

# Five Keys to Supporting a Person with Autism

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| First | Then |
|-------|------|
|       |      |

## 1. Assume competence


### Assume Competence

- Used to believe that 80% of individuals with ASD were mentally retarded
- Now believed to be 30% or less
- Allow peers to model
- Verbally encourage prior to attempt
- If at first you don't succeed....make it more visual!!



## Competence in Community

- ▶ Consider the time frame for competence
- ▶ Connect to special interest
- ▶ Call ahead and explain what you hope happens
- ▶ “How can we make this happen?”

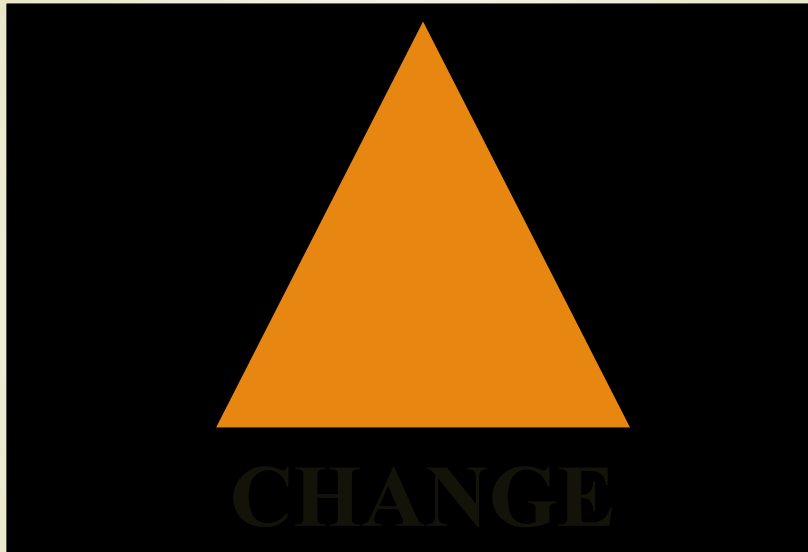



## 2. Use visuals and a communication system



## Communication System

- ▶ In times of stress, language decreases.
- ▶ Communication System should support the student's worst day
- ▶ Communication between everyone involved is critical
- ▶ Know the "script"
- ▶ Environmental Analysis if possible
- ▶ Calendars, schedules
- ▶ Signal or icon for "change"





## Communication System

- ▶ Signal or icon for “change”
- ▶ “Turn around” time
  - ▶ More for an “unpreferred change”
  - ▶ Less for a “preferred change”



## Communication in Community


- ▶ Visuals for exploring zoo, museum, parks, fairs
- ▶ Encourage interaction
- ▶ Set expectations for community partners

## The Incredible 5 Point Scale

- 
-  5 Emergency
  -  4 Outside/Gym Activity
  -  3 Classroom Voice
  -  2 Whisper
  -  1 Silence




3. Be aware of sensory needs




## Sensory Needs

- ▶ Hypo or Hyper Sensitive
- ▶ May struggle to process all the senses at once
- ▶ Environmental challenges
- ▶ Need to take breaks to support sensory system




## Sensory in Community

- ▶ Overall loud noise may not be an issue
- ▶ An engaging activity is more important than silence
- ▶ Take the tools!
- ▶ Ignore self-stim behaviors for coping
- ▶ Target vs. Walmart




4. Have typical peers around for modeling and friendship.



## Modeling and Friendship

- ▶ We WANT to have friends, we just don't know how!
- ▶ Look for related interests
- ▶ Not just girls!!
- ▶ Will struggle to just "talk"—need scripts, projects to share, and conversation starters





It doesn't matter  
**WHAT**  
they know.

If the person doesn't have appropriate social interaction skills, they won't **get the job** or **keep the job**.



## Social Interactions

- ▶ Consistent, daily teaching individually and within group
- ▶ Vocal tone, facial expression and words may not match emotion
- ▶ Frequently does not respond well to sarcasm and teasing—a learned skill
- ▶ Targets for bullying



## Social in Community

- ▶ Step away from the child!
- ▶ Where do the peers hang out?
- ▶ What skills do peers need?
- ▶ Appropriate hello and goodbye

# All Behavior is Communication!



If we do the prior "keys" then we reduce or eliminate inappropriate and troubling behavior.



## 5. Have Fun!

Thanks for coming!

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