

Autism 101

Amy Moore Gaffney, M.A., CCC-SLP

Education Consultant
Speech-Language Pathologist
TEACCH® Certified Advanced Consultant

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SECTION 1

What is Autism?

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Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

- ❖ A neuro-biological disorder
- ❖ There is no known cause. The best scientific evidence points to a combination of genetic & environmental influences.
- ❖ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates Autism occurs in 1 in 54 children
- ❖ The features, abilities, & severity of symptoms vary considerably among individuals with ASD.
- ❖ Nearly 75% of children with ASD have at least one co-occurring condition




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Diagnosis Criteria

- ❖ Persistent deficits in social communication & social interaction
 - Social-emotional reciprocity;
 - Non-verbal communication;
 - Developing, maintaining, & understanding relationships




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Diagnosis Criteria

- ❖ Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities
 - 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




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Diagnosis Criteria

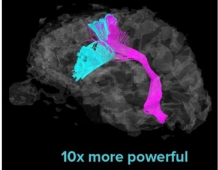



- ❖ Symptoms present in early development
- ❖ Symptoms cause clinically significant impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning




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Learning Style

Neurotypical Brain	Autistic Brain
	
10x more powerful	10x more powerful
 Ability to process what is heard.	 Ability to process what is seen.

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Challenges & Supports

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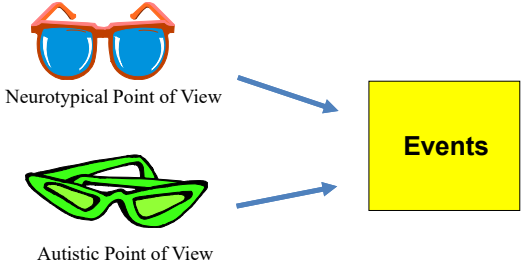
Theory of Mind / Social Thinking


- Perspective Taking
 - May not be accurate with what they think the other person is thinking
 - Is it a behavior problem or a Perspective Taking problem???
- Reading intentions
- Understanding / Perceiving emotions
- Explaining own behavior – Theory of Own Mind
- Predicting

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Lens of Interpretation




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Cartooning Example




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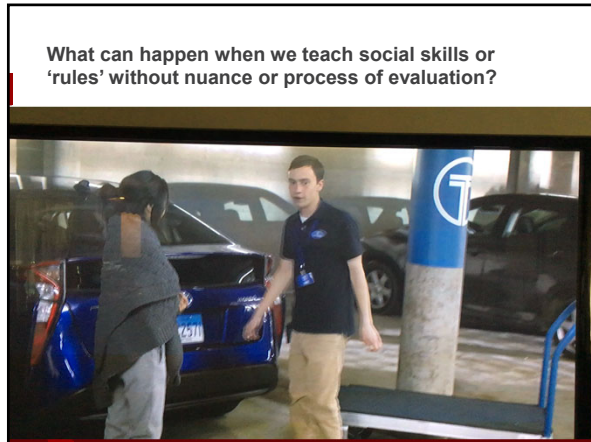
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Social Interaction

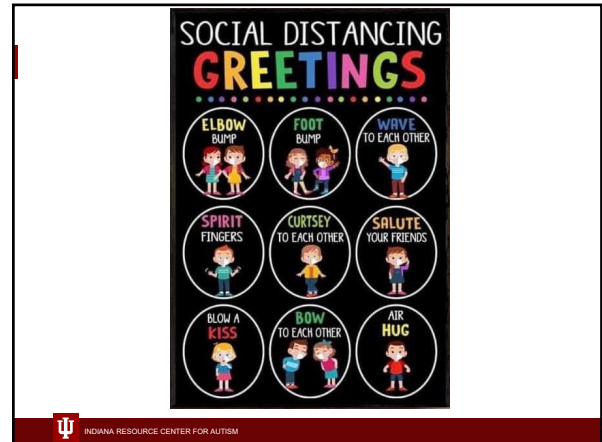
- ❖ Hidden Curriculum
 - Expectations – Expected & Unexpected Behaviors
 - Unstated social rules / guidelines
- ❖ May not use social “niceties”
- ❖ Cause/effect relationships of behavior
- ❖ May have difficulty understanding social relationship dynamics, especially in the teen years

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Social Interaction

- ❖ Group work can be very stressful due to the level of social interaction required
- ❖ Often the victims of bullying behavior, or can misread a situation and from their perspective be bullied
- ❖ Many people with autism have a desire for social interactions and friendships. They can be painfully aware of their social difficulties and social status.
 - Rate of depression is around 50% in adolescents with autism

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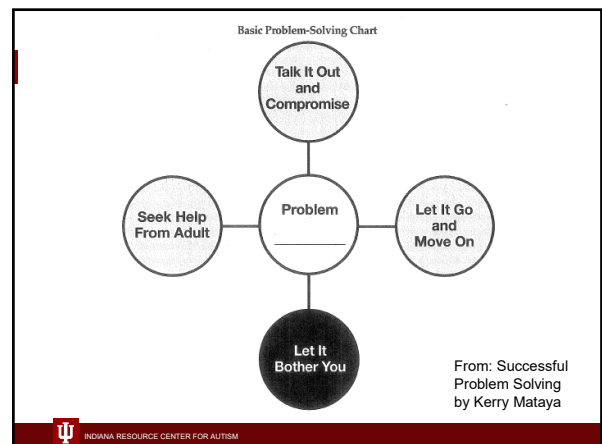
Problem Solving

- One way of viewing a problem
 - Can't see other people's perspectives
- Does not see problems as having more than one solution
- May not focus on the most important part of the problem
- May solve problems in unconventional ways
- "Stuck thinking"

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Executive Functioning FRAMES

Focus	Regulate Emotions	Activate	Memory	Effort	Self Monitoring
Initiate, Sustain, Shift Attention	Understand, Regulate Intensity of Emotions	Organize, Plan, Prioritize, Get Started	Working memory, Store & Retrieve information	Regulate alertness, Sustain effort, Processing speed	Analyze, Adjust Behavior

(Based on Brown, 2001)

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Strategies to support EF

- ❖ Specific Written Expectations
- ❖ Visual Supports
- ❖ Individualized Checklists
- ❖ Establish specific Classroom Routines
 - For Example: Highlight Title of Text each time, number paragraphs, underline target vocabulary words

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Checklist Tags

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Emotional Regulation

- ❖ Can have difficulty letting things go
- ❖ May not emotionally react in an expected way to a situation
- ❖ Difficulty modulating their emotions
 - Have an on/off switch instead of a dimmer switch
 - May over-react or under-react

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The 5 Point Scale

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Support Language and Give Choices

WHEN I FEEL FRUSTRATED

I'm frustrated because	I had a bad night at home ----- I got in a fight with my friends	I choose	To go to the counselor To take a break and finish later	So I can concentrate better
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Example of a Choice Visual

When Jamie is mad!

He can	sing	ABC's.
He can	squish	the ball.
He can	stomp	his foot.

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Emotional Regulation

I can get calm

- Hands push 5
- Head push 5
- Hug/ Body Squeeze 5
- Smell Flowers - Blow Out Candles

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Emotional Regulation

CALMING DOWN

- STOP
- Smell the Flower
- Blow out the candle
- Relax your body

1st - Do Breathing Sequence

2nd - Squeeze stress ball and put in jar

3rd - Match pictures of interest in binder

4th - Check Schedule card

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Sensory

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Sensory Challenges

- ❖ Hear, Touch, Smell, Taste, See
- ❖ Hyper-sensitive or Hypo-sensitive
- ❖ Body Temperature Regulation
- ❖ High or Low Pain Tolerance
- ❖ Poor Interoception Awareness (Kelly Mahler)
- ❖ One Size does NOT fit all

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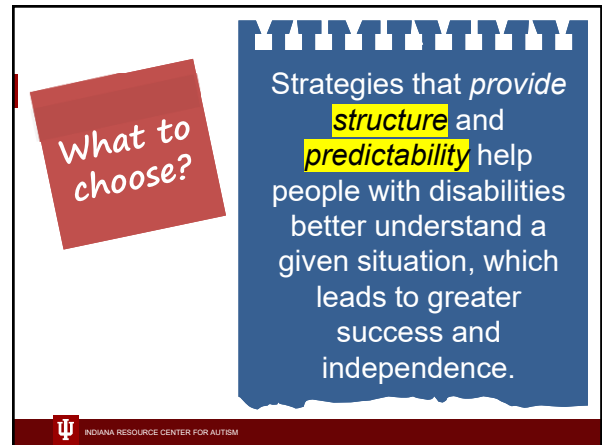
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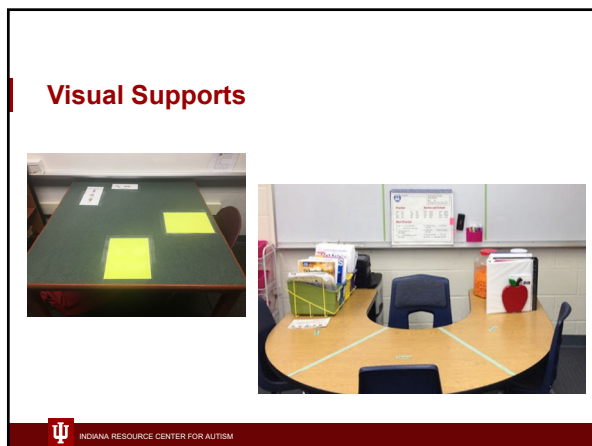
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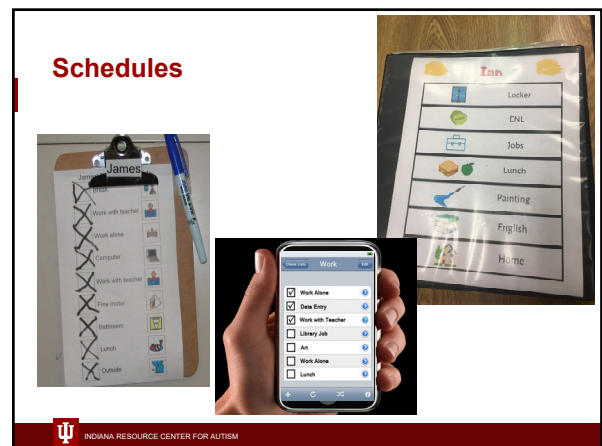
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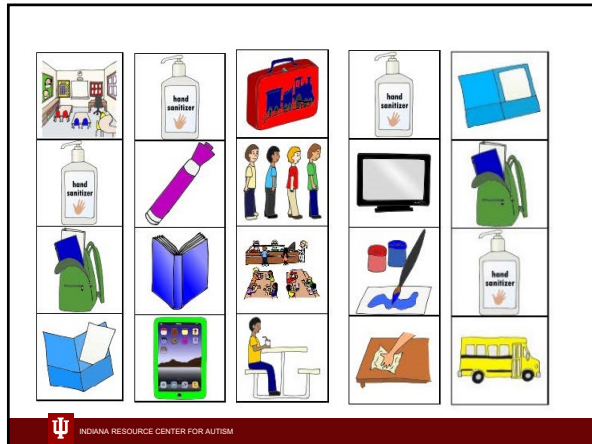
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“Change” Supports

It's raining. We can't go outside today. We will have recess in the classroom today.

Surprise! Out of Time! CHANGE

Pause

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WARNING... TRANSITION AHEAD!

CAUTION

- Use a Visual Timer
- Give lots of advanced warning
- Offer a transition item for comfort
- Use a visual support

Schedule Change

Danger!

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To Do Lists

Insect Report Due Next Friday

Timeline	Task	Details
Monday	Read at least 2 sources to learn more about insects	Can be on internet or information from books
Tuesday	Create outline	5-10 facts people should know about insects
Wednesday	Write 1 st draft. Use information from research to add details to outline	Introduction Body Conclusion
Thursday	Edit report (Ask your teacher to read it and make suggestions)	Read and look for errors Correct errors Make changes based on suggestions
Friday	Read paper again. Check for spelling errors. TURN IN PAPER	

End of the Day Checklist

- I checked my homework log
- My homework is written down for each class
- I have the folders I need for homework
- I have the books I need for homework
- I have my 5th book if I need it

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To Do Lists

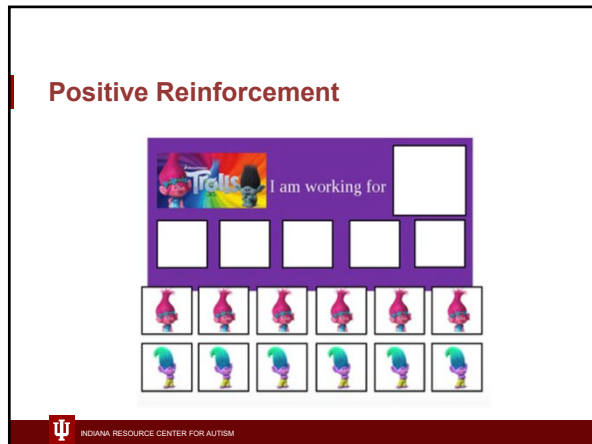
David's Work

- computers
- checking account
- math
- break

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Homework System

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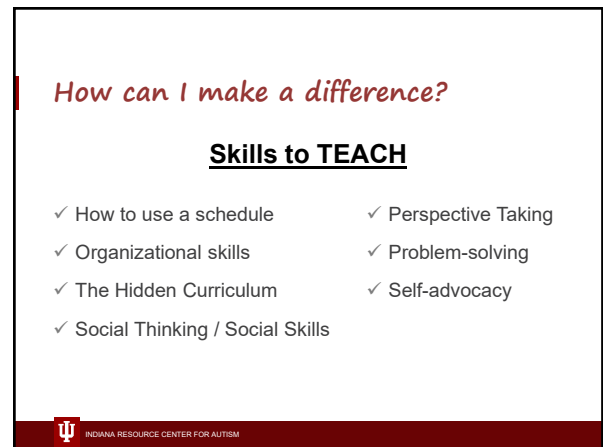
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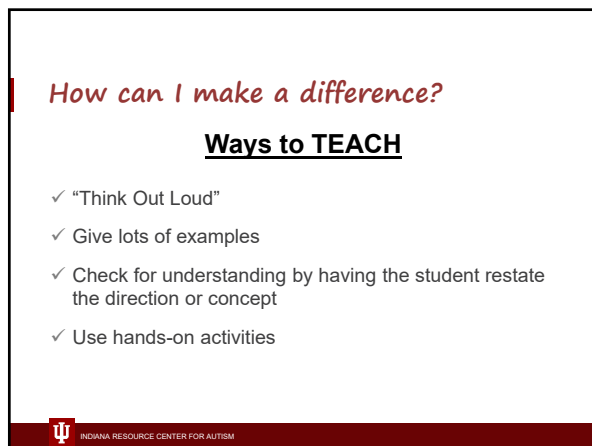
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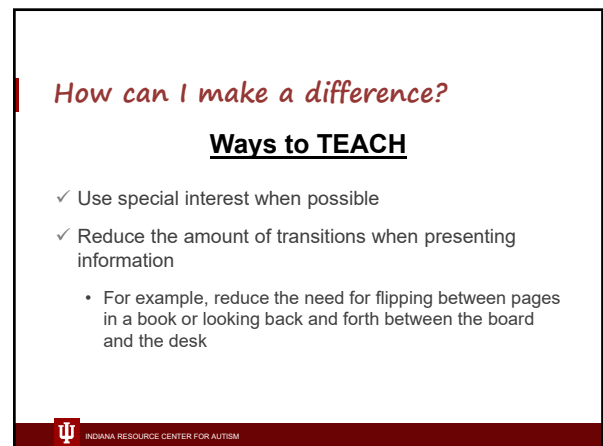
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Things to Provide:


- ✓ Visual Supports
- ✓ Structure
- ✓ Predictability
- ✓ A Model/Examples
- ✓ Breaks
- ✓ Choices
- ✓ To Do Lists
- ✓ Written Directions
- ✓ Copy of Class Notes
- ✓ Accommodations
- ✓ Motivation
- ✓ Reinforcement




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How little things make a big difference



- Structuring recess
- Special helper jobs
- Pre-select Group Work Partners
- Use Smencils for a Spelling Test
- Having a lunch buddy
- Initial Planner each day to make sure it's being used
- Listening to the student's perspective
- Talking to a student about her favorite toy/activity
- Sending home a positive message




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Resources

- ❖ Executive Function in the Classroom: Practical Strategies for Improving Performance and Enhancing Skills for All Students – Kaufman (2010)
- ❖ Executive Skills in Children and Adolescents: A Practical Guide to Assessment and Intervention – Dawson & Guare (2010)




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Resources

- ❖ FLIPP the Switch: Strengthen Executive Function Skills – Wilkins & Burmeister (2015)
- ❖ Interoception: The 8th Sensory System – Mahler (2015)
- ❖ Solving Executive Functioning Challenges: Simple Ways to Get Kids with Autism Unstuck and on Target – Kentworthy, et al (2014)




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Resources

- ❖ The Incredible 5 Point Scale – Buron & Curtis (2012)
- ❖ The Zones of Regulation – Kuypers (2011)
- ❖ Unstuck and On Target: Teaching flexibility and Goal Directed Behavior to Children with ASD – Cannon, et al (2011)
- ❖ When My Worries Get Too Big! – Buron (2013)




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Resources

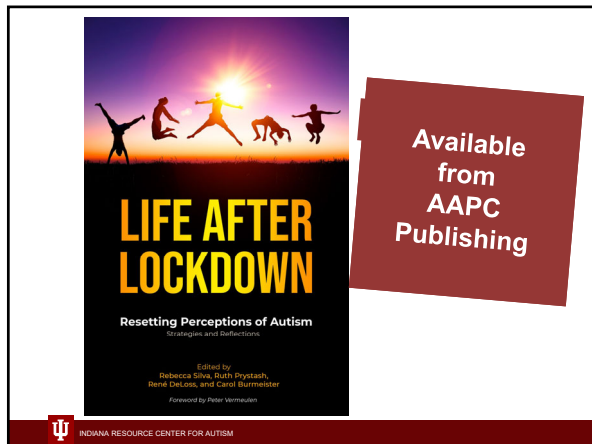
www.teacherspayteachers.com

- Liz's Early Learning Spot (Anger Management)
- Fun For Learning (Behavior Management)
- Pocket of Preschool (Emotions)
- Kathryn Watts (Classroom Management)
- Pathway 2 Success (Executive Functioning, etc.) (good for young learner – high school)



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