

A Brief Look at Behavior Management Techniques for Children with Autism

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that about 1 in 59 children have been identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder. As such, the number of children in your care on the spectrum may be increasing. Consider these behavior management techniques:

Create a Routine: Strive to be as consistent as possible when interacting with a child with Autism. Include a greeting using the child's name, having detailed action plans for all aspects of the child's day, and establishing assigned seats.

Orientate the Child to the Room: Allow access to room during a "quiet" time so the child can explore and see or hear the environment. Include showing any sensory items like flashing light or ringing bells.

Share the Rules: Present the rules to the child in an understandable format. This may be verbal, written, using pictures, or any combination.

Create Social Stories: Consider having simple photos and graphics illustrating ALL the steps that take place during an entire school day.

Use Positive Praise: Give the child positive praise for actions during the day.

- "Good job sitting in your seat."
- "You did very good following all the rules."
- "Thank you for raising your hand before speaking."

Know the Child's Level of Need: Not all children on the Autism spectrum are the same. Consider a child's individual and varied needs when explaining rules, establishing routines, and offering informational input.

Gather Information: Work with the entire education team, including the parent and child, to know appropriate interactions (touching; no touching; voice level), the child's communication needs, and effective de-escalation processes.

Provide Things To Do: Give the child an activity during the day. Keeping the child engaged in a sensory activity helps lessen anxiety and minimize disruptive behaviors.

Sources:

- Autism Speaks – Ideas for Preventing Challenging Behavior at School (<https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit-excerpt/ideas-preventing-challenging-behavior-school>)
- Autistic Mama – Help Autistic Children Ride the School Bus with a Social Story and Play (<https://autisticmama.com/autistic-children-ride-the-school-bus-social-story-play/>)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Autism Spectrum Disorder (<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html>)
- International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards – 15 Behavior Strategies for Children on the Autism Spectrum (<https://ibcces.org/blog/2016/07/15/behavior-strategies/>)
- Teach Thought – Autism Awareness Month: 6 Strategies for Teaching Students with Autism (<https://teachthought.com/pedagogy/autism-awareness-month-6-strategies-for-teaching-students-with-autism/>)