speech and language skills can still present a number of obstacles.

They may have problems expressing their own emotions and feelings as well as perceiving and knowing how to respond to those of others. This can be as extreme as lacking the ability to recognize faces and differentiate people, or as subtle as lacking the ability to appreciate and make use of nuance and tone of voice when communicating.

What to do

- Teachers/parents/guardians should provide learners with ASD with the right and consistent encouragement; train them to use moderate speech and to speak in ways that don't make them different from their peers. Rather than abandon certain pedantic speech (annoys other people by attending to small errors and minor details), they can be placed in situations where it may prove an asset such as in those field of learning like science, math, and engineering where precision of language is critical.

2.1.5 Behaviour Issues

- Learners with ASD have a challenge of adhering to rules, rituals and may tend to be preoccupied with preferred topics/objects. They can also be easily overwhelmed by minimal changes, and unstructured times are the worst because they are unpredictable transitions such as recess, lunch, PE, changing classes, etc.

What to do

- Teachers should maintain written routine with pictures and ensure the routine is known by all. For example, learners should have a well laid timetable of every lesson and activity of the day.

2.1.6 Motor Skill Challenges

- Motor difficulties including major motor skills (such as standing upright) or fine motor skills (such as holding a pencil between their fingers and thumb).
- Motor skill challenges can be presented as an inability to master handwriting. Forcing a learner to do endless handwriting practice is never a good solution, yet this is the most common approach for learners with poor handwriting. What typically occurs with forced solo practice is that the learner's bad habits are reinforced.

What to do

- Teachers need to encourage learners with ASD to participate in physical activities where motor coordination is required e.g., play, games, sports, etc. In this situation, it is important to positively reinforce the learner to participate.

2.2 Challenges Teachers face in Managing Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

Some learners on spectrum demonstrate challenging and disruptive behavior such as anger/aggression, irritability, self-injurious behavior and tantrums. The teacher may not easily identify that learners with such disruptive behaviors have ASD. For example, James will hit the table when is removed from the window. Peter will become hyperactive and disruptive if he is told to leave the activity of his interest. However, even learners whose behaviors are not aggressive may not be easily noted especially the passive learners. In a big class, it is hard for teachers to be aware that, for example: Jane nods her head 10 times per minute when she disrupted.

In a study that was carried out by Sally, Meghann, Nicole & Helen (2013), the major challenge teachers face in managing learners with ASD is the class size. The vast majority of teachers try to do their very best for every learner in their care, but when you are teaching a class of 140 or more, it is not always possible to notice every issue with every learner.

By the time the teacher notices unique behaviour in a learner, the school year will be over, the learner will be moving into a new class with a new teacher, and the whole cycle starts again. Sometimes, the teacher is transferred to another school where learners have different challenges.

In another development, Sally, et al (2013) conducted an interview asking teachers who teach ASD learners regarding creating an inclusive classroom. He states that teachers face challenges in managing social emotional behaviors as well as inadequate skills to accommodate learners with ASD.

What to do

Teachers should work hand in hand with learner's parent. Parents of a learner with ASD play a vital role in working with teacher to share effective strategies that can be adapted beyond the classroom walls. Both parents and need to work together to meet the needs of the learner and to ensure strategies and practices are in unison between the home and school environment.

2.3 Challenges of Parents face in upbringing learners with ASD.

Mary Orpwood(2017) in her article “We Have Kids-Family” highlights the five major challenges parents of autistic children face as follows:

2.3.1. Failure to have enough Sleep

A learner with autism spectrum disorder does not take long asleep due to less produced melatonin (the hormone responsible for regulating sleep patterns in animals and people) which results in making him/her having less sleep than the peers. This has been acknowledged that people with autism spectrum disorders may only need to sleep for three or four hours. This means that their parents will have to get half of the recommended amount of sleep on a daily basis .as they have to wake up with their learner to ensure that they are safe. This has long-term impact on their overall physical and mental health.

2.3.2. Parents being embarrassed

Going out with an autistic learner is a horrible scene especially dealing with an abrupt outburst behaviour the in public.

One of the characteristics of ASD learner is being aggressive and making loud noise that can attract the attention from the public. parents can be embarrassed when moving with such child to unfamiliar situation people. They may think that the child is being spoilt and can make comments like: "I would never let my child act like that in public," they do nothing but judge and embarrass the parent.

The more judgmental comments a parent hears, the less they feel comfortable moving out with their child. Finally, the parent will opt leaving the child behind when going for regular activities such as shopping or going to church/mosque etc. the child ends up being in near-complete isolation, which is never a good thing.

2.3.3 Dealing with violent behaviours

Most parents of children with autism spectrum disorders have been experienced violent behaviours such as cuts and bruises because of trying to restrain and calming down their children's behaviours. This is the most painful situation that parents go through every day. The emotional impact of such children is huge, and it can be impossible to predict when aggressive behaviour will occur.

UNIT 3: Managing Challenging Behaviour of Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Harrower, Dent & Weber (2016) identify practical approaches for special education teachers and service providers who face the challenge of providing effective support to students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) as follows:

3.1. Manage the behaviours

Learners with ASD may exhibit unusual behaviours which are in most cases challenging and need to always be responded to in the usual disciplining manner.

- a) **Identifying the behaviour:** The most important is to first identify behaviour and then focus on managing such behaviour. Identifying the behaviour is often done by the teachers, as learners start disrupting the learning of both the learner with autism and other learners in the class; and parents as they see their children start to show behaviours that disrupt harmony in the family.
- b) **Understanding the situation:** A good starting point is to understand the situation as a problem to be solved and to analyse the deficits in learning that may be causing the problem behaviour.
- c) **Developing a successful and a systematic intervention or plan.** For any intervention plan/ measures to take place, it is necessary to first understand the characteristics of the learner with ASD as well as the needs of the individual learner.

When teachers and other educational workers are equipped with appropriate information and the training, they are better to manage behavioural challenges.

UNIT 4: Teaching Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Most children with autism require teachers to apply approaches, strategies and procedures in the educational contexts. (Harrower et al 2001). This unit contains information about important areas of instruction and instructional approaches that have proved successful for teachers working with learners with autism. These include:

4.1. Instructional Approaches.

No single method for teaching learners with ASD is successful for all learners. In addition, learners' needs change over time, making it necessary for teachers to try other instructional approaches such as:

4.1.1 Visual aids Approaches

The most strongly recommended approach for teaching learners with ASD is to use visual aids. However, there is need to choose visual aids on the basis of an understanding of the learner and her or his abilities and responses. One of the advantages of using visual aids is that they attract learner's attention and teachers can use them to motivate learners to learn. For example, pictographic and written work can help the learner to learn through observation, communication and to develop self-control.

Visual aids support can be employed to:

- organize the learner's activity—daily schedules, mini-schedules, activity checklists, calendars, choice boards.
- provide directions or instructions for the learner—visual display of classroom assignments, file cards with directions for specific tasks and activities, pictographs and written instructions for learning new information.
- assist the learner to understand the organization of the environment—labelling of objects, containers, signs, lists, charts and messages

- teach social skills—pictorial representations of social stories depicting a social situation with the social cues and appropriate responses developed for a specific situation for the individual learner.
- teach self-control—pictographs, which provide a cue for behaviour expectations (Harrower et al 2001).

4.1.2 Provide Precise, Positive Praise

While teaching, give learners precise information about what they do right or well. Learners with ASD may learn on one trial, so directing the praise to the very specific behaviour is important: for example, “Yakobo, you are doing very well at multiplying these numbers.” “This is a good colouring you are doing.”

Learners with autism may not be motivated by the usual common praises that work with other learners. They might prefer some time spent alone, time to talk to a preferred teacher, a trip to the canteen, a daily routine, time to play with a desired object, music, playing in water, performing a favourite routine, items that provide specific sensory stimulation, or sitting at the window. So, it is important for the teacher to know what motivation that works for each learner. Furthermore, life skills, social skills, and academic skills should be reinforced during teaching and learning.

4.1.3 Use Age-appropriate Materials

It is important to honour the dignity of learners with SD through the choice of instructional materials. Even if the instruction must be modified significantly, the learning materials should be appropriate to the age of the learner. Sometimes learners may continue to choose one activity or object because they do not know how to choose another. So, provide opportunities of choices to help learners who have limited ability to communicate or to choose different activities or objects to use.

4.1.4. Break down Instructions into Small Steps, be patient and pay attention

When providing instruction for learners with ASD, teachers should avoid long verbal information. In addition, support oral instruction with visual cues and representations to help learners understand. In the same way, learners with autism may need to process each discrete piece of the message or request; and therefore, need extra time to respond. Therefore, providing extra time and allowing for ample time between giving instructions and learner responses are both important tactics for supporting learners with ASD.

4.1.5. Develop Talent and Interest Areas

If the learner demonstrates a particular interest and strength in a specific area (e.g., music, drama, art, graphics, computer), provide opportunities to develop further expertise in that area. This may not only provide enjoyment and success, but may also lead to the development of skills for future employment.

4.2 Classroom Management

4.2.1 Provide a Structured, Predictable Classroom Environment

The classroom environment should be structured in order to provide consistency and clarity so that learners know where things belong and what is expected of them in a specific situation, and can anticipate what comes next. Learners with ASD often find changes in activity, setting, or planned routine very stressful. Visual schedules can be used to help them understand and co-operate with necessary changes. Social stories with illustrations can also be used to prepare the learner for new situations.

4.2.2 Provide a Customized Visual Daily Schedule

All planned activities can be plotted in a visual form and posted at or near the desks of learners with autism so that they can understand changes in activities and know what to expect.

The learners can be helped to learn to use the schedule independently and the teachers can direct the learner to the schedule when it is time to change activities to smooth transition times. If possible, decrease environmental distracters and reduce activities that confuse, disorient, or upset the learner and interfere with learning.

Vary tasks to prevent boredom, and alternate activities to reduce anxiety and possibly prevent some inappropriate behaviours. For example, alternate familiar, successful experiences with less preferred activities. In addition, incorporating physical activity and exercise at points throughout the day is helpful.

4.2.3 Provide Relaxation Opportunities and Areas

It may be necessary to have a calm, quiet, designated area where the learner can go to relax. Relaxing for some learners with ASD may mean engaging in repetitive behaviours that have a calming effect on them. In some cases, learners who crave certain repetitive movement, such as rocking or other self-stimulating movements, can be provided with a time and space where this movement is permitted.

4.2.4 Provide Opportunities for Meaningful Contact with Peers

Create opportunities for a learner with ASD can interact with peers. This may include:

- Pairing the learner with friends for walking down the hall, on the playground, and during other unstructured times
- Varying peer friends across time and activities to prevent dependence on one child
- Arranging cross-age peer supports/friends by assigning an older learner to assist the learner with ASD
- Pairing learners while attending special school events such as assemblies and clubs
- Facilitating involvement in after-school or extracurricular activities

NB: If your school has an arrangement in which a class of older learners is paired with a younger class, ensure that the older learner with ASD is also paired; and provide the necessary supports for success.

4.3. Communication Development

Expanding the communication skills of learners with ASD is one of the greatest challenges for teachers and parents. Most people are unaware of the complexity of normal communication, because children develop these skills automatically, usually by the age of three or four. Many learners with ASD have not developed the skills they need for spontaneous communication, and must therefore be taught.

Some general suggestions for assisting with communication

- Focus on developing interaction and communication in the environments in which the learner participates (e.g., classroom, playground).
- Use sentences to talk to the learner. Keep in mind that you are modelling speech and trying to communicate with the learner.
- Use vocabulary appropriate to the learner's comprehension capability. For learners with more severe communication disability, choose familiar, specific, and concrete words, and repeat as necessary.
- Use language that is clear, simple, and concise. Figures of speech and irony or sarcasm will only confuse learners with communication difficulties.
- Allow time for the learner to process the information. It may be necessary to talk more slowly or to pause between words. The pace of speech depends on the ability of the individual learner.

4.3.1 Learning to Listen

Learners with ASD often need structured lessons on how to listen. Reinforcing listening efforts rather than assuming that listening is an expected and automatic behaviour may be necessary.

Breaking listening down into components for the learner and reinforcing each component may be helpful; for example, teaching the learner to face the speaker, look at one spot (which does not mean they must make eye contact), and place hands in a planned position, and praising or otherwise rewarding each step.

4.3.2 Developing Oral Language Comprehension

Use visual input to aid comprehension of oral speech. Visual aids may help obtain and maintain the learner's attention. Accompanying spoken language with relevant objects, pictures, and other visual supports can help with comprehension. Experienced teachers of learners with ASD suggest the use of photographs to support understanding of the content of oral language communication. Interestingly, many learners with autism use reading to support oral comprehension rather than the expected reverse of using oral language to support reading. This makes reading instruction even more significant for these learners.

When working with learners who are higher functioning, it is easy to assume that they understand information, particularly if they are able to repeat it. However, even though there may be good recall, the learner may not grasp the intended meaning. It is important to check for comprehension.

4.3.3 Developing Oral Language Expression

Learners with ASD may not develop traditional oral language, but most do develop some form of communication. It is important that teachers and parents have a thorough knowledge of the learner's form of expression and that they adjust their expectations for communication accordingly. For learners with limited oral expression, teachers and families should accept limited verbal attempts and nonverbal behaviour as communicative. A customized communication dictionary is a very useful tool in which teachers and parents can document what the learner says and what is meant, along with planned teacher responses to language attempts.

Even those learners with ASD who do have oral language may not add to their working oral vocabularies easily. Teachers and parents will need to teach new vocabulary in a variety of contexts and using a visually-based approach. Learners need to be taught that:

- Everything in our world has a name
- There are different ways of saying the same thing
- Words can be meaningful in a variety of contexts, and
- Learning to use words will help them communicate their needs and desires.

Learners who rely on pictorial representations to communicate will need to learn that a drawing or representation has a name and that it can give direction, or tell us what to do.

Understanding this is essential if visual systems are going to provide meaningful communication.

The learner's education program should include situations that encourage different types of expression, such as:

- Requests (e.g., for food, books, or help)
- Negation (e.g., refusing food or a book, protesting when asked to do something, or indicating when the learner wants to stop)
- Commenting (e.g., labelling pictures in books, or objects from a box, greetings or play activities).

4.3.4 Developing conversation skills

Virtually all people with ASD have difficulty with the pragmatics of communication—the interpretation and use of language in social situations. Even those individuals who have a good vocabulary and appear to have a command of the language may have restricted understanding of social and conversational interactions. Therefore, to develop conversation skills, the following can be done:

- For some learners, it may be necessary to provide structured teaching to develop the oral language needed for social and communicative play. This can be done by:

- Providing structured play opportunities that incorporate the learner's interests.
- Modelling, physical prompts, visual cues, and reinforcement can be used to facilitate attention, imitation, communication, and interaction.
- To facilitate social communication:
 - Structure interactions around the learner's activity references and routine.
 - Encourage informal and formal communicative social exchanges during the day.
 - Simple drawings are an effective strategy for teaching conversation skills. These drawings illustrate what people say and do and emphasize what they may be thinking. A set of symbolic drawings can be used to represent basic conversational concepts, such as listening, interrupting, loud and quiet words, talk, and thoughts.
 - Colours may be incorporated to represent the emotional context.
 - Pictures with scripts can also be used to develop conversation skills and communication appropriate to specific social contexts and situations.
- People with ASD have difficulty understanding subtle social messages and rules, and have problems interpreting the non-verbal communication of others. It may be helpful to provide the learner with a concrete rule when one does exist, and to present it in a visual format, by writing it down or incorporating it into a social story or comic strip conversation.
- Learners also need opportunities for social interactions and community-based experiences in order to practise the skills.

4.3.5 Echolalia

Some learners with ASD demonstrate echolalia. Echolalia is the literal repetition of words or phrases from language of other people. Young children use echolalia as part of normal language development. However, in ASD, some learners seem to stop developing at this level of language growth.

Echolalia can be both immediate and delayed, that is, the learner can repeat what they just heard or can repeat it later, sometimes many months or years later. Immediate echolalia can be used as a teaching tool. The echolalic speech phrase can be shaped by using speech rules and by using the echolalic skill to model more appropriate language. For example, when a learner echoes back questions, the teacher can shape the response by modelling the appropriate response and reinforcing the use of the appropriate response.

Delayed echolalic utterances may have no obvious meaning for the listener. Learners with ASD frequently repeat television commercials word for word. To understand the function of the language behaviour, it is helpful to think of it as a chunk of language that has been stored without regard for meaning. It is important not to assume that the learner understands the content of the echolalic speech being used. When possible, try to determine the situation that has elicited the speech and prompt the appropriate language to use for that situation.

4.3.6 Using alternative or augmentative communication systems

Many learners can benefit from the use of an augmentative communication system. An augmentative communication system is any approach that supports, enhances, or adds to the way a person tells you something. It may be used with non-verbal learners and for learners who have verbal expression, but appear unable to use speech in a functional way to express wants and needs.

Parents are key players in such decisions as the communication system should be used both at school and at home to be effective. The teacher's role is often implementing the decision and supporting the learner in learning to use it to supplement oral speech or as a substitute for speaking.

4.4 Teaching Social Skills

Most learners with ASD would like to be part of the social world around them. They have a need to interact socially and be involved with others. However, it is a mistake to assume that learners with ASD understand any situation or a social expectation.

Learners with ASD have not automatically learned the rules of interaction with others, and they are unable to follow these unwritten rules of social behaviour. They may be using an ineffective method of interacting because they do not know another more appropriate one, or they may be unable to distinguish between situations in order to select an appropriate behaviour. Therefore, social skill development is a crucial component of any intervention plan for changing problem behaviours.

This can be done through the following practices:

4.4.1. Using Social Stories

One of the most helpful methods for teaching social skills is the use of social stories. A social story is a description of a social situation that includes the social cues and appropriate responses, and that is written for a specific situation for the individual learner.

Social stories can be created by parents, teachers, and other service providers. They are useful with learners who have a level of cognitive functioning that allows them to understand the story. To be effective, a social story should describe a situation from the perspective of the learner, direct the learner to do the appropriate behaviour, and be in the voice of the learner (i.e., from the “I” perspective).

The process begins with identifying learner needs through observation and assessment. Once a difficult situation is identified, the teacher observes the situation and tries to understand the perspective of the learner in terms of what will be seen, heard, and felt. The teacher then writes the story at an appropriate comprehension level and from the perspective of the learner, and includes descriptive, directive, and perspective statements.

The most effective format for a story is a booklet with one or two sentences on each page, and a single page containing one main concept.

There are three basic approaches for implementing a social story:

- For a learner who reads independently, the story is read twice by a teacher or parent, followed by the learner reading it back. Then the learner reads it daily.
- If the learner does not read, the story may be recorded on a cassette tape with a signal (i.e., bell) to turn the pages. The learner is taught to “read” the story, and reads it daily. Symbols, drawings, or photographs can be included in the story to support meaning for the learner.
- To incorporate modelling, the story can be videotaped. The story is read aloud on a videotape, with one page on the screen at a time.

4.4.2 Teaching Key Social Rules

Developing an understanding of the basic rules associated with a given situation will help the learner to adapt to the social context, and may prevent increased anxiety and reduce the reliance on inappropriate coping behaviours.

Critical social skills for which learners with ASD will likely need some type of direct instruction include:

- **Waiting**—Visual cues such as an object, pictures, and written words can provide concrete information to make waiting less abstract and more specific to the situation.
- **Taking turns**—This can be taught through the use of social stories as well as a picture or pictograph to cue the child. It may also be necessary to provide some instruction and rehearsal in turn-taking activities.
- **Transitions**—using social stories and providing warnings with visual cues, such as symbols that are understood by the learner, can help the learner make the transition from one activity to another. Transitions can be particularly difficult if the learner has not completed the activity; the learner may need to be prepared for the possibility of having to finish later.
- **Changing the topic in conversation**—Some learners may stay on one topic and appear unable or unwilling to talk about anything else. Staying with one behaviour or topic in this way is referred to as perseveration.

- Visual rules, established time limits and setting a time and place to engage in a favourite topic may help in teaching learners when they need to end or change the topic.
- Finishing—It may help to teach learners to use environmental cues, such as observing and following the behaviour other learners. It may also be necessary to use a timer, and a method for checking their own work.
- Initiating—Social stories combined with photographs or pictures can be particularly useful for teaching a learner how to approach others, ask for something, get into a game, say hello, and leave a situation if upset.
- Being flexible—Visual systems can be used to explain changes in a concrete way. If sequenced schedules or picture routines are used, a specific picture or symbol can be removed or crossed out and another put in its place.
- Being quiet—Visual supports may be helpful in teaching the specific behaviours for being quiet, and teaching rules for specific situations.

4.4.3 Using Peer Support

Peers can assist learners with ASD in developing social skills. It may be helpful to educate the peers first, so that they better understand the behaviour of the autistic learner. Learners can be provided with information on autism and tips for interacting with the learner with ASD, but it is important that parents be involved in the decision to discuss ASD with their child's peers.

Peers can be helped to develop strategies to enhance the social competence of the learner with ASD. Pivotal Response Training (PRT) is one technique that has been used to encourage interactions, initiation, vary plays, and language use.

PRT involves teaching typical peers to use strategies to:

- gain attention
- give choices to maintain motivation
- vary games
- model social behaviour
- reinforce attempts
- encourage conversation
- extend conversation
- take turns
- narrate play

4.4.4 Using Social Skills Training Groups

Learners with ASD may also benefit from social skill instruction within a small group-structured format. There are a variety of social skills training programmes and resources available. Although these programmes are not developed specifically for learners with ASD, they can be used in combination with appropriate adaptations and supports. Lessons follow a similar format in each of the social skills curricula:

- identifying the skill and skill components, and when it is used
- modelling the skill
- role-play
- opportunities to practice, and
- strategies for generalization

These programmes include an assessment that is used to identify skills for instructions acquired.

4.4.5 Integrated Play Groups

Integrated play groups can provide opportunities for learners with ASD to interact with their age peers, and create a natural environment for incidental teaching of social skills. Play groups provide natural situations in which children with autism use language to express wants, practise being near other children, and imitate social interactions among non-disabled peers.

4.4.6 Teaching Self-monitoring/Managing Skills

The ultimate goal for all learners, including those with ASD, is to increase independent participation in a variety of environments with effective social skills. One way to increase independence in higher-functioning learners with ASD is to teach self-management procedures, in which learners monitor their own behaviour in order to earn positive reinforcement. The accuracy of the self-monitoring may not be as important as the process and awareness it builds in the learner. The process for teaching self-management is as follows:

- Define the target behaviour that the learner will self-monitor.

- Identify reinforcers that function successfully for the individual.
- Create a self-monitoring method for the learner to collect data (e.g., a chart, stickers, or some kind of low-tech counter device).
- Teach the learner the target behaviour and how to use the self-monitoring method to record the performance of the behaviour.
- Increase the learner's independence by gradually reducing teacher or parent intervention and having the learner self-manage behaviour.

4.4.6 Supporting the Development of Friendships

Learners who demonstrate basic social skills may still have difficulty establishing connections with other children and maintaining interactions with peers.

Teachers and parents may facilitate further social interaction through:

- encouraging a friend to play with the child at home.
- helping the learner join school clubs with support as needed to participate.
- teaching the child to observe other children to follow what to do.
- encouraging co-operative games.
- modelling how to relate to the learner, and educating other learners in the class.
- encouraging prospective friendships.
- providing enjoyment at break times.
- doing projects and activities that illustrate the qualities of a good friend.
- helping the learner to understand emotions through direct teaching of how to read people's faces and body language and respond to cues that indicate different emotions.

4.5 Teaching Functional Skills

One of the fundamental goals of schooling is that learners acquire the skills they need to function as independently as possible in the world.

In the field of special education, educators have developed a variety of models for the domains of functional skills. Although these models differ in some ways, they include five domains:

- domestic, or self-care
- functional academics

- vocational, or job skills
- social, including leisure skills
- community, including travel and using services

Schools and families should co-ordinate the functional skills development, so that instruction at both home and school is consistent and efficient. Some of these skills involve the most personal areas of a person's life, so sensitivity, and care need to be used in planning with parents or other caregivers.

4.5.1 Self-care

The same kinds of instructional strategies can be applied to instruction in the areas of self-care as with communication or social skills.

- Learners with ASD, particularly those who also have intellectual disabilities, often need direct instruction in personal hygiene, grooming, and dressing.
- Toileting can be an area requiring significant planning and instruction.
- Planning meals, food preparation, and even eating may be an appropriate part of a learner's program.
- Household skills required for living independently (e.g., doing laundry, caring for clothing, and cleaning) may be taught or reinforced in the school program.
- Handling money and budgeting are essential skills for older learners.

4.5.2 Functional Academics

Being able to apply the basic academic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics to real life situations is another important area of functional skill development for many learners with autism. Learners need to learn how to communicate personal information such as their name, birth date, address, and telephone number. They need to recognize important signs and instructions in writing, such as labels and street signs. Using measurement for weight, volume, distance, and size; counting; using calendars; and telling time are all mathematical literacy skills that are of critical importance to independent functioning.

4.5.3 Vocational Skills

Learners with ASD usually require instruction in basic skills needed for the world of work. These skills are broad and overlap with all the other areas. Independent learners need to have skills such as:

- being punctual and reliable in attendance at the work site;
- following a job routine, and completing duties as assigned;
- understanding task completion;
- following safety procedures;
- accepting direction and correction;
- responding appropriately to persons in authority;
- completing a clean-up routine;
- dressing in appropriate work attire and using appropriate grooming; and
- using job site leisure time appropriately (lunch, breaks).

4.5.4 Leisure Skills

Education programmes for learners with ASD often include a recreational component, in recognition of the fact that they need help in developing a positive use of their spare time. For some individuals whose disabilities prevent employment in the future, leisure activities make up an even more significant part of their daily routines as adults.

Participation in leisure activities can vary from full to partial participation, depending on the needs of the individual. Leisure activities include:

- team sports (e.g., soccer)
- individual sports (e.g., bowling)
- arts activities (e.g., music)
- attending performances (e.g., theatre, movies)
- nature activities (e.g., camping, hiking)
- participating in organized groups (e.g., Scouts)
- attending social events (e.g., dances)

Developing activities that can be enjoyed at home is also important. Learners may need support in finding and learning activities such as:

- using a television
- caring for pets
- playing games such as cards
- sewing, knitting, or doing other crafts

4.5.5 Community Skills

Safety in the community is a major concern for many learners with autism. It is important to consider safety issues in planning for them as they develop dependence in the community. Social skills are of course closely connected to community skills. Possible areas for consideration in planning community skills instruction include:

- using public transportation
- finding community services such as pools, recreation centres and banks
- managing pedestrian rules and understanding traffic
- using public facilities such as washrooms
- Restaurant skills such as choosing and ordering food

UNIT 5: Case Studies

The following four case studies have been developed to show three very different learners with autism disorder. The features of the learners in these case studies were derived from several real students in some schools. The information has been significantly altered to preserve confidentiality. The studies still show the very real needs of learners with autism, and how teachers can plan to meet those needs.

SAM'S CASE:



source: From Gestures to Symbols by Emily Rubin

www.ash.org/Publications/leader/2010/100119/AutismCaseStudies.

Sam was born six weeks premature following his mother's hospitalization for pre-term labour. His birth history was significant for low birth weight (2.1kg), respiratory distress, intraventricular haemorrhage, and a neonatal hospital stay of six weeks. He began receiving intervention services at 12 months of age to address speech, language, social-emotional, and cognitive delays. To date, evaluations yield developmental age equivalents up to the 24-month level. Since birth, Sam's history is unremarkable for significant medical concerns and he is in good health. He has passed hearing screenings and wears corrective glasses

At 5 years, 8 months of age, Sam obviously shared his intentions through nonverbal means, which included facial expressions (e.g., looking toward mother to request food), physical gestures (e.g., pulling his teacher's hands to his head to report his friend), and more conventional gestures (e.g., pointing to request for his car toy and a head shake to reject). Sam occasionally uses a few verbal word approximations (e.g., "no," "yes," "more," and "balloon"), Sam uses nonverbal means at baseline (e.g., expressing emotion by biting his hand and looking toward staff).

During language art centres, Sam engaged in activities designed to elicit, more sophisticated requests for preferred actions. Rather than identifying pictures, he could choose a preferred sensory activity, such as a head massage, a back rub, or tickling. Colour-coded symbols paired with sentence templates allowed Sam to create his own sentences for functions already exhibited spontaneously using nonverbal means at baseline (e.g., requesting comfort by pulling his teacher's hands toward his head

Sam's first quarterly review occurred around his 15th birthday. Observations and videos revealed a higher rate of spontaneous bids for communication and the emergence of symbols to express emotion (e.g., "happy" and "mad"), request coping strategies (e.g., "head squeezes" and "high fives"), and form simple sentence structures (e.g., "Jim squeeze head" and "Karen rub back"). By six months post-intervention, Sam began to take turns, requesting interaction using subject + verb sentences and then responding to interaction. His teacher might request that "Sam rub back" and Sam would oblige. At 12 months post-intervention, Sam continues to expand his symbolic language skills and recently began to generalize his sentences to include names of his peers.

TOTO'S CASE:



Source: Communication Emotions by Jane Wegner available at www.ash.org/Publications/leader/2010/100119/AutismCaseStudies.

Toto is a 12-year-old boy who was diagnosed with ASD at age 2. Toto is generally healthy although he has recently been diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis and is sensitive to pain. He has difficulty with small spaces and “bottlenecks” where many people are congregated.

Toto participates in special education at a nearby school. His strengths include being curious, social, and visually smart. His challenges include communication, impulsivity, and behaviour that may include tantrums, aggression, and property destruction. These challenges have made it difficult for Toto to participate in activities with peers.

Toto is a multimodal communicator whose verbal communication is not understood by most people. He uses a Palm 3 (Dynavox Technologies), pictures, personal signs, gestures, and some words to communicate.

Toto’s strengths in the area of social communication included engaging in shared interactions, sharing attention to regulate the behaviour of others, and using several modes of communication.

Toto’s emotional regulation strengths included responding to assistance from a familiar partner that he trusted and using a behaviour strategy (holding a block of wood) to remain focused and calm in some familiar environments. His needs in the area of emotional regulation were seeking assistance with emotional regulation from others, responding to assistance across contexts, and responding to the use of language strategies across environments.

Transactional support was strong in some areas. For example, all of Toto's partners wanted him to learn and communicate more conventionally and he had consistent, responsive communication partners at home. Toto needed the same responsive style across all partners and the consistent use of visual and organizational supports as well as his AAC system to enhance learning and comprehension of language and behaviour.

ROBERT'S CASE:



From Gestures to Symbols by Emily Rubin

Source:

<http://www.asha.org/Publications/leader/2010/100119/AutismCaseStudies.htm>

Robert is a 16-year-old learner diagnosed with autism disorder after many years of being mislabelled as “emotionally disturbed with acting out behaviour”. He has developed oral language, but his very rapid speech without much inflection is difficult to understand. He may use oral language without ensuring that anyone is listening, so communication is not received. Robert is in a mainstream school setting. He is achieving averagely in math and science, but he has significant difficulty with reading comprehension, which affects his success in English and other academic subjects.

His receptive and expressive vocabulary is significantly below age-level, but he can master concepts that are represented visually. He is particularly good at using formulas in math but has difficulty knowing which formulas to use for solving a mathematical problem.

Robert often has difficulty completing assignments, even in Math and Science, because he is rigid about how they should look, insisting on starting his work over if he makes errors. He is interested in computers and is pursuing this area in “his learner Learning Plan for possible future training and employment”. Robert has some strengths as well as difficulties in social relationships and his poor judgment and inflexibility have had a disruptive effect on the lives of his teachers and peers. He has poor eye contact when he talks to people outside his family and does not follow social rules for personal space and touching. Robert has developed self-care skills but doesn’t follow them regularly, so that his hygiene and appearance are a contributing factor in poor peer acceptance. He often tries to start conversations in the middle of a story plot and does not understand when other people do not know the stories. His parents have started to lock the door to his bedroom at night so Robert does not wander the house, because he has been known to staying awake all night.

ALAN’S CASE:



Source: ASSISTING STUDENT DEVELOPMENT - myessaydoc.com

www.myessaydoc.com/assisting-student-development...

Alan is currently integrated full-time into a regular P.5 classroom. He was late in achieving some of the developmental milestones of early childhood. He started to walk at 18 months and was slow to talk. His early language was almost exclusively repetitive echolalic speech with limited communicative message. As a young child, Alan’s play was repetitive with seeming unawareness of others. He did not like to be touched by or to be close to other children, but he was agitated when separated from his mother.

He often used his sense of smell to investigate objects. He had an unusual interest in small objects such as keys or switches. When Alan was three years old his mother, who is a single parent, consulted with a clinical psychologist. The family has seen the psychologist regularly, and his mother has participated in parent training in behaviour management. Alan was evaluated by a speech and language therapist at age three and has had ongoing speech therapy.

At age 10, Alan still has behaviours that require significant support. He functions in the classroom with adapted assignments and an individualized visual schedule. The classroom routines include a token economy managed by the teacher assistant assigned to the class, with reinforcers to maintain appropriate behaviour. Alan is highly inflexible about the schedule and becomes aggressive about transitions if unexpected changes are made. Problematic behaviours have escalated since the beginning of P.5.

The behaviours of concern to the teacher, teacher assistant, and Alan's mother include banging on the desk or table, head-banging, agitated response if other people around fail to use specific cues, ignoring adult direction, yelling, and throwing objects. These behaviours pose a threat for physical harm to himself and disrupt the orderly functioning of the classroom. Alan has had interrupted sleep patterns and is showing the same behaviours of concern at home. His mother is having difficulty managing him.

Alan's academic skills are below grade level. His reading decoding is estimated at the P.3 level and his math computations skills at the P.4 level. Math problem-solving and reading comprehension appear to be at the P.2 level. Most academic tasks can be adapted for Alan. It is difficult to evaluate his knowledge using exams or any format measures because he may refuse to do unfamiliar tasks. Alan likes to make detailed drawings, but tends to repeat the same subjects, usually cars, and trucks. He enjoys music, especially listening to quiet music on his Walkman, but will not participate in music activities that require interacting with other learners. He has difficulty in gym period and follows a modified physical education curriculum with low order games assisted by the teacher assistant. After this year, Alan expects to be promoted to another class.

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Appendixes

Appendix i: Evaluation Tool/Checklist for Learner's with ASD in Secondary Schools

SN	Skills to be assessed	Levels (tick appropriately)				Remarks
		1	2	3	4	
1.	Playing different games					
2.	Keeping track of homework and returning it on time					
3.	Bringing everything that is needed in classes					
4.	Asking teachers for help during class time					
5.	Figuring out solution when confronted with a problem in class					
6.	Looking clean while at school					
7.	Talking with other learners about things they like					
8.	Listening to what other people say while conversing with them					
9.	Asking teachers for extra help with work					

SN	Skills to be assessed	Levels (tick appropriately)				Remarks
		1	2	3	4	
10.	Appreciating others (“Thank you”; “Good job”; “Nice work”; “Welldone”)					
11.	Figuring out what other people are feeling					
12.	Offering to help other learners if they need help					
13.	Working well with others in a group					
14.	Knowing how to find places they need to go (i.e. classroom, market, taxi stop, bodboda stage) on th					
15.	Knowing how to stay calm when they are mad about something					
16.	Always trying even when something is hard					
17.	Behaving normally if schedule or routine changes					
18.	Knowing how to ask for a break when needed					

SN	Skills to be assessed	Levels (tick appropriately)				Remarks
		1	2	3	4	
19.	Following the rules in class					
20.	Having ideas about what they want to do after secondary school					
21.	Understanding what is read in my classes (e.g., science, history, English)					
22.	Participating in school activities outside class (e.g., clubs, sports, band)					
23.	Getting together with friends outside of school					
24.	Getting calls and texts from friends					
25.	Calling or texting friends					
26.	Interacting with other people using the internet (e.g., chat room, gaming, e-mail, Face book).					

Teachers are reminded that these scores are not for selection of the best learner but to guide in encouraging the learners maintain the best and work on the areas.

APPENDIX II: Other Important Tips to the Teachers

Give fewer and clear choices. If a learner is asked to pick a colour, say red, only give him two to three choices to pick from. The more choices provided, the more confused an autistic learner will become. Try not to leave choices open ended. You are bound to get a better result by asking, for instance: “Do you want to read or draw?” than “What do you want to do now?”

If a question you asked or an instruction you gave is greeted with a blank stare, reword your sentence. Asking the learner what you have just said helps to clarify that he/she has been understood.

Avoid using irony. If a learner accidentally knocks all your papers on the floor and you say “well done they clap for you” you will be taken literally and this action might be repeated on a regular basis.

Avoid using idioms. “Put your thinking caps on”, “Open your ears” and “Zip your lips” will leave a learner completely mystified and wondering how to do that.

Repeat instructions and check understanding using short sentences to ensure clarity of instructions.

Provide a very clear structure and set daily routine including time for play

Teach what “finished” means, and help the learner to identify when something is finished and something different has started. Take a photo of what you want the finished product to look like and show the learner. If you want the room cleaned up, take a picture of how you want it to look like when it is clean. The learner can use this for a reference.

Provide warning of any impending change of routine, or switch of activity.

Address the learner by name at all times; for example, the learner may not realize that an instruction given to the whole class also includes him/her. Calling the learner's name and saying "I need you to listen to this as this is something for you to do" can sometimes work

Use various means of presentation – visual, physical guidance, peer modelling, etc.

Recognize that some change in manner or behaviour may reflect anxiety which may be triggered by a minor change of routine.

Not taking apparently rude or aggressive behaviour personally, and recognizing that the target for the learner's anger may be unrelated to the source of that anger.

Avoid overstimulation. Minimize / remove distracters, or provide access to a learner's work area or booth when a task involving concentration is set. Colourful wall displays can be distracting for some learners; others may find noise very difficult to cope with.

Seek to link work to the learner's particular interests.

Explore word-processing, and computer-based learning for literacy.

Protect the learner from teasing at free times, and provide peers with awareness of his/her particular needs.

Allow the learner to avoid certain activities (such as sports and games) which she/he may not understand or like; and support her/him in open-ended and group tasks.

Allow some access to obsessive behaviour as a reward for positive efforts.

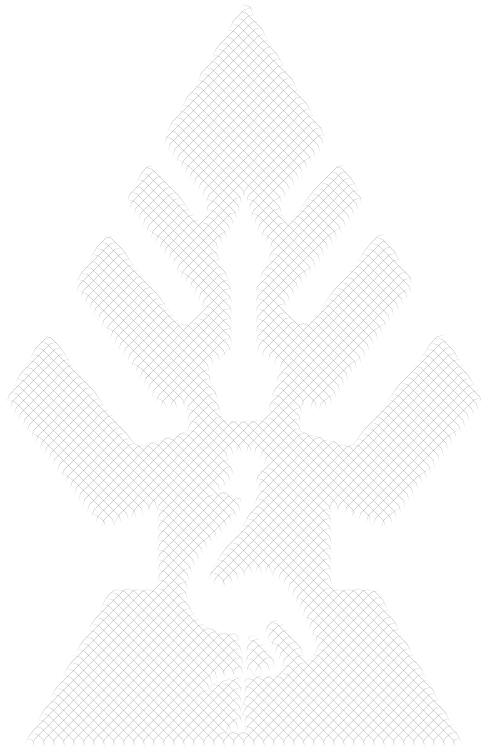
Tips to help the average classroom teacher benefit learners with ASD

- Create a classroom routine
- Learners with ASD appreciate routine
- Use preparatory commands and commands of execution to cue transitions
- Give fewer choices (at least not more than 3 choices)
- Use appropriate technology
- Treat them like any other learner as much as possible
- Try to break instructions with pauses between them
- Speak slowly to give the learner time to process what is said or communicated
- Mind your use of vocabulary e.g., ‘Go and stand on the far side’ may be meaningless to the learner at that material time
- Alternative augmentative communication is another crucial approach which is very effective especially when it comes to teaching of non-verbal autistic learners. It involves intensive use of visual cues (hand signing, pictures, and symbols) is necessary.

Other Tips for Supporting Learners with ASD

- Use simple language (vocabulary and structure) that is familiar to the learner
- Use and teach conventional gestures and/or functional communication for the learner; for example, teach ways for the learner to communicate “I need help,” “No, thanks,” “I don’t know”
- Do not always require eye contact
- Always ask, “What could she be saying with this behaviour?”
- Provide definite visual structure and a visual schedule throughout the day and during each activity
- Be sure activities have clear beginnings and endings
- Identify activities that give the learner opportunities to use her/his interests and highest-level skills
- Avoid “changing the rules” whenever possible

- Make rules as clear, specific and concrete as possible
- Establish routines to assist in making daily activities predictable
- Only use prompts that can be easily faded
- To facilitate social play, identify simple, age-appropriate activities that are of high interest to peers.
- Choose activities that require simple social interactions
- Be creative
- Be flexible
- Have a constant one-person contact
- Clear communication
- Asking lots of questions to find out what works and what doesn't
- Develop trusting relationships
- Help learners identify skills and talents
- Listen to the learner who usually knows what works best for them
- Listen and observe
- Take each learner on a learner basis
- One-on-one support
- Individualized planning
- Maintain a sense of compassion and a sense of humour
- Inclusion of the learners, parents, caregivers from the beginning
- Involvement of parents and/or previous support workers initially
- Working together with learners and parents
- Provide support based on the support provided through high school
- Liaising with treating clinicians for specific recommendations





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