**Impact on Literacy Checklist**

**for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

**The TOP 10**

Student’s Name (DOB):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reading for comprehension is a complex process and the ability to read for understanding is dependent upon the interaction of a number of factors. Many of these factors are known to be deficient in students with ASD (Randi, et.al., 2010). Based on a literature review of characteristics of ASD that impact comprehension, this checklist was created to guide educators in identifying the primary ASD characteristics impacting reading comprehension. Once identified, strategies can be developed to address the areas of impact.

Check below the characteristics demonstrated by the student and how they may be impacting the student’s reading comprehension.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Characteristics & their Impact on Literacy for Students with ASD** | | **Yes** | **No** | **If yes, reference comprehension strategies listed for each characteristic.** |
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| **Joint Attention & Social Engagement:** The ability to respond to and engage in shared, enjoyable experiences including looking to others to understand how they feel about their experiences and imitating others to learn new skills. | | | |  |
| How deficits in joint attention & social engagement may impact literacy | Lack of shared interest in the reading experience resulting in missed learning opportunities. |  |  |  |
| Lack of imitation skills to practice the behaviors of reading and to develop new interests. |  |  |  |
| Lack of social engagement that enhances vocabulary development and increases experiences for background knowledge. |  |  |  |
| OTHER (describe): |  |  |  |
|  | | | |  |
| **Theory of Mind & Social / Emotional Reciprocity:** The ability to recognize and interpret the thoughts, perspectives, intentions, and emotions of others to predict their behavior; Understanding emotions through descriptions of body language and facial expressions. | | | |  |
| How deficits in Theory of Mind and Social / Emotional Reciprocity may impact literacy: | Difficulty understanding the perspectives and emotional states of characters and/or author. |  |  |  |
| Difficulty predicting or making inferences about the future behavior of characters. |  |  |  |
| Difficulty understanding the emotional states of characters based on body language and facial expression descriptions in the text. |  |  |  |
| OTHER (describe): |  |  |  |
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| **Central Coherence:** Understanding the central tenets of a passage and creating meaning from text details; the ability to integrate details in order to understand the “big picture” of a passage. | | | |  |
| How deficits in central coherence may impact literacy | Over-focus on minor, irrelevant or concrete details in the passage thus missing the main idea(s) or overall purpose of the text. |  |  |  |
| Comprehending all the rote facts in the passage but not blending them to understand the “big picture.” |  |  |  |
| Difficulty connecting information at the paragraph or chapter level. |  |  |  |
| OTHER (describe): |  |  |  |
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| **Executive Function:** The ability to organize information and thoughts for coherency, self-monitor for comprehension, and execute plans of action. | | | |  |
| How deficits in executive functioning may impact literacy | Difficulty suppressing irrelevant background knowledge and shifting meaning to different contexts. |  |  |  |
| Making irrelevant connections between contexts, concepts, or relationships. |  |  |  |
| Difficulty organizing and planning the reading experience (e.g. timelines for reading long texts) and self-monitoring for understanding (meta-cognition). |  |  |  |
| OTHER (describe): |  |  |  |
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| **Restricted Interests & Motivation:** Abnormally intense preoccupation with specific interest areas or activities which impact motivation to read non-preferred text or results in getting stuck on words or phrases. | | | |  |
| How intense interests and motivation can impact literacy | Intense focus on specific preferred interest areas so does not engage in reading in non-preferred areas interests. |  |  |  |
| Gets stuck reading only certain words, phrases, or sections in text. |  |  |  |
| Fails to monitor for comprehension (meta-cognition) due to focus on preferred interests and topics. |  |  |  |
| OTHER (describe): |  |  |  |
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| **Prior Knowledge:** The ability to apply relevant background knowledge to make global and abstract connections in text. | | | |  |
| How deficits in applying prior knowledge can impact literacy | Difficulty accessing and applying relevant background knowledge in order to understand the context or situation in text. |  |  |  |
| Difficulty with word meanings (semantics) in context of the text. |  |  |  |
| Difficulty with comprehension of text requiring a lot of background social knowledge and social experiences (e.g. novels) versus those that require limited social understanding (e.g. technical text). |  |  |  |
| OTHER (describe): |  |  |  |
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| **Literal (vs. Abstract) Thinking:** Focus on factual information such as events and actual objects or people in the text and an absence of focus on concepts and generalizations often confused by a lack of understanding idioms, irony, figures of speech, innuendo, and sarcasm. | | | |  |
| How literal vs. abstract thinking can impact literacy | Difficulty understanding figurative language (e.g. metaphors) and use of idioms, irony, innuendo, and sarcasm. |  |  |  |
| Difficulty ignoring irrelevant factual information in text and missing context cues and information that enhances understanding. |  |  |  |
| Applying only one meaning to a word and failure to use context cues to recognize a different meaning is necessary. |  |  |  |
| OTHER (describe): |  |  |  |
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| **Pragmatics:** The ability to understand language and communication in social contexts and thus predict character intentions and behaviors. | | | |  |
| How deficits in pragmatics can impact literacy | Difficulty understanding perspectives or intentions based on the narration of characters and context cues. |  |  |  |
| Focus on concrete details in narrative text (e.g., what a character said specifically) rather than focus on conversation and context cues to gain an understanding of plot and character development. |  |  |  |
| Difficulty making inferences about characters’ emotions and perspectives based on subtle cues or context in text. |  |  |  |
| OTHER (describe): |  |  |  |
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| **Repetitive Patterns of Behavior:** The desire for predictability that results in rigid adherence to schedules, routines, and thinking in an attempt to create “sameness.” | |  |  |  |
| How repetitive patterns of behavior can impact literacy | Literal, concrete and inflexible thinking that prevents abstraction or understanding of text within context. |  |  |  |
| Difficulty with multiple meanings of words; Likely to have a single meaning without considering context. |  |  |  |
| Difficulty generalizing knowledge or meaning from personal experience to the context of text. |  |  |  |
| OTHER (describe): |  |  |  |
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| **Language, Communication & Vocabulary:** The ability to understand the complexities of language, communication, and vocabulary to comprehend text. | | | |  |
| How deficits in language, communication & vocabulary can impact literacy | Difficulty with communication skills that impact ability to answer questions or demonstrate knowledge. |  |  |  |
| Difficulty understanding vocabulary nuances (e.g. homographs (words spelled the same with more than one meaning) or homophones (words pronounced the same but with different meanings)). |  |  |  |
| Difficulty understanding pronouns used to represent previously identified persons, objects, or groups. |  |  |  |
| OTHER (describe): |  |  |  |