

Suggested Modifications
For students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Strategies for Managing Behaviors:

- Understand the deficits of Autism
- Predict possible difficult situations for the student
- Develop pro-active, preventive routines

General Principles for Planning Educational Interventions for Students with ASD:

- Make it predictable - the child's classroom environment should be made as consistent and predictable as possible, especially through the use of established classroom routines and individualized daily schedules (pictures or written, depending on the child's developmental level).
- Make it visually clear - Expectations are communicated to the child in a visually clear manner, especially through the use of pictures, writing, and/or use of objects and physical cues in environment.
- Establish routine - Follow the same sequence of events for predictability (i.e., take roll, children get out materials, cueing words for beginning a task)
- Cue for changes in routine - Bring attention to a change in schedule before it happens and repeat change several times before it occurs. Support with picture or written cues.
- Be aware of sensory issues - Children with autism often have difficulty handling situations which create overstimulation of their sensitive sensory systems, such as too many people, too much noise, too much activity. Such situations can lead to inappropriate behaviors, such as hitting, biting, yelling. Proactive recognition of potential situations can avoid such behaviors. Allow

the child to position themselves near the front, side, or back of the group or line. During play activities, create an "escape" area that is free of distractions and noise where the child can retreat if needed.

Specific Techniques to Address Impairments in Social Interactions

- Children with autism have special difficulties understanding and recognizing other's emotions and the subtle rules that guide social interactions. A neutral, matter-of-fact, and yet caring manner is often most effective with these children. Remember that the child may miss or misread subtle facial or gestural cues that show how you or others are feeling. Don't rely solely on these methods to get your expectations (or warnings) across.
- Children with autism frequently find the world unpredictable. They find clearly stated guidelines regarding other's expectations reassuring. Clear statements about social expectations are often more effective than verbal social reasoning in helping the child with autism learn appropriate behavior

Example: To curb a child's verbal outbursts in class, the teacher would want to state clear expectations for the behavior: "The rule is to be quiet until Ms. Stacy calls on you to answer." Using verbal reasoning such as, "How do you think I feel when you interrupt me?" is most likely going to elicit confusion, will be less effective and may increase inappropriate behavior.

- Develop a written (or picture) set of rules to help make social expectations clear and to act as a visual reminder of expectations that don't leave the child when the adult does. The rules should be individualized to the child's specific needs.

Example: Social stories work very well for children with autism. Write the story with the student and use specific, target behaviors which include the child as the subject:

During Circle Time, Joey hit his friend, Sam, because he

was sitting too close to him on the floor. Sam cried because Joey hurt his arm. Mrs. Smith does not like children to hit each other. It makes her feel sad when Joey hits others. Mrs. Smith is happy when Joey tells Sam, "Move over, please," when Sam sits too close to Joey.