



Instructional Strategies: Independence and Inclusion

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Our Goals

- Decreasing adult dependency
- Considerations for executive functioning
- Increasing engagement with peers

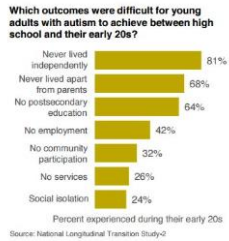


Decreasing Dependency on Adult Support

Adults with Autism



- Overall, adults with autism have poorer outcomes than other groups of adults with disabilities
- Following school, many adults fall off of the "Services Cliff"



Promoting Independence

Finding the Balance

Refrain from hovering...	Not enough engagement...
Increased or prolonged dependence	Lack of engagement with others
Decreased peer interactions	Inappropriate engagement
Decreased teacher attention	Increased self-stim behaviors
Feeling embarrassed/stigmatized	Decreased skill acquisition
Loss of personal control	Loss or regression of skills
Increased behavior problems	Increased behavioral problems

*The focus of adult support is to teach the use of tools and strategies to foster independence.
Adult support should not be the tool.*



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Teaching Students to Use Tools

1. Put tools and strategies in place to promote successful learning
2. Teach the student how to use the strategies
3. Fade adult support
 - Let the student use the tool independently and provide feedback and reinforcement



Promoting Independence

Be aware of the level of prompting and support provided to individuals:

- Latency (wait time)
- Intonation
- Explanation
- Verbal
- Visual
- Positional
- Pointing
- Gestures
- Modeling
- Physical

Least Intrusive

Most Intrusive



Ask Yourself:

- Can _____ do this on his own?
- How can I teach _____ to do this more independently?
- Can _____ be supported without me? Teach the use of the resources around them
 - Peer?
 - Visual support?
 - Non-intrusive prompt?
- Be aware of doing routine things for the individual.
 - Always involve as much as possible & REINFORCE for involvement.
 - Use declarative statements to walk through concepts



Do we NEED visuals?



Steps...

1. Start with a square pieces of origami paper
2. Fold on the diagonals and North-South and East-West line
3. With colored side up, fold diagonals as valley folds and N-S/E-W as mountain folds
4. Collapse paper along the fold lines (should collapse into square folded paper)
5. Fold the corners inward. Crease well and unfold
6. Fold down the tip. Crease well and unfold
7. Lift bottom corner upwards and fold along crease lines and flatten
8. Flip over and repeat steps 3 and 4 on this side
9. Fold both sides to the middle
10. Flip paper over. Fold both sides to the middle
11. Make a diagonal crease on the right side
12. Lift up the bottom tip and tuck it between the 2 sides of the paper. Press flat.
13. Repeat steps 8 and 9 on the left side
14. Do steps 8 and 9 on the left tip to make the bird's head
15. Fold down the wings
16. Pull wings apart to open up and flatten the middle "hump"
17. You're done!



...with a visual support



Using Visual Supports

Visuals are not always about what the individual “needs” now, but about teaching them to use a tool to fade reliance on support personnel for greater independence.



Visuals Supports

In the long term, visuals:

- Increase overall independence

In the short term, visuals:

- Decrease the need for verbal redirection
- Decrease the need for prompting
- Decrease anxiety in certain situations, therefore
 - Decrease behavior
 - Increase engagement



Visuals Supports

Can:

- Communicate routines and expectations
- Be used for expressive communication
- Promote behavior regulation and self-monitoring
- Be universally accepted



Visual Supports

To communicate routines & expectations

- Daily schedule/mini-routines
- When/Then
- Social Stories



Visual Supports

To help children communicate their needs

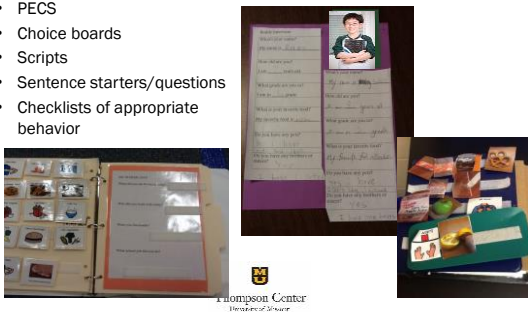
- May need an alternative form of communication (e.g., written, oral, use of pictures)
- Provide opportunities throughout the day to practice appropriate communication with others



Visual Supports

For expressive communication

- PECS
- Choice boards
- Scripts
- Sentence starters/questions
- Checklists of appropriate behavior



Visual Supports

For Behavioral Regulation & Self Monitoring

- Scales of behavior level & options to support (5 point scale)
- Token system
- Visual/video of student performing the desired behavior



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Visual Boundaries

- Use natural physical boundaries, objects, and furniture
- Use tape on floors and walls if furniture is not available/convenient
- Use pieces of carpet or rugs
- Labels or name signs on independent work areas



Executive Functioning and ASD

Executive Function deficits seen in individuals with ASD are typically associated with the core symptoms of ASD

What are Executive Functions (EF)?

An umbrella construct that includes a collection of functions responsible for **regulating** (guiding, directing and managing) **cognitive, emotional and behavioral** functions during an active problem-solving situation (Gioia et al, 2015).

These functions often go unnoticed **unless there are deficits.**



Executive Functioning

Defiance vs. Deficit:

- Executive functioning deficits are often interpreted as defiance
- When a task requires multiple executive skills (“thinking” or “doing”), a breakdown is more likely



Executive Skills

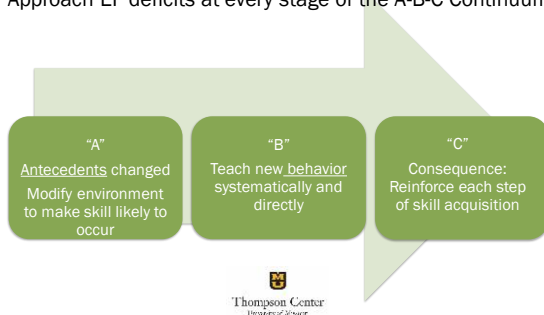
The “Thinking” and “Doing” Skills

Response Inhibition	Working Memory	Quality (Goal Directed) Task Performance
Emotional Control	Organization, Planning, and Prioritizing	Time Management
Flexibility	Task Initiation	Independent Sustained Attention to Task

Intervention Planning for Executive Functioning

Teaching Executive Functioning

Approach EF deficits at every stage of the A-B-C Continuum



Environmental Modifications

First step in teaching EF skills- start with modifications to the environment

- Make changes to the environment
 - Add visuals
 - Add in self-management supports
- Make changes to the task
 - Shorten length
 - Link to reinforcement
- Make changes in the way you interact with the student
 - Pre-corrects
 - Prompts and prompt fading
 - Attitude

When Do I Work on This?

Embed services within pre-existing routines when possible:

- What are the pre-established routines in the class?
- How can the structures this student needs be incorporated into those routines?

Reinforcement is a CRUCIAL part of this process!

All students can benefit from guided practice of executive functioning skills.



Direct Teaching of EF Skills

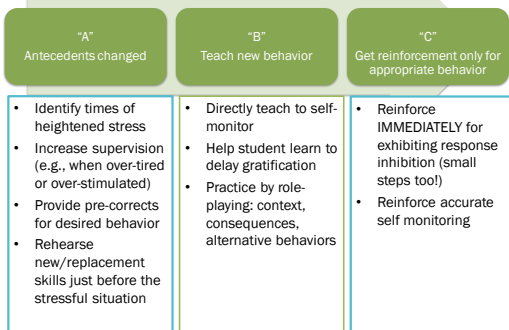
“How do I decide which skills to target?”

- Consider what is most limiting independence
- Consider developmental age and grade expectations
- Assess to find an appropriate starting point
- Consider possible assessments

*Most often EF deficits are addressed as accommodations and modifications-
BUT teaching should be considered*



Response Inhibition



Self-Monitoring Example

How did I do?	Great! Most of the time!	Pretty good- but needed reminders	Okay- but I needed a lot of help	Not at all- having a rough day
Accepting mistakes and staying calm				
Listening and responding to classmate's ideas				
Continuing to try if something was hard				



Emotional Control

"A" Antecedents changed	"B" Teach new behavior	"C" Get reinforcement only for appropriate behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modify environment to reduce likelihood the student's emotions will escalate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build in daily routines Reduce distractions to avoid over-stimulation (visual, auditory, and olfactory) Remind and rehearse what to expect in various situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social narratives (video modeling) focus on appropriate behaviors Student scripts to aide in problem solving Rehearse what student can do at each "level" of emotional escalation (Incredible 5-Point Scale, "What to do when my worries get too big" & "A 5 is Against the Law") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce for emotional control and/or for using strategies to de-escalate

Emotional Regulation

Level	What you said	How other person may feel	What this may mean
5	I could kill you	Afraid, threatened	May call police, may think you are serious
4	Swearing about an activity	Nervous, possibly threatened	Others may not want to be around you. You may get in trouble
3	Telling someone he is stupid	Offended, sad	May think you are unkind and not want to be around you
2	Talking while the counselor is talking	Confused, uncomfortable	Counselor may think it's not polite.
1	Smiling at someone in the hall. Using kind words.	Comfortable, relaxed	You may keep more friends.

Sustained Attention

"A"
Antecedents changed

"B"
Teach new behavior

"C"
Get reinforcement only for appropriate behavior

- Modify tasks (if appropriate)
- Increase task interest
- Provide frequent "check in's" for non-preferred tasks
- Increase active engagement v. passive listening
- Reduce external stimuli
- Partner with a task-oriented peer

- Directly teach to self-monitor
- Model and practice self-monitoring of attention:
 - Timed "check points"
 - Rating scale
 - Have student track and compare to teacher tracking
- Teach how to disengage from nonessential tasks and focus on target task

- Reinforce use of strategies and attention during long tasks
 - Tie reinforcement to task completion instead of time limits
- Practice new behaviors and provide reinforcement

Sustained Attention

Attention-Monitoring Checklist



Date: _____
Time: _____
Activity: _____

Was I paying attention?

YES	NO

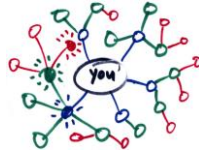
(Dawson & Guare, 2004)

Engagement with Peers

You Are the Connection!



- Your job is to build relationships with ALL students
 - Students with disabilities and their peers
- Make an effort to talk to each student in the class
- Make yourself available to others
- “I noticed” statements



Inclusive Classrooms

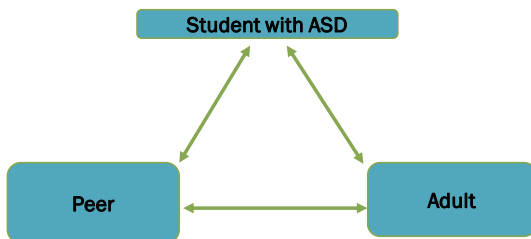


This means more than just having students with disabilities in your classroom!

- Make students with disabilities vital and active members of the classroom (classroom climate)
- Engaged in the same or similar task activities
- Main work space with peers, as possible
- Direct questions and instructions to the student
 - Encourage others to direct their questions there too!
- Incorporate special interests into the curriculum
- Promote peer interactions



Shifting the Adult Support



This increases the frequency and quality of social learning opportunities in the natural environment



Selecting Peers

- Exhibits good social skills, language, and play skills
- Well liked by other peers
- Positive social history with target student
- Are willing to participate
- Readily follows adult directions
- Regular school attendance
- Select several peers to rotate



Selecting Peers

- Other Considerations:
 - MS/HS: Have similar schedules or academic groupings
 - Gender
 - Similar interests
 - “At-risk” peers



Peer Training Includes:

- Basic Social Interactions
 - Engaging in organized play, sharing, providing assistance, providing affection, praise, and encouragement
- Conversational Skills
 - Effective ways to initiate and maintain communication, prime students for expectations, keep interactions on track



(Neitzel, et al., 2008)

Barrier to PMI



Some students may not be orienting to peers at all, therefore, initial interactions may be pairing peers with reinforcers or fun activities



Plan for it...

Peer Mediated Intervention:
Activity Matrix

Time of day/ Activity	Target Skills				

Plan for Peers...

- ☐ When can you fade yourself out?
- ☐ Where can you use visuals?
- ☐ How can you increase executive functioning skills?
- ☐ When can your child be involved with peers during their day in a meaningful way?

Resources

OCAI Autism Internet Modules

<http://www.autisminternetmodules.org/>

National Professional Development Center on ASD- Evidence Based Briefs

<http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/content/briefs>

Missouri Autism Guidelines Initiative (MAGI)

<http://autismguidelines.dmh.mo.gov/>