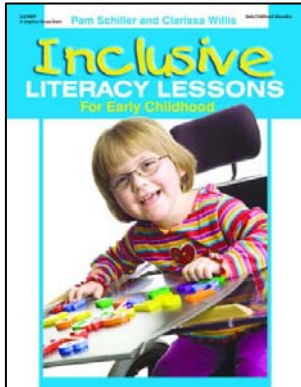


What to Do on Monday Morning?

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General Guidelines for Children with Special Needs

Just like typically-developing children, children with special needs have strengths and weaknesses. Some children may have a recognizable disability, i.e., a child with Down syndrome or a child who wears a hearing aid. Other children may exhibit delays, but may not have been diagnosed with a specific condition or syndrome. With time and practice of skills, many seemingly delayed children will ultimately catch up in their development. In other cases, children may be at-risk for a disability because of their environment or a chronic health condition, such as ear infections or a depressed immune system.

Regardless of the challenges children may face – All children can learn and all children should be allowed to participate in everyday routines and activities to the best of their capabilities. Special adaptations may be necessary. Sometimes, a child is only able to **partially participate**. Research tells us that children learn best in natural environments with typically-developing peers.

Each child is unique. The following list is intended to be a guide when working with children with special needs. Depending on the type and severity of the disability, a child may exhibit one or more of these characteristics. When working with children with special needs please keep in the mind the following:

1. Make the child a valued member of your classroom community:

- Children in your classroom look to you as a role model. They watch what you say, what you do, and how you act. It is important that the other children in your class see that you view all children, especially children with disabilities, as valuable class members who are not only important to you but important to each other.
- Always use **people-first language**. Refer to the child first and the disability last. For example, Sara is a child with autism – she is not the autistic child in your class. Bill is a child with a hearing loss – he is not a deaf child.
- Answer children's questions about a child with a disability honestly and

openly. Provide enough information to help the typically-developing child see that his classmate is like him but that he learns differently or needs help doing some things.

2. To encourage acceptance of children with disabilities by their peers, try the following:

- Plan activities that include the child. Look for ways to help the child with delays participate in everyday activities and routines. If the child cannot fully participate and do everything just like his peers, look for ways to adapt an activity so the child can partially participate.
- Read stories that feature people with disabilities as members of a community.
- Teach all the children in your classroom that everyone has strengths and everyone has weaknesses.
- Adopt a zero tolerance policy for bullying, teasing, and laughing at others, regardless of their abilities.
- Remember, all children can learn, some children just take more time and practice.
- Children with disabilities need to feel successful. Give the child a task he can do before introducing something he is just learning to do.

3. Work with the child's family:

- Unless you have a child with disabilities, you can never truly understand the perspective of parents who do. You can sympathize and try to appreciate how parents *might* feel, but you can never really know the day-to-day realities of living with, and caring for, a child with disabilities.
- For parents of a child with disabilities, their child is **not** just a disabled *child*. He or she is special, and is a valued member of their family. Try to work under the belief that parents of a child with a disability are doing the best they can with the resources they have at the time.
- Be respectful of their opinions. Parents often agree that the one thing that a teacher can do to understand their perspective is to be respectful of their opinions and treat them as valued contributors.

Sample Literacy Lessons:

Whispering

Objective:

To listen intently. To develop phonemic awareness.

Vocabulary:

game
hear
listen
speak
throat
whisper

Materials:

blindfold
recording device
recording media

Literacy Lesson:

- Demonstrate whispering.
- Have children place their hands on their throats while saying their name.
- Ask a volunteer to describe what she feels. *How is whispering different from speaking?*
- Tell the children that you are going to play a whispering game.
- Show the children the gestures you will use to signal the start and finish of each round of the game.
- Sit the children in a circle.
- Ask for a volunteer to be the “listener.” Take the volunteer aside and select a name he is to listen for. Blindfold the volunteer and walk him back to the circle. Have the children begin to whisper their names. Have the volunteer tap the classmate whose name he was told to listen for.
- Continue the game with a new “listener.”

Special Needs Adaptations:

Special Need	Adaptation
Visual Impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children with visual impairments are usually very good listeners. Use this lesson as an opportunity to focus on the strengths of this child. Invite him to be the first person who is the “listener.”
Hearing Impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• While children with hearing impairments may be unable to participate in this activity as the “listener,” they could participate in other ways. For example, invite the child with hearing impairments to be the “listener’s helper.” Since the listener is blindfolded, this child could serve as his leader and guide him, as he walks around the circle.
Cognitive Delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listening is an important skill for children with cognitive delays. For a child who has trouble understanding what he is expected to do, start by modeling the activity for him. Play the game with him two or three times, one-on-one. If he forgets what to do, gently remind him. It will be much easier when the large group plays the game if the child with cognitive delays has already played it before and knows what to expect.
Motor Delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The child with motor delays will have difficulty walking around and may not understand about being blindfolded. Play the game in a small group with this child. Invite three or four people to sit facing the child. Blindfold the child, the teacher can tap one child on the shoulder and invite him to whisper his name. He can then lean toward or point to the child as he says his name.

Speech/Language Delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a child with speech/language issues, make sure the directions are simple and clear. Before beginning the large group activity, demonstrate for the child what will happen, one step at a time. Wait a moment and invite the child to imitate what you just said or demonstrated.
Emotional/Behavior Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blindfolding is difficult for a child with severe behavior issues. To avoid a tantrum invite him to close his eyes or turn his back to the group, instead of being blindfolded.

Expanding the Learning:

- Record children whispering their names, one at a time. Encourage the children to listen to the tape and clap when they hear their name.
- Suggest that the children whisper when they are talking with their friends during center time. *Is it easier or more difficult to listen when listening to someone who is whispering?*
- Sing songs in a whisper? *Is the song more or less interesting when sung in a whisper?*

Reflect:

- *When do people whisper?*
- *Does whispering make you listen more closely? Why?*

Sentence Development

What Do You See?

Objective:

To develop descriptive vocabulary.

Vocabulary:

attributes
describe
see
words

Materials:

butcher paper
chart paper
crayons
orange, tangerine, or other fruit
paper
photograph or a simple illustration from a story book

Literacy Lesson:

- Show the children an orange. Pass the orange around the circle. Ask them to describe the orange. What shape is the orange? What color? What size? What does the skin look like? Is it shiny? Is it rough? Is it smooth?
- Tell the children that words that are used to describe something are called descriptive words or adjectives. Descriptive words often reflect attributes of an item or a person.
- Show the children a photograph or a simple illustration from a story book. Encourage a volunteer to describe what she sees.
- Write the description, in sentence form, on a sheet of butcher paper. As other children add to the description, add the adjectives to the sentence and rewrite it below. Continue to write each sentence under the previous sentence, so children can see that the sentence continues to grow as their adjectives are added. Use questions to encourage descriptions.
- For example, if the photo is a picture of a girl eating an ice cream cone, the first sentence might be, "This is a girl eating ice cream." Additional

sentences might be:

This is a girl eating ice cream on a cone.

This is a girl with pigtails eating ice cream on a cone.

This is a girl with pigtails eating green ice cream on a cone.

This is a girl with brown pigtails eating green ice cream on a cone.

Special Needs Adaptations:

Special Need	Adaptation
Visual Impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adapt the activity by using a colorful object, such as a quilt or a multi-colored jacket instead of a picture. The child with visual impairments can participate, although his sentences may not be as descriptive; you can invite him to describe it according to how it feels or smells.
Hearing Impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children with hearing impairments often need extra help in using words that describe. Encourage the child to describe the picture in terms of color or size. Encouraging the child to use <i>color</i> or <i>size</i> words helps her begin to understand the idea behind using descriptive language (adjectives).
Cognitive Delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This child will more than likely be using very telegraphic speech or only using one or two words to make a sentence. Ask him a question that will help him specifically use a descriptive word. For example, if you are describing a picture of a child on a farm, he may say <i>farm</i> or <i>boy</i>. Make a sentence, and ask him to repeat it after you, such as, "The boy is on the farm."• Next, try to expand the child's learning by asking a question, such as, "What is

	<p>the boy wearing?” The child may answer <i>jacket</i>. Then, ask, “What color is the jacket?” and the child answers “blue.” Next, invite the child to help you make a sentence, such as, “The boy on the farm is wearing a _____ (leave it blank) jacket.” If the child answers “blue,” you would say, “Yes, the boy on the farm is wearing a blue jacket.” Invite the child to repeat the sentence after you say it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This technique is called slotting and involves your helping the child fill in the blanks, in order to reinforce the learning of new vocabulary.
<p>Motor Delays</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the child does not have the motor skills to pick up the orange hold it for him and give him a chance to smell it. • Remember for a child with limited head control an object needs to be held at his eye level in order for him to see it.
<p>Speech/ Language Delays</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child with speech language delays can participate in this activity using the same modifications described above for children with cognitive delays. In addition, look for ways to encourage the child to expand his sentences.
<p>Emotional/ Behavior Issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes, children with emotional issues do not like to use a certain type of medium, when participating in art activities. For example, a child with autism may get upset if you use scented markers or may prefer one color over another. Since the goal of the

	activity is to learn to use descriptive words, honor the child's preferences. The same is true, when selecting a picture for the child to describe. For example, if you know that a child who is given to outbursts likes kittens, select a picture that features kittens.
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Extending the Learning:

- Invite the children to draw a self-portrait. Challenge them to describe their picture. With permission, transcribe their description onto their drawing. Use questions, to encourage a full description.
- Invite the children to share a toy from home. Use questions to encourage them to describe their toy.
- Take a walk around the block. When you return to the classroom, encourage the children to describe what they observed on their walk. Write the description of your walk on chart paper. Invite the children to illustrate the story and then post it outside the classroom door so that the experience can be shared with others.

Reflect:

- *How can we use our words to communicate with our friends more clearly?*
- *How would you describe yourself to a friend?*

Story Photos**Objectives:**

- To expand vocabulary and sentences.
- To retell a story.

Vocabulary:

- book
- describe
- favorite
- retell

sequence
story

Materials:

audio recorder
copy of teacher's favorite story
crayons
media for recording
paper

Literacy Lesson:

- Ask children about their favorite books.
- Tell the children that they are going to read one of their favorite books.
- Read your favorite story to the children. Be sure to tell the children why this book is one of your favorites. If possible, read a story that features a child with a special need (see the list).
- This activity provides you with a chance to continue working with the class on tolerance and understanding of others. This is especially important if some of the children in your class have never been around other children with disabilities.
- Ask questions after the story to make sure that the children understand the story.
- Encourage the children to draw a picture about their favorite part of the story. Have the children share their pictures during story time.

Special Needs Adaptations:

Special Need	Adaptation
Visual Impairments	<p>Title: <i>Knots on a Counting Rope</i> Author: Bill Martin and John Archambault Publisher: Henry Holt ISBN: ISBN-0-8050-0571-4 A boy born blind is the subject of a story that is told by a grandfather to his grandson.</p> <p>Title: <i>Naomi Knows It's Springtime</i> Author: Virginia L. Kroll</p>

	<p>Publisher: Boyds Mills Press Inc., 910 Church St., Honesdale, PA 18431, (1987) ISBN: ISBN-1-56397-006-0 Naomi explains how she knows it is springtime, even though she is blind.</p>
Hearing Impairments	<p>Title: <i>A Very Special Friend</i> Author: Dorothy Hoffman Levi Publisher: Gallaudet University Press, Kendall Green, 800 Florida Ave NE, Washington, DC 20002- 3695, (1989) ISBN: ISBN-0-9300323-55-6 In a story about friendship, a lonely child makes a new friend when a child who is deaf becomes her new neighbor.</p> <p>Title: <i>A Very Special Sister</i> Author: Dorothy Hoffman Levi Publisher: Gallaudet University Press, Kendall Green, 800 Florida Ave NE, Washington, DC 20002- 3695, (1992) ISBN: ISBN-0-930323-96-3 A child who is deaf deals with the excitement of her mother's pregnancy and her fears that the baby will be more loved than she is loved.</p>
Cognitive Delays	<p>Title: <i>Be Good to Eddie Lee</i> Author: Virginia Fleming Publisher: Philomel Books, Putnam & Grosset Group, 200 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016 ISBN: ISBN-0-399-21993-5 A child with Down Syndrome, Eddie</p>

	<p>Lee, wants to be included in the activities of the other children in his neighborhood. While they initially reject him, they later learn to value him as a friend.</p> <p>Title: <i>My Brother, Matthew</i> Author: Mary Thompson Publisher: Woodbine House, 5615 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852, (1992) ISBN: ISBN-0-993149-47-6</p> <p>The story is told from the point of view of David, a boy with a younger brother who was born with a cognitive disability.</p>
<p>Motor Delays</p>	<p>Title: <i>Danny and the Merry-Go-Round</i> Author: Nan Holcomb Publisher: Jason and Nordic, Publishers, PO Box 441, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648, (1987) ISBN: ISBN-0-944727-00-X</p> <p>With the help of his mother, while on a trip to the park, Danny, who has cerebral palsy, makes a new friend.</p> <p>Title: <i>Rolling Along: The Story of Taylor and His Wheelchair</i> Author: Jamee Riggio Heelan Publisher: Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, Dixon Education and Training Center, 345 E. Superior Street, Suite 1641, Chicago, IL 60611, (2000) ISBN: ISBN-1-56145-219-X</p> <p>Getting his first wheelchair opens up a whole new world to Taylor who has cerebral palsy.</p>

	<p>Title: <i>Rolling Along with Goldilocks and the Three Bears</i> Author: Cindy Meyers Publisher: Woodbine House ISBN: ISBN-189-0627127 ISBN-13: 978-1890627126 The traditional story with a new twist. Baby Bear is in a wheelchair and he is gone for physical therapy when Goldilocks arrives. Children enjoy this retelling of a favorite classic.</p>
Speech/Language Delays	<p>Title: <i>Sarah's Surprise</i> Author: Nan Holcomb Publisher: Jason and Nordic Publishers, PO Box 441, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648, (1990) ISBN: ISBN-0-944727-07-7 Using a new communication device provided by her speech pathologist, Sarah, a young girl who is non-verbal, gives her mother a wonderful birthday surprise.</p>
Emotional/Behavior Issues	<p>Title: <i>Tobin Learns to Make Friends</i> Author: Diane Murrell Publisher: Future Horizons, 721 W. Abram St., Arlington, TX 76013, (2001) ISBN: ISBN-1-885477-79-1 Told through the mind of Tobin, the train engine, aspects of social skills development are explained in concrete terms that children can understand.</p> <p>Title: <i>I'm Like You, You're Like Me: A Child's Book About Understanding and Celebrating</i></p>

Each Other

Author: Cindy Gainer

Publisher: Free Spirit Publishing, Inc., 400 First Avenue North Ste. 616, Minneapolis, MN 55401-1724, (1998)

ISBN: ISBN-1-57542-039-2

Through interaction with others who are different, children learn to value others, even those who may not be able to do the same things they are able to do.

Extending the Learning:

- Challenge the children to place their pictures in a sequence that retells the story. Place photos in a horizontal line. Place photos that are about the same part of the story in a vertical line.
- Record the story and place the book and recording in the listening center.

Reflect:

- *Which part of the story was your favorite part?*
- *Which parts of the story might really happen?*
- *Which parts of the story are just pretend?*

Social Interaction



- Social interactions with other people, both physical (such as hugging or holding) and verbal (such as having a conversation).
- Children with ASDs do not interact with other people the way most children do, or they may not be interested in other people at all.
- Children with ASDs may not make eye contact and may just want to be alone.

- They may have trouble understanding other people's feelings or talking about their own feelings.
- A child with an ASD may not like to be held or cuddled and may not form the usual attachments or bonds to other people.

Communication

- Communication, both verbal (spoken) and nonverbal (unspoken)
- About 40% of children with ASDs do not talk at all. Other children have echolalia, which is when they repeat back something that was said to them.
- Or a child may repeat a television ad he heard sometime in the past.
- Children with ASDs may not understand gestures such as waving goodbye. They may say "I" when they mean "you" or vice versa.
- Their voices may sound flat and it may seem like they cannot control how loudly or softly they talk.
- Children with ASDs may stand too close to the people they are talking to, or may stick with one topic of conversation for too long.

Behaviors

- Routines or repetitive behaviors, like repeating words or actions over and over, obsessively following routines or schedules for their actions, or having very specific ways of arranging their belongings.
- Children may want to have routines where things stay the same so they know what to expect.

Sensory Integration Issues

What Exactly Is Sensory Integration?

Sensory Integration (SI) is a process that occurs in the brain. It allows us to take in information through our senses, organize it, and respond accordingly to the environment.

What Do You Mean By A Sensory Integration Disorder?

Almost 50 years ago, an occupational therapist named Jean Ayres described a condition that resulted from processing within the brain. She used the term **Sensory Integration Dysfunction (SI Dysfunction)** to describe a child who is unable to analyze and respond appropriately to the information he receives from his senses. A child with sensory integration dysfunction has problems adapting to the everyday sensations that others take for granted. Today, the terms Sensory Integration Dysfunction, Sensory Integration Disorder, and Sensory Modulation Disorder are used interchangeably. Regardless of which term is used, many experts believe that a sensory integration problem is the root cause of many of the behaviors commonly seen in children with autism.

How Do I Know If A Child Is Over-Sensitive Or Under-Sensitive?

Sense	Over-Sensitive	Under-Sensitive
Vision (sight)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Covers his eyes when the lights are too bright•Overwhelmed by too many colors and items in the classroom•Rubs his eyes or squints his eyes frequently	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Does not respond to light•Holds items close to her face as if he can't see them•Stares at flickering fluorescent lights
Sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Covers his ears•Responds to sounds other children ignore•Will act as if he can't hear when	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Speaks loudly•Turns the volume up on the TV or computer•Sings loudly

Sense	Over-Sensitive	Under-Sensitive
	you call his name, but then responds when a child drops a toy • Yells with fingers in ears	• Always plays with toys that make loud noises
Smell	• Holds his nose at common odors • Sniffs the air or sniffs other people	• Ignores bad odors • May sniff people or toys
Touch (Tactile)	• Gets upset when someone touches him • Very sensitive to textures and materials • Opposed to getting dirty or touching certain toys • Scratches at his skin or startles when something touches him	• Bumps into people • Chews on items frequently • Unaware of temperature changes • Seemingly unable to tell when he is in pain or hurt • Does not cry when he falls down
Taste	• Gags when he eats • Only eats food of a certain texture • Sensitive to hot or cold foods	• Wants only spicy food • Adds lots of pepper or salt to his food • Licks objects or toys
Movement	• Does not like to move, dance, climb, or hop • Sways • Seems to walk 'off-balance'	• Child does not get dizzy when he whirls or turns around • Loves to move fast • In constant motion • Rocking • Moves his body all the time

What Can I Do To Help A Child With Sensory Integration Disorder?

Children with sensory integration disorders sometimes respond well to items that enable them to calm down, so that they can better organize all the input they receive through their senses. Some examples of such calming objects

(*calmers*) and organizers include: things to chew on (*chewies*), toys that vibrate, weighted vests, soft things that they can squeeze, bean bag chairs or therapy balls to sit on, and stretchy material such as latex that they can make a body cocoon with.

The most common calmers and organizers include:

- **Chewies:** For a child with issues relating to touch, chewing on something soft can be very relaxing. Chewies can be purchased from companies who specialize in sensory integration materials or inexpensively made from the tubing used in ice-makers.
- **Vibrating toys:** Vibration can be very calming to the proprioceptive system. Examples of vibrating items might include pens, toothbrushes, toys, pillows, and cell phones.
- **Weighted objects:** A weighted object might be used to help a child who has difficulty with balance or with his proprioceptive system. A weighted vest, back pack, fanny pack, or blanket can help the child feel more *grounded* and less concerned about his sense of movement. Deep pressure helps children calm down.

- Oral motor activities: Designed to help the child with issues related to his mouth and to touch. Blowing bubbles, eating crunchy foods, biting on a washcloth and blowing a cotton ball across the table with a straw can help the child satisfy her need for oral stimulation and movement.

Behavioral Issues/Solutions

- Increase sensorimotor skills
- Modify tasks for both success and sensorimotor feedback
- Establish an effective system of communication.
- Extinguish destructive behaviors.

Questions to ask yourself:

1. Are behaviors linked?
2. Do they occur in response to the same situation?
3. Do they occur in a predictable pattern?
4. What activity or event preceded the behavior?
5. What environmental factors impact behavior?
6. What was the child reacting to?

Warning signs or predictors of the behavior

- Restlessness
- Eye aversion
- Distractibility
- Pause
- Louder voice
- Hand flapping

The Top “10” Things For Teachers To Know about Autism Spectrum Disorder
by Clarissa Willis

- 1. Autism is a spectrum disorder:** Children with autism display a range of behaviors and abilities from very mild to quite severe. In other words, the word autism can describe a child who fits anywhere within that range.
- 2. Always use ‘child-first’ language or people-first language, when describing the child:** The child in your classroom with autism is just that – a child with autism and not an autistic child. People-first and, in this case, ‘child-first’ language helps others see that you view the child first and the disability second.
- 3. Focus on the child’s interests:** When trying to encourage a child with autism to play, focus on the interests of the child and make interactions with others as natural as possible.
- 4. Novel situations can be overwhelming:** Recognize that children with autism may have difficulty adjusting to new play situations and new play materials.
- 5. The environment is important:** Children with autism need a special place in the room where they can go without distraction and without all the sensory input they receive elsewhere.
- 6. Social skills training should begin early:** Learning how to respond in social situations should begin as early as possible. It is a critical skill for children to possess and enables them to interact with others more easily.
- 7. View parents as partners:** Parents often agree that the one thing a teacher can do to understand their perspective is to be respectful of their opinions and treat them as valued contributors.
- 8. Value the uniqueness of each child:** Each child is unique, and while she may have characteristics typical of other children with autism, she will have other characteristics that are not.
- 9. There is no one single method that works:** There is no magic pill or specific program that can *cure* or *fix* autism. While many programs and methods have been tried and are successful with some children, they may not be successful with others. Look for methods with a solid research base.
- 10. Learning about autism is a process:** Learning about autism is not about a product; it is about a process of gathering information and making informed choices, based on the needs of the individual child.

Good Morning! Good Morning!


Objective: To greet the child with autism and start the day out on a positive note.

When to use this strategy: When the child first arrives in the morning. Remember, sometimes the child may arrive upset and needs a few minutes in the quiet area before the day begins.

Step 1: Start every day with the same routine. It is important that you use the same words and phrases each day. You might try something like, “Good morning _-_-.” Wait to see if the child responds. “Let’s check and see what we do first.”

Step 2: Either kneel down to eye level and show the child a picture schedule of what you want him to do, or, if you wearing a **picture apron**

Step 3: If the child does not respond to a spoken welcome, he may respond to a song. Try the following, sung to the tune of *Three Blind Mice* (first verse).

<p>Welcome Song (sung to the tune of <i>Three Visually Challenged Mice</i>)</p>	
<p>Hello _____ (child’s name) Hello _____ (child’s name)</p> <p>I’m glad you’re here. I’m glad you’re here. Let’s put your things away and find out what to do today. I’m glad you’re here! I’m glad you’re here!</p>	

Step 4: Direct the child to his cubby. If he hesitates, walk with him and show him. Putting a picture of the child above his cubby helps him identify it more easily.

Step 5: Tell him what to do next, “After you put up your backpack, go to the _____ center.”

Step 6: Say or sign thank you. Step 6: If the child does not move independently to a learning center, walk with him. Show him the picture cards that relate to putting up his backpack, coat, etc., and then guide him to the center where he will begin his day.

Step 7: A child with autism likes structure and set routines. Even if you start the morning with independent center time, direct the child to a specific place each morning.

Step 8: After he is accustomed to the routine, you can vary the welcome, by giving two or more center choices. However, initially, if you tell him to choose where he wants to go, he is more likely to stand in the middle of the floor or go hide in his cubby.

Helpful Hints

Keep focused on your primary objective, which is to start each day with a calm and predictable sequence. Regardless of how you start the day, consistency will make the child with autism feel more secure.

Face it, some children, even children with autism, are just not *morning people* and need a little more time to *wake-up*. If the child is prone to *rugged* mornings, then begin each day by allowing him to go to his quiet center for a few minutes, until he has adjusted to the routine.

Don't forget that when you are absent, it is crucial that your substitute or teacher's assistant follow the same morning welcome routine that you follow.

All About Me!

Objective: To enable the child with autism to feel part of your class and to help his classmates get to know all about him and his family.

Materials needed: Pictures and information about the child, ribbon, paper, or other materials to decorate a bulletin board.

When to use this strategy: When you want to help the children in your class get to know more about the child with autism. This strategy also helps the child with autism feel special and valued.

What to do?

Step 1: Talk with the child's family and ask them to send some pictures of the child and his family to school. Action pictures work best, because they show the child doing things.

Step 2: Ask the family to write a few sentences to go along with each picture, which describe what the family is doing, and include names of the people in the pictures.

Step 3: Feature a different child each week on the bulletin board. Put up pictures of his family and pictures of what the child enjoys.

Step 4: After you have displayed the pictures, build an activity around them. Talk about the child's siblings, pets, or activities. This helps the child feel more comfortable and helps all children in the class see the child with autism as being more like them.

Step 5: Another adaptation of this exercise is to have each child in the class make a picture book about their family. Be sure to include grandparents, pets, and activities or customs that the family enjoys. This Book About _____ (child's name) can be used throughout the year.

Step 6: Making a book about a child also helps connect his family to your classroom, and can be used to help children discover things they have in common with their classmates, such as the number of brothers and sisters, types of pets, family customs, family activities, etc.

Step 7: An additional benefit of this activity is that, as you get to know more about the child with autism and his family, you can plan activities centered on familiar things.

Helpful hints:

Be aware that not all children come from traditional families. Family is defined by the child and those he lives with, not by any traditional rule.

Some children may be in foster care or come from families that are not currently intact. In this case, the *All About Me* activities could center on what the child likes to do and what activities he enjoys at school.

It is also not uncommon for a child to be in a blended family or be in a situation where he spends some time with parents in two separate households. In this case, try to include all family members from both households.



The Bully

When someone tries to bully you
Don't stand there until it's through.
Find a teacher or adult friend
They can make the teasing end.
Defend yourself with what you say
Then turn your back and walk away