

SCHOOL CLOSED

*No School?
No Problem!*

*Creating a Plan
for Winter Break*



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Today's Parent Cafe



- What the Research Says
 - Creating Your Plan
 - Strategies for Success
 - “It Worked For Me!”

Research Says...

- Children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) do best when there is structure and predictability within their environment.
- Individuals with Autism respond well to routine, structure, and clear expectations / rules. Some of this can be addressed through the use of visual supports.
- Research has shown that providing these types of supports can increase independence and reduce anxiety and other behaviors.

Creating Your Plan

- Make a list of potential activities for home and in the community.
- Plan activities that are fun as well as learning opportunities for your child.
- Take advantage of this time to have your child learn and/or practice a new independent skill.
- Use environmental & visual supports to help your son/daughter manage the transitions and change in routines.

Recreation & Community Activities

- Do your research about the activity (routine of the program, staff ratios, training, experience level, inclusion services).
- Request to talk with the program coordinator/leader prior to the first day to discuss routines, expectations and offer your input and assistance.
- Create a profile of your child sharing their interests, strengths, challenges, what works well and make copies for program staff.
- Prepare a schedule of the routine of the program and review it with your child before the first day.

Why Establish a Routine/Schedule?

- Without the structure of school, many children become overwhelmed, don't always have the skills to keep occupied, be alone, or with others.
- A schedule answers many questions and brings the predictability and structure for the child, while facilitating independence.
- The routine allows the child to predict the day's events, which brings him/her security.
- Creating a home schedule is the first step towards planning for a less stressful break.

Creating a Schedule

Any schedule should answer the following questions for your child:

- What am I going to do?
- When?
- Where?
- How long?
- What comes next?
- When can I have quiet/down time or do what I want to do?

Establishing a Routine/Schedule

- Individual needs, temperaments, schedules, and commitments should be considered.
- Establish when meals, bath, play, activities, shopping, hanging out with friends and bedtime will take place.
- Abide by the routine as much as possible, but also build in the possibility for changes.
- Familiarize family members, camp staff, respite workers, friends, and neighbors with routines to support generalization across settings.

Schedule Considerations

- Consider the many activities your family will be participating in, as well as all of your child's.
- If possible, use a type of schedule similar to the one your child uses at school i.e., written, picture, object, etc..., and is age appropriate.
- Consider opportunities to increase your child's participation in daily activities around the home such as chores and holiday preparations.

Schedule Considerations

- Remember, any activity that can be planned to include a same age “preferred” peer or peers is an opportunity to expand your child’s social circle in a comfortable, appealing setting.
- Consider volunteer service learning opportunities as activities during time off from school such as the Senior Center, Food Banks, churches as appropriate for your child’s age and ability.

Changes in Routine/Schedule

- Sometimes circumstances beyond one's control and the demands of the day interrupt the routine/schedule.
- As soon as you are aware of the change, communicate the change to your child, and note it in their schedule.
- It is common for the child to protest the change with undesirable behavior.
- It’s important to respond each time this occurs in the same manner. Then, return to reinforcing the routine as soon as possible.

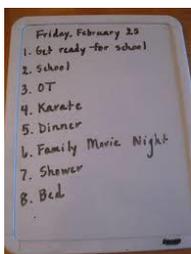
Visual Supports

- Ways to clearly define elements of an activity or event so that it is meaningful to each individual.
- Used in daily living routines at home, or in the community (medical visits, recreational activities, social events).
- May include full or partial schedules for the day, the breakdown of steps within an activity, checklists, schedules, etc...
- Use task organizers and supports appropriate for your child’s level of understanding

Types of Visual Supports

- ☑ Picture cues for following directions
- ☑ Directions written in words
- ☑ Visual cues for rules (written)
- ☑ Individual visual schedules
- ☑ Individual task organizers
- ☑ iPod Touch, iPhone, iPad Apps

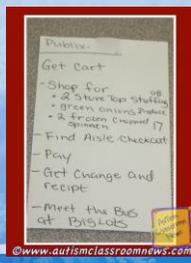
Individual Visual Schedule



Task Organizer Written Directions

Grocery Shopping:

- Get Shopping Cart
- Fruit
- Milk
- Cereal
- Checkout
- Car
- Go home



Task Organizer – Pictures with Words

Chores:



	Dirty clothes to laundry room
	Sort dirty clothes
	Put clothes in washing machine
	Add detergent
	Choose setting
	Start machine
	Go do other activity. WAIT for Bell

Task Organizer – Pictures with Words

Making Lunch

Apps - Picture Scheduler or iPrompts



Consistency

- Many experts feel that a consistent environment is the best tool available for children with Autism to learn.
- Consistency in the daily routine, discipline, communication, and social interactions all contribute to reinforcing their learning environment.
- Many children with Autism have trouble transferring what they learn from one experience to another (generalization).

Structure at Home

- Decide where your child's schedule will be displayed.
- Place visual supports in areas where needed for independent functioning (bathroom, kitchen, etc...). *Use similar supports to those used at school – check with teachers/therapists.
- Set up an "activity station"
- Designate a "cool zone" for sensory input and calming with preferred items.

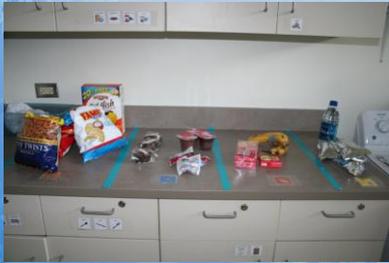


Giving Choices Improves Communication and Behavior

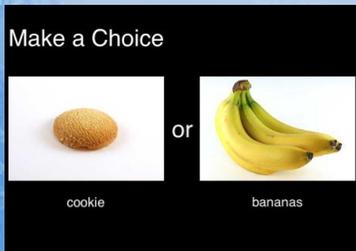


Choice Board

Another way to provide choices...



Choice in iPod touch (iPrompt App)



Reinforce Positive Behavior

- In most cases, if positive behavior is followed with desirable consequences, the child will repeat the behavior in order to gain the reward.
- Be very specific when rewarding the child.
 - Verbalize exactly what behavior earned the reward.
 - Instead of saying "Nice job," say "I like how you..." or "Thank you for..."
- The child will often be more likely to associate the positive behavior with the praise.

Reinforce Positive Behavior

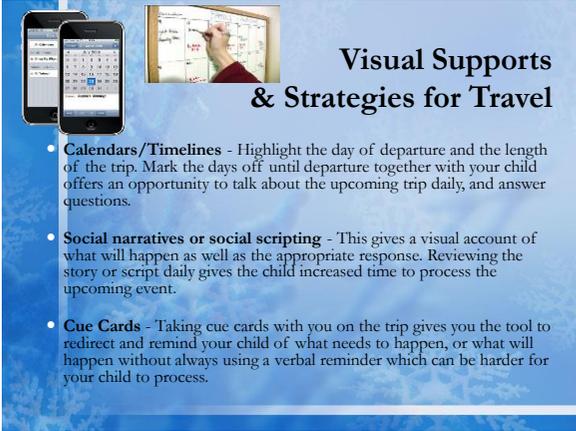
- Tangible rewards are sometimes necessary since social interaction is oftentimes to an autistic child. Privileges, stickers, toys, and tokens can be used as effective rewards.
- Immediate rewards are usually most effective during the early years, while delayed rewards can be effective with older children.

Unstructured Times, Changes in Routine & Behavior

- Think about what you can plan for “Before” you enter that situation.
- Think about “Right Before” you might see a behavior, what you can do.
- Think about “During” a behavior and what you are going to be doing to help them calm (which could be planned ignoring).
- Think about “After” the behavior has occurred how do you want to reinforce the attempts your child made to change or if they didn’t, how are you going to teach them to do it differently next time.

Vacation Planning

- Consider where and whether or not the child is familiar with the destination.
- In preparation for the trip consider various ways to offer your child the opportunity to:
 - understand, prepare, try to anticipate what is planned, where and with whom
- Travel guides, maps, brochures, and the internet can answer many questions about the destination.
- Provide visual supports (appropriate for your child’s developmental level and age).



Visual Supports & Strategies for Travel

- **Calendars/Timelines** - Highlight the day of departure and the length of the trip. Mark the days off until departure together with your child offers an opportunity to talk about the upcoming trip daily, and answer questions.
- **Social narratives or social scripting** - This gives a visual account of what will happen as well as the appropriate response. Reviewing the story or script daily gives the child increased time to process the upcoming event.
- **Cue Cards** - Taking cue cards with you on the trip gives you the tool to redirect and remind your child of what needs to happen, or what will happen without always using a verbal reminder which can be harder for your child to process.



Travel Essentials

- Sensory Tools (matched to individual needs: chewing gum)
- favorite Fidgets, etc...)
- iPod/iPad/mp3 player (for Apps/games & music).
- Sunglasses
- Earbuds/headphones (for sound sensitivity/quiet time)
- Preferred Snacks
- Portable Schedule
- Visual Supports/Cue Cards
- Social Narratives



Traveling By Plane

- **Start Small:** Make your child's first flight a short one, if possible, with no more than an hour or so in the air.
- **Prepare your child:**
 - In the weeks leading up to your trip, begin a dialogue with your child about what will happen on your trip.
 - Go over the travel process in detail.
- **Take a practice run.** Call your airport and ask if there is an autism access program in place. Many will let families take a practice run through airport security and mock boarding.

Traveling By Plane

• Communicate

- Let your airline know as far in advance as possible that you'll be flying with a child with Autism, request priority boarding.
- Request bulkhead seats, which feel less confining, eliminates possibility of seat-kicking.
- Three days before your trip, call the Transportation Security Administration's hot line, TSA Cares (855/787-2227), acts as an intermediary with airport customer care, help navigate security checkpoints.

• Consider Meals & Snacks

• Pack Essentials Your Child Will Need (Headphones, Charging Cords, Fidgets, etc...)

Visual Cues for Rules-Written

Rules for Riding in the Car

- Put on seatbelt
- Stay in seat
- Hands to yourself
- Inside voice

Waiting is Abstract

- Where?
- How long?
- What can I do?



SADN:
(Start, Amount, Done, Next)

Supports for Waiting

- Pictures
- Visual timers (also now available on iPod technology)
- Wait cards
- Wait bags, boxes, back pack (with age appropriate “waiting” items)
- Watches
- Clocks



Transitioning Back to School

- Use a Countdown Calendar
- Gradually resume school year routines
- Pack backpack in advance with your child
- Lunch: Stock up on favorites
- Go over school expectations
- Use Social Stories™
- Build up coping reserves
- Relax!

Social Stories™

- Provide them with the means to understand and respond to various social situations.
- teach basic social skills (ex. sharing, asking a friend to play, etc.).
- Teach understanding, interpretation and appropriate response in social situations

(ex. predicting outcomes, preparing for change, using coping strategies, problem-solving, etc.).

- Descriptive: provides information about the child/adolescent, the environment, and what will take place in the social situation.
- 2. Directive: describes how the child/adolescent should respond in the social situation.
- 3. Perspective: identifies the feelings or reactions of others in the social situation.

Social Stories™

- 1. **Descriptive:** provides information about the child/adolescent, the environment, and what will take place in the social situation.
- 2. **Directive:** describes how the child/adolescent should respond in the social situation.
- 3. **Perspective:** identifies the feelings or reactions of others in the social situation.
- 4. **Control:** provides analogies of similar situations using nonhuman references.

Remember...

- The sooner a break schedule is considered, the sooner everyone will start to plan – or at least become accustomed to the idea.
- Many children with use a very specific type of schedule. Such a schedule follows a specific progression. If your child uses a schedule in their classroom, you will want to develop a home schedule that is similar.
- Plan activities that are fun as well as learning opportunities for your child.

Share, Learn, Plan: “It Worked for Me!”

1. Using the Action Planning form, please list...
 - Any strategies that you’ve used that has worked well in supporting your son/daughter while on break or traveling.
 - Activities you plan on having your child participate in over winter break.
 - Any new strategies you plan on using during break.
2. With an elbow partner, share your ideas and plans with an elbow partner.
3. Share your elbow partner’s ideas with the group

Resources

- **IL Autism Training & Technical Assistance Project**
 - IATTAP Experiential Practicum
 - Social Stories Fact Sheet
 - Visual Supports Fact Sheet
- **The Gray Center:** <http://www.thegraycenter.org/social-stories/what-are-social-stories>
- **The New Social Story Book by Carol Gray**
- **The Autism Program of IL (TAP)**
 - **Airport Accessibility Kits:**
<http://accessibility.theautismprogram.org/guides/chicago-department-of-aviation>
