



Including
Children with **Autism**
in Primary Classrooms

A Teacher's Handbook



एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर

INCLUDING CHILDREN WITH AUTISM IN PRIMARY CLASSROOMS

A TEACHER'S HANDBOOK

विद्यया ऽ मृतमश्नुते



एन सी ई आर टी
NCERT

राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
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FOREWORD

Autism is invisible and Children with Autism (CWA) seem enigmatic to both teachers and parents. One would observe differences in the ways in which such children engage with learning and comprehension from other children of similar age. Thus, meeting the needs of CWA in inclusive settings often poses challenges for teachers and others. The present handbook is an initiative to address the challenges faced by regular teachers working with CWA in inclusive settings. The handbook was developed with the aim of easing the process of inclusion for all children, CWA in particular, at the primary level. However, the strategies suggested in the handbook, though meant predominantly for CWA, would benefit all children in regular classrooms.

The main objective of the handbook is to spread awareness that all children have varied needs and learning styles. It would help teachers to recognise that CWA view the world differently. The social nature of a school or classroom can make it difficult for CWA to learn along with other children due to their difficulty with social communication. This creates a gap between the teaching learning processes and CWA in the regular classroom. This handbook is an attempt to bridge this gap and sensitise regular teachers about the special educational needs of CWA.

The handbook was developed by national experts and teachers through workshops, as well as by collecting anecdotes and cases from the field. A rigorous try out before finalisation of the contents was undertaken. Teachers should try to tailor the suggested strategies as per local situations and context because every child is unique.

It is hoped that the handbook will go a long way in making inclusive education a success. Constructive comments, opinions, observations, suggestions or remarks on this handbook are welcome.

Hrushikesh Senapaty
Director

New Delhi
May 2018

National Council of Educational
Research and Training



PREFACE

Autism is invisible. Every Child With Autism (CWA) can be a puzzle waiting to be solved. Autism Spectrum Disorder has been recognised by the Right of the Persons with Disabilities Act 2016. Behavioural symptoms such as, difficulties in communication, understanding relationships and unusual or stereotyped behaviours may manifest as early as three years of age. CWA may remain unidentified due to lack of awareness about Autism among parents and other members of the society. If CWA remains unidentified, they pose challenges for regular teachers upon their enrolment in school. They often tend to get labeled and incorrectly grouped with children with mental challenges, slow learners and those with specific learning disabilities.

The development of this handbook is an initiative by the Department of Education of Groups with Special Needs (DEGSN), NCERT to tackle existing issues and spread awareness about autism among regular school teachers, parents and other stakeholders in education. This handbook is in three parts. Part I facilitates understanding of autism and the concerns of including a child with autism in regular classrooms. Part II titled “How To” provides useful strategies in school situations such as, assembly time, teaching learning, co-curricular activities, assessment process, unstructured time like recess, picnics, etc. Part III of the handbook helps develop a deeper understanding of behavioural issues and provides teacher-friendly activities such as, social stories, visual schedules, communicating through pictures and the likes.

The process of development of the handbook began with the formation of an advisory group of experts from the field. A meeting of the advisory group of experts helped chart the course of action and structuring of the handbook.

A checklist was prepared for initial identification of children with autism spectrum disorder/features of autism. It was done in collaboration with Action for Autism (AFA) and was shared with Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) for further distribution and identification of Children With Autism (CWA) in Kendriya Vidyalayas located in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR). This set the tone for a tryout of the handbook in select Kendriya Vidyalayas located in Delhi and NCR who had CWA in the primary classes.

Visits to the shortlisted schools provided exemplary understanding of the current scenarios in the classroom set up through interaction with students, teachers and principals of the schools and with the parents of CWA.

An Experience Sharing Meeting was organised, wherein teachers from Kendriya Vidyalayas and experts gathered to share their perspectives about the content, applicability and feasibility of the strategies suggested in the handbook. This meeting facilitated a greater understanding of all aspects and led to further revision of the content as per requirement.

This handbook is the successful outcome of the collective efforts and dedication of several persons involved with its development. The handbook is meant for regular teachers in inclusive classrooms. It is hoped that the handbook will facilitate greater understanding of the needs of all children, particularly CWA, and enhance the quality of education in regular inclusive schools.

Bharti

Associate Professor

Department of Education of Groups with Special Needs



WHY SHOULD I READ THIS HANDBOOK?

“The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles, but to irrigate deserts.”

— C.S. Lewis

If you often find yourself thinking about a child in your class who “understands language literally” or “instead of following instructions, looks around and imitates peers” or “keeps on repeating some phrases, tirelessly” or “behaves a little different” and solutions are not readily available, then this handbook is especially meant for you.

The task of providing extra attention and walking that extra mile for addressing the needs of the little ones requires enormous amount of patience, especially when dealing with children in the primary classes. Your role as a teacher becomes more significant in the presence of Children with Special Needs (CWSN) in the class. A little extra effort on your part as a teacher may positively touch the life of a child with special needs and help the child to participate effectively in class activities. A humble effort is made in the form of this book to help you accommodate and address the special needs described above and to enhance your professional abilities while teaching in a class having a child with autism. After parents, the teacher plays an important role in facilitating learning for children with autism.

With greater understanding of the benefits of inclusive education, the number of CWSN in the mainstream classroom is on the rise. In addition, the RTE also stresses on the right of all children to education and states that schools should not refuse admission to children on grounds of disability. As teachers we need to have faith in the concept of inclusion ourselves. We have to believe that affording a child with disability the opportunity to learn with their peers without being segregated is the best strategy for both groups of children. Inclusive education implies — children learning with each other and learning from each other. Inclusive

education means all learners, young people— with or without disabilities — being able to learn together in ordinary preschool provisions, schools and community educational settings, with an appropriate network of support services (Draft of Inclusive Education Scheme, MHRD, 2003). Inclusion means the process of educating children with special educational needs alongside their peers in mainstream schools. The feasibility of inclusion of such children in schools, however, has been an issue that has been discussed and debated extensively at various national and international fora. In the context of school education, inclusion can be understood as:

- All children studying in regular schools irrespective of abilities and disabilities;
- All children, including children with special needs, studying in schools located in the vicinity of home;
- Children with special needs becoming part of the community and getting opportunities to participate meaningfully in the events and activities happening around them from early years;
- Inclusive schools providing opportunities for participation and in gaining meaningful educational and social experiences. The goal of inclusion is neither to fix nor to find solutions to all problems;
- Nearby regular schools (inclusive schools) providing/arranging the required support services of a special educator and paraprofessional as and when required; and,
- Inclusive schools working in close collaboration with the parents.

This handbook focuses on easing the process of inclusion for children with autism in primary school and starts with developing an understanding of what autism is. When teachers understand this condition, they are better placed to recognise why the CWA responds and interacts in the way the child does.



This handbook provides teachers with different strategies and interventions that they could employ to make the journey of classroom learning more comfortable and enjoyable for the child with autism. Teachers will realise as they begin to use these strategies that the classroom becomes more enjoyable for all children including CWA and that the strategies are not just benefitting CWA.

As a teacher you may identify with one or more of the various cases mentioned in the handbook. These case studies describe real life situations and challenges experienced by regular teachers teaching in inclusive classrooms. The cases are further illustrated to indicate strategies for specific challenges that the teacher may face in the classroom. This makes it easier for him/her to relate with and act appropriately in the required situation, providing positive experiences to the CWA and making the experience in school fruitful and enjoyable.

The interventions mentioned in the handbook are only suggestive and are provided to give a good start/reference point to the teacher for addressing the needs of CWA in inclusive classrooms at the primary stage of school education.

It is our sincere hope that pursuing this handbook would be an enjoyable experience. Your suggestions, feedback, opinion, comments and experiences are crucial for us. Please share these via email at tarubharti1@gmail.com. or by writing to Dr. Bharti, *Associate Professor*, DEGSN, NCERT, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110 016.



ACRONYMS

AFA	Action for Autism
APA	American Psychological Association
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
CWA	Child/Children with Autism
CWSN	Children with Special Needs
DEGSN	Department of Education of Groups with Special Needs
KVS	Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resources Development
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
RPWD	Right of Persons with Disabilities
RTE	Right to Education
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
WHO	World Health Organisation

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In the beginning, the DEGSN would like to thank the Director, NCERT and the Joint Director, NCERT for providing the opportunity to initiate and complete this endeavour. The process of development began with bringing together a group of experts as advisory board members, who deliberated on the course of action for development of this handbook. The focus was to bring the handbook as close to the ground realities as possible. The significant contribution of the following experts in this initial vital phase of the journey is gratefully acknowledged:

Ann Varavakula, *Consultant*, Head of Special Needs, Santa Maria School, New Delhi; Giselle Lobo, *Assistant Professor*, Nirmala Institute of Education, Goa; Mary Barua, *Founder Director*, Action for Autism; Veena Singh, *Consultant Special Educator*, Fortis Healthcare; Shyamala Dalvi, *Consultant*, Mumbai; Tripti Mathur, *Freelancer*; and DEGSN faculty members, Anupam Ahuja *Professor*, Anita Julka *Professor*, and Vinay K. Singh, *Professor*.

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The draft handbook was tried out in selected Kendriya Vidyalays. A common platform was provided to regular teachers and experts, to interact and share their experiences and opinions about the handbook. The regular teachers deserve special thanks for their cooperation in the tryout of the handbook. The department is also thankful to the experts involved in the experience sharing

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IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGY

- **Inclusive Education:** A system of education, which advocates that all children should study together in the neighbourhood schools irrespective of abilities and disabilities, economic and social conditions, family background, etc., with all the required support services provided/arranged by the school in collaboration with parents.
- **Special Educational Needs:** The individual requirements for education of a child with a disadvantaged background or mental, emotional or physical disability. These children may require special attention and may have specific needs that other children may not have.
- **Children with Special Needs:** The children having special educational needs.
- **Disability:** According to the WHO, it is a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives. Disability is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions.
- **Mainstream Classrooms:** In the context of education, mainstreaming is the practice of educating children (students) with special needs in regular classes during specific time periods based on their skills. The two groups of children (children with special needs and children without special needs) spend limited selected time with each other during the entire school day.
- **Autism Spectrum Disorder:** Autism Spectrum Disorder means a neuro-developmental condition typically appearing in the first three years of life that significantly affects a person's ability to communicate, understand relationships and relate to others and is frequently associated with unusual or stereotypical rituals or behaviours. (RPWD Act 2016).

- **Asperger's Syndrome:** Asperger's syndrome is a severe developmental disorder characterised by major difficulties in social interaction, and restricted and unusual patterns of interest and behaviour (APA, 2013).
- **Sensory Sensitivity:** With regard to Autism, sensory sensitivity refers to sensitivity (oversensitive or under sensitive) towards extreme changes in noise, light, texture and temperature.
- **Socialisation:** It is a process by which individuals acquire knowledge and understanding of the use of language, social skills and values with regard to the existing norms and roles, and adapt themselves accordingly to seek entry into a social group or a community.
- **Special Educator:** A professional with the understanding and training in dealing with Children with Special Needs.
- **Down Syndrome:** A congenital disorder arising from the trisomy (a condition in which an extra copy of a chromosome instead of a pair is present in the cell nuclei, causing chromosomal defects) of the 21st chromosome causing intellectual impairment and physical abnormalities, including short stature and a broad facial profile.
- **Reinforcement/Reinforcer:** A reinforcer is something that increases the likelihood that a behaviour/response will occur. Reinforcement is a process by which a reaction or consequence leads to the increased likelihood of behaviour/response to be repeated, or strengthening of a behaviour/response in future.



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PART I- UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS

This section facilitates understanding of autism and the concerns of including a child with autism in regular classrooms. It briefly describes social skills, sensory sensitivities exceptional skills, triggers for characteristic behaviours and why it is called a spectrum disorder.

CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING AUTISM

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD) is a neurological, developmental delay which mainly impacts a child's language, social skills and behaviour. In other words, Children with Autism (CWA) face difficulties in social interaction, verbal and non-verbal communication and repetitive behaviours. Autism is considered a spectrum disorder because the symptoms range from mild to more complex conditions with multiple difficulties in the above mentioned areas. CWA may not necessarily lack skills but their skills may not develop age-appropriately and may be uneven. Translated in terms of school-related skills, this child may be able to sit in the class, do basic arithmetic but not speak; or may know the alphabet, numbers and nursery rhymes, but may not be able



to ask or express his/her needs or desires. Each individual with autism is unique. Many on the autism spectrum have exceptional abilities in visual skills, music and academic skills (numbers and letters). It is important to remember that one child with autism may be completely different from another child with autism. While one child may not speak at all, be very withdrawn, and have very few self-help skills, another child may not speak but be completely able to take care of her own needs; a third may speak, attend the local school, but have great difficulties in interacting with other children. That indicates why autism is called a spectrum disorder, because children can be as different from each other as the colours of the rainbow! The child with autism needs support in certain areas. It is essential to remember that a child with autism is a child first, with his or her unique personality, strengths, challenges, likes and dislikes.

Children with Asperger's Syndrome may not have delays in language or cognitive development. However, they may find it challenging to connect with others and may often have difficulty in maintaining eye contact, reading other people's facial expressions or body language. They face difficulties in understanding the subtler hues of communication. They interpret the language very literally, so they find idioms and sarcasm confusing. They may have behavioural issues. They are vulnerable to bullying. They have the tendency to adhere to rules, routines and favoured activities or topics; this often makes transitions, changes and flexibility extremely difficult, and distressful.

Coined by Eugene Bleuler in 1911, the term 'Autism' is derived from a Greek word 'autos' which means 'self'. Although several descriptions are available in history, Autism as we now understand was first described by Leo Kanner in 1943 and by Hans Asperger in 1944. Autism is not a mental illness and is different from intellectual disability (mental retardation). The causes of Autism are yet to be identified fully and research is going on. Available research has led



to the understanding that no single gene alone is responsible for autism and also that it is not caused by bad parenting, neglect, unhappy home environment or both parents working.

Let us see how it is seen in the classroom.

SOCIAL SKILLS

We live in a social world. Everything we do, whether buying an ice-cream, borrowing a pencil, making a request, or asking for help from a classmate, all require us to be able to interact with others. Non-autistic people do this effortlessly. How do I draw the busy



shopkeeper's attention to ask for the ice cream I want? How loudly should I speak when asking the girl next to me for a pencil while the teacher is teaching? What tone should I use when asking a classmate for help? These are simple skills we have intuitively. We do not have to 'learn' them. Yet people with autism, even very intelligent ones, often struggle with



these social communication skills. A lot of this comes from our ability to understand how others think and feel. For example, knowing that, since the teacher is teaching, one must whisper—“Abhay, please lend me a pencil” and not speak in the usual loud voice because the teacher would not want to be interrupted while teaching; to be aware that walking around the class will disturb other children; realising that taking someone else’s eraser or book without asking or against their wishes will not be liked. All of this and much more requires conscious learning efforts by CWA.

UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

People with autism have difficulty in understanding a situation from the variety of cues that help normal people interpret the social world such as the tone of someone’s voice, the posture of the body or from the context. For instance, sometimes we enter a room and without having heard a single word, we still sense that two people were fighting or having a private discussion. As our social understanding develops, we know when to remain seated, when is it okay to move around, or interrupt a conversation or how to respond when someone calls our name. Additionally, without being taught, we learn to vary our behaviour with different people. Different types of behaviour are adopted, depending on whether one is speaking to one’s mother or teacher or friend. We also change our behaviour according to different social situations such as, talking to mother at the breakfast table or talking to her at a prayer meeting.



A child with autism will have a very literal understanding of communication. If a teacher remarks a student — “Who is drawing pictures during Maths class”, “oh yes, draw a few more pictures. No need to do your Maths work,” — we understand that the teacher is being sarcastic and wants us to stop drawing and pay attention to the work. But a child with autism, with difficulty in understanding what the teacher is actually thinking or feeling, may interpret the words to mean that s/he has permission to continue drawing and ignore the class.

UNDERSTANDING OTHER’S PERSPECTIVE

Not having an understanding of ‘other minds’, for instance, that the teacher does not know or has not seen something that s/he knows or has seen, means that most of them do not have the concept of lying or asking for help or doing something behind the teacher’s back. This also means that it rarely occurs to most of them to complain about bullying (for example, kicked by another child while going past his chair, or being disrupted when trying to write lessons). It may simply not occur to her/him that the teacher is unaware about the bullying. Instead, when the bullied child finally gets frustrated and retaliates by hitting or throwing, s/he gets reported by the bully and gets punished as a result! Even a very talkative verbal child with autism may not be able to explain her/his side of the story.

PLAY

Play is an important part of development. Accepted knowledge says that all children would naturally gravitate to the playground. Also, children indulge in pretend play. Whereas, children with autism have difficulty in pretend play and also have difficulty in joining in play that requires a great deal of social give and take. For them, ‘play’ means stacking blocks, lining up toys, constantly looking at wheels spinning, etc. In fact, the





school playground, a fluid and unstructured place during recess, is a place where children with autism have the greatest difficulty and are vulnerable to bullying and teasing.

SENSORY SENSITIVITY

Many children with autism also have different ways of ‘sensing’ the world. Some may not like being touched gently, but prefer a firm hold, or need movement and rocking to self-calm or even to help them focus. Others may have difficulty in holding a pencil in a firm grip or getting a haircut; others may get distracted with the label on the collar of the shirt. There may be unusual likes and dislikes in diet or difficulty in tolerating certain everyday sounds. A six-year-old may resist climbing stairs, but may be able to climb and hang from a jungle gym



swiftly and effortlessly. These are just a few examples.

We often hear that children with autism ‘don’t make eye contact’. A child with autism may often not respond in typical ways in the classroom, such as by looking. But it is entirely possible that the CWA

hears what is being said, but needs to look away to process the information received. Of course taking the child’s name before giving instruction makes it easier to get the child’s attention!



EXCEPTIONAL SKILLS

Some children with autism have exceptional skills such as, enormous memory, calendar skills, or information about countries, their capitals, presidents and so on; or they read way beyond their age. Such mostly memory-related skills are often a result of their ability to focus on minute details. But an ability of super-focus on details can lead to difficulties in generalising learning. So a child, who is able to add or subtract effortlessly in his/her Maths exercises, may not be able to apply the same skill to money when the class goes shopping or while handling money. Wherever possible one can and should use these special abilities to teach other skills, but it is important not to make assumptions based on such skills of what the child can or cannot do. Hence, teaching the child day-to-day living skills should not be ignored. For example, a child’s reading skill may be above the class average, yet comprehension skills may not be at par with the reading skills. Thus, the teacher needs to work upon her/his comprehension.

For them the world can be a very confusing place; as a result, they are often mistakenly thought to be ‘disobedient’ and/or ‘bad’. Whereas, all they are trying to do is to navigate a





very confusing world, trying to process information that comes to them, trying to make sense of a social world that they do not quite understand, and at the same time dealing with the different way their senses interpret the environment. *This is why a child with autism thrives in an environment where communication is clear and precise, where things are well ordered, organised and predictable, and where changes are communicated clearly and visually.*

Every child is unique. Some children are different and it is okay to be different. Let us accept them as they are and do what we can to help them feel included. It is important to understand that these children need empathy, not sympathy.



CHAPTER 2

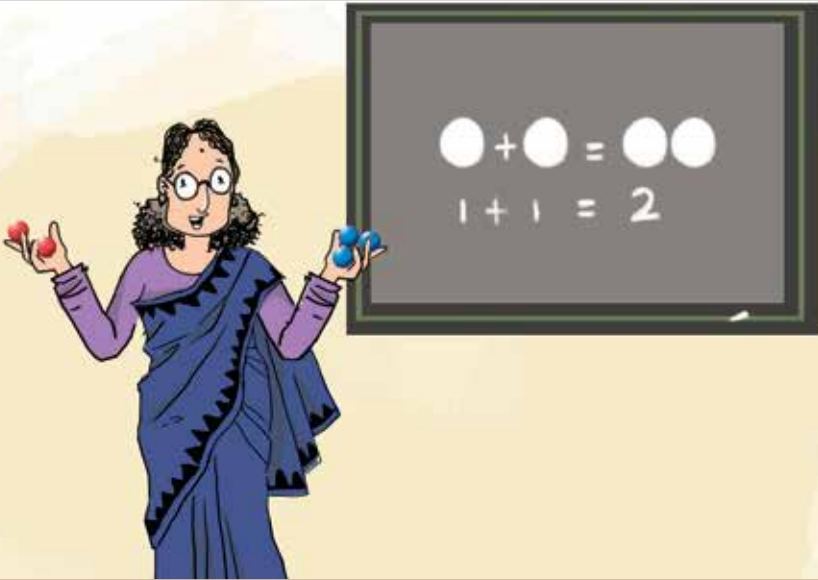
CHALLENGES AND REWARDS OF INCLUDING A CHILD WITH AUTISM IN THE CLASSROOM

Having a child with a autism in the class is certainly a memorable experience, and may challenge your teaching skills and patience. However, if you have an open mind, and spend a little time to understand how a child with autism views the world, the experience will enrich your teaching skills, and you will have the satisfaction of making a profound difference in the quality of the child's life.

What makes teaching a CWA so complex? Why is it different from teaching a child with some other challenging condition like a Visual/Hearing Impairment or Down Syndrome? While these challenges may need some adaptation of curriculum or assistive devices, the methods of teaching remain largely the same as those for children who are not learning challenged. For CWA, educational, social and communication interventions are required simultaneously which can be planned only after realising that:

- Autism primarily affects the child's **SOCIAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS**. Most of our teaching methods depend on language to communicate an idea, and the social means to indicate approval to motivate a child. When this basic pathway is hampered the teacher is forced to think out of the box and figure out new ways to get the point across and to motivate the child.
- Children with autism may have problems **IN THE WAY THEY PROCESS VARIOUS SENSATIONS** such as touch, light, pain, sound and smell – they may be over or under sensitive – and this, as we shall see, adds an extra challenge.

- Autism is a **SPECTRUM** Disorder – meaning that each child with autism displays these characteristics in a varied manner and to varying degree – thus each child with autism is a fresh puzzle, waiting to be solved.



The key skill the teacher needs is the ability to analyse and understand the child's seemingly irrational behaviour and then apply appropriate proven methods to help the child function in a way that makes her/him more participative and successful in the classroom.

The challenges that you face when teaching or interacting with a child with autism or for that matter any child, falls into one of the following two situations. Either the child is not doing a task or action in the manner or level that is expected (for example, child not answering a question about a story just told, or s/he seems inattentive) – or the child is doing something that is inappropriate in the current environment



(for example, the child keeps moving out of her/his seat and running around the class).

When the child is not doing a particular expected task – because of a deficit skill that needs to be taught or a language deficiency, and when the child is displaying inappropriate behaviour that causes disturbance in the class, then you may wish to teach the child to stop such behaviour or at least reduce it, or teach alternative appropriate behaviour.

Thus when faced with a teaching challenge, we either want to promote appropriate behaviour or teach a new desired behaviour, or we want to reduce or stop inappropriate behaviour.



**SKILL DEFICIT:
INCREASE BEHAVIOUR/TEACH SKILL**

REDUCE INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR



The key to finding an effective solution to specific teaching challenges you may face with a child with autism in the class, is to understand the reason why the child has that particular challenge.



TRIGGERS FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Too High!



Too Fast!



Too Overwhelming!



Too Unfamiliar



Too Close!



Too Hectic!



TRIGGERS FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Too Loud!



Too New!



Too BRIGHT!



Too UNEXPECTED!



Too VAGUE!



**Too LOOSE!
Too TIGHT!**



PART II- “HOW TO...”

HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

The following section encompasses various situations that a teacher may come across while dealing with children with autism in regular classrooms in inclusive schools. This section enlists common school situations, and probable challenges that may arise in such situations, followed by the strategies that can be employed in these situations.

1. CHILD'S PROFILE

The teachers and school authorities must collaborate with parents and create a profile of the child.



STUDENT:

GRADE:

TEACHER:

REINFORCERS: LIST THE HIGHLY PREFERRED REINFORCERS
(ITEMS, ACTIVITIES, ETC.).

Items:

Foods:

Activities:

Verbal:

Non-Verbal:

Social:

Toys:

Any other:

DISLIKES: List the things (items, activities, etc.) the student dislikes.

INTERESTS: List the activities, games and sports the student enjoys.

STRENGTHS: List the activities, games and sports the student does well.

NEEDS: List the activities, games and sports where the student needs help.

STRESSORS: List the events or situations the student may find stressful and list the strategies that have helped previously.

COMMUNICATION: How does the student communicate?

Verbally

Sign Language

Pictures/Objects

Combination of above

None of the above

Any other:



SENSITIVITIES: How does the student respond to different sounds, light, touch, smells and tastes?

Normal response to:

Unusually strong response to:

No response at all to:

2. REACHING THE SCHOOL AND ASSEMBLY TIME

Reaching the school may require the child to commute alone or in the company of peers or parents by bus, or auto or rickshaw. The CWA should be prepared for this journey through social stories and visual schedules. The following issues may need to be addressed while preparing the CWA for the journey:

- Sensory overload due to presence of a lot of other persons;
- Bullying and teasing;
- Identifying and remembering bus stops;
- Way from bus stop to the school/home and vice versa;
- Preference for a particular seat.

The CWA may feel comfortable during this journey in the presence of a bus buddy or special friend. The CWA also needs to be sensitised about good touch and bad touch while travelling from home to school and back.

Once the child enters the school, s/he could get overwhelmed seeing other enthusiastic kids, running, rushing and pushing each other. If it is an indoor event, then the noise could



reverberate in the whole building making it uneasy for children who are sensitive. The teacher and the assembly monitor needs to understand the following for the better participation of the CWA.

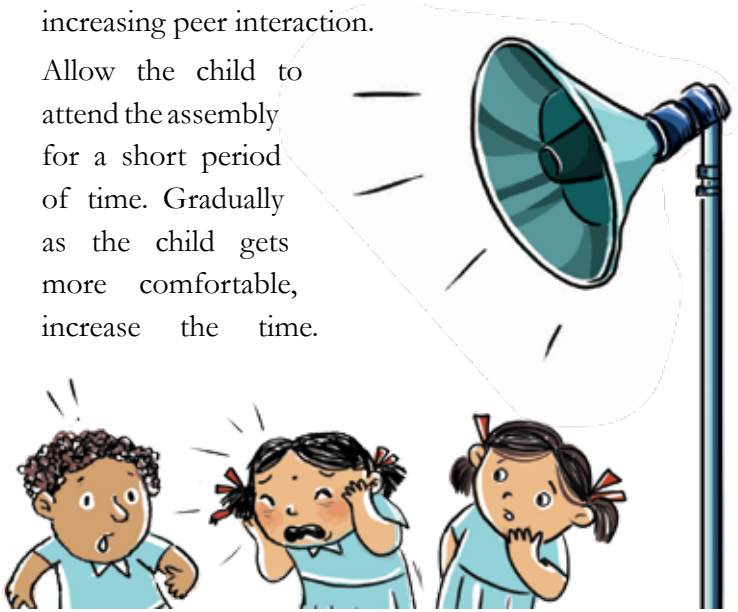
SOME DOS AND DON'TS

1. Some children with autism are comfortable standing at the beginning or the end of the line. Others may prefer standing between peers because it may give them a sense of security.
2. If the child is sound sensitive, s/he should be allowed to wear ear plugs that would muffle loud sounds. It causes no disruption and maximizes participation. Gradually it helps the child in desensitisation.
3. Allow CWA to attend the assembly from a distance or a height (the first/second floor of the building) along with one buddy with whom s/he feels comfortable.



The buddy can be assigned on rotation from time to time. This will increase attendance in assemblies along with increasing peer interaction.

4. Allow the child to attend the assembly for a short period of time. Gradually as the child gets more comfortable, increase the time.



5. Use small visual schedules of the assembly to help the CWA understand the sequence of events taking place.
6. All-school assembly with hundreds of kids and speakers talking about issues of pollution or cleanliness may be uncomfortable and meaningless to CWA. Once in a while, the child may be allowed to help the school staff in arranging the bulletin board during assembly time.

3. SETTLING IN THE CLASSROOM

Transitioning from the assembly to the classroom may pose a challenge to the CWA. During this transition period, several aspects need to be taken care of, as children generally tend to talk, rush and be in a hurry to settle down in the class.

To ensure that the child with autism gets settled in the class easily without much disturbance, the following things need to be attended to:



1. Children should be made to enter the classroom in a line.
2. A class member should be appointed to oversee maintenance of discipline.
3. Positioning should be made according to the child's convenience. A visual marker could be used to help the child identify her/his desk.
4. The desk should be positioned in such a manner, so that it facilitates easy access and movement of the teacher to the child and vice-versa.



4. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

The CWA may appear over-friendly or they may not be able to sense when they overstep a boundary; they may have difficulty in sustaining a conversation or seeing things from another person's viewpoint. This can create issues in the classroom and on the playground. Listed below are some situations that require careful handling.



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1. Throwing pencil shavings all around.
2. Dirtying the space.
3. Not asking permission to go out or come in.
4. Not asking permission to change seats.
5. Not waiting for her/his turn.

6. Absence of appropriate classroom manners such as, remaining seated in her/his seat, using her/his pencil/pen, not disturbing others.
7. Finishing work early/late.
8. Not knowing how to solve the problem, write answers or understand the lessons.
9. Not engaging in classroom interaction.
10. Inability to sustain a conversation.
11. Not being engaged with seatmates.
12. Restlessness.
13. Out of seat behaviour.
14. Inappropriate ways of getting the Teachers' or peers' attention – for example, throwing things, grabbing instead of asking, hitting or pulling hair.
15. Obsession with a topic – it may lead to repeated questions or insistence on talking about a specific topic.

All these could make them vulnerable and could lead to bullying or teasing by other students. There could be several other situations apart from the ones listed above. Some generic strategies to deal with such situations are given below.

SUGGESTED HELP

1. Mark the dustbin area and teach its usefulness.
2. Teach courtesies such as, *excuse me, sorry, welcome* and *thank you* as appropriate manners and encourage taking permission for leaving/occupying one's seat. For example, if s/he leaves her/his seat and walks out, call her/him back and correct the behaviour immediately.
3. Waiting may not always be acceptable to the child. Give her/him first preference. Be flexible considering her/his needs.
4. Demonstrate the use of pen/pencil. Alert her/him about general behaviour to be observed in the classroom.





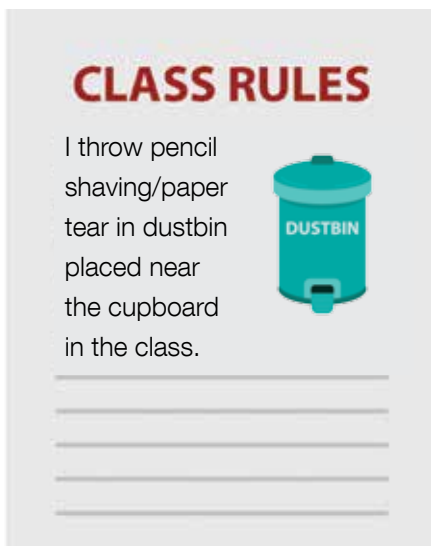
5. The teacher should remain alert as the child might finish the work early/late/not be able to do it at all. In case of finishing early, the CWA should be rewarded with preferred activity.
6. The teacher can take the initiative to sit along with the seatmate and engage in conversation during the group discussion in a class.
7. Seatmate could be allotted on a rotation basis, as everybody may not be able to deal with the emotions of a child with autism. Teachers should take into account the interests of other children too.
 8. Restlessness could be dealt with by giving a stress ball or allowing the class a short break from studies.
 9. Out of seat behaviour is an outcome of restlessness. The CWA may be allowed to interact with others for five to ten minutes in between classes.
10. Restlessness could lead to throwing things, pulling and pushing others. It can be effectively dealt with through power breaks like sharing a joke or singing.

11. Obsession with a topic is a common occurrence. Changing the topic and asking her/him firmly to think on the new topic will help. Never ward off queries even if they are repetitive.
12. Bullying and teasing should be curbed by sensitising peers towards the needs of the child.

For a child who has difficulty in keeping still and often bumps into other children because of lack of awareness of his body boundary, activities that help build up that awareness are important. Drawing a circle around the child with chalk when he or she is standing in a crowd and reminding him that he has to stay within that boundary can help him understand this concept slowly.

CLASS RULES OR INDIVIDUALISED PERSONAL RULES TAPED TO DESK

Classroom rules individualised to address the CWA should be prepared in consultation with the parent and the special education teacher. The modified rules, written in simple positive sentences, supported by a lot of visuals/pictures, facilitating easy comprehension by CWA may be pasted/taped to the child's desk. For example, the class rule says, keep the class clean by throwing paper tears, pencil shavings, etc., in the dustbin. The same may be modified for CWA "I throw pencil shaving/paper tear in dustbin placed near the cupboard in the class". With pictures the same direction would look like as shown in the box.



If the CWA is found throwing pencil shavings here and there, then s/he can be gently but firmly directed to look at the rule listed/taped to her/his desk for appropriate behaviour.

PREPARING AND SHARING THE “GOOD CHOICES THAT I CAN MAKE” LIST:

The CWA can be taught self-management skills with the help of a list like the one given below:

- I can raise my hand to ask questions or get help.
- I can ask more questions if I do not understand.
- If I do not understand what someone is saying or doing, I can ask them.
- I know that my own words and actions can make people feel differently than I do.
- I can use “I” messages to tell people how I feel. (“I feel bad when you tell me I can’t play ...”).
- I can write down the problem and then think of appropriate things that I could do.
- I could use relaxation strategies. “Take a deep breath, count to 10, breathe out slowly”.
- I could ask for time-out/break all by myself.
- I can make good choices.

INDIVIDUAL RULE AND BEHAVIOUR CARDS:

Few general behaviour cards indicating often-used instructions, do’s or don’ts, etc., should be prepared and kept within the easy access of CWA and the teacher. Common behaviour that can be included in this set of cards includes:

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Look at



Red card for NO



Green card for appreciation



Sit on the chair



Shhh, be quiet



Work quietly



Break/time out



All done



Not done



Need more time

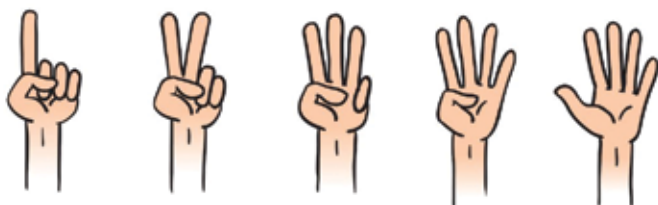


5. MANAGING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

All of us have preferred ways of learning and as a teacher, you are aware that each child has her/his strengths as well as areas where s/he may need support and help. Children with autism in your class have different learning styles. This is because they **view the world differently**. They respond to the stimuli from the environment differently than those without autism. The classroom may cause a sensory overload at times. In other words, sights, sounds or smells may affect them more than other people. The social nature of a school or classroom may make it difficult for a person with autism to function as s/he may have difficulty with social communication. S/he is predominantly a strong visual and experiential learner. Remember that all visuals and activities you use to support teaching will not only help students with autism but all the students in the class. The child with autism has her/his own strengths, which can prove beneficial for learning as well as participation in school activities.

A CHILD WITH AUTISM USUALLY HAS:

- Good visual memory as seen in:
 - Ability to discriminate between pictures.
 - Ability to match similar objects, pictures, etc.
- Most CWA learn quickly through experience (for example, numbers are understood better if CWA uses numbers in the environment using objects; words can be understood by acting out words like “run”, “quick”, “slow”, etc.).



- CWA excels when there is a clear and predictable structure to his daily routines (for example, getting ready to go to school, snack time, assembly, etc.). CWA like routine and predictability and need to be informed beforehand of any change of routine.
- Good at following rules that are explicit;
- They excel in using gadgets like computers, mobiles, tablets, etc., because these provide a visual and predictable structure.
- They have an eye for detail that interests them. For example, s/he may notice finer details like markings on pen, pencil, sharpener, etc.



Just like any other person, the CWA also has some challenges and difficulties that require attention.

LEARNING CHALLENGES FACED BY CWA

- Difficulty in motivation – many children with autism lack the motivation to attend or be engaged with a lesson. One reason is that most lessons are presented in a verbal format. Also, understanding what others are **SAYING (language)** is one of the main challenges faced by children with autism.
- Difficulty in engaging with the lesson – CWA are distracted by sensory sensations (visual, auditory or tactile) and this causes difficulty in following a lesson. Also, children with autism have difficulty in answering open-ended questions like “what is happening in this picture?” which interferes with their ability to engage in academic discussions.
- Difficulty in understanding the abstract – Children with autism are concrete learners. Any discussion of abstract concepts without accompanying visual or tactile experience makes it extremely difficult for

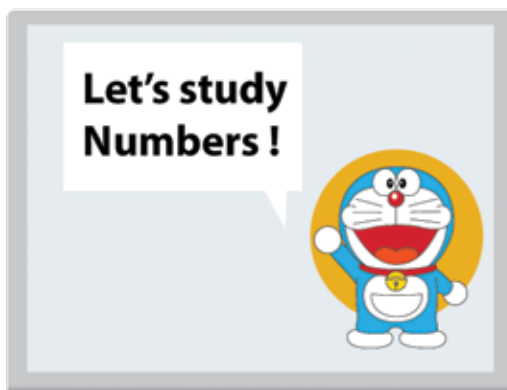


them to understand and stay focused on the lesson. This will translate into difficulty in understanding concepts like time, quantity size, etc.

- Understanding language literally — Instructions such as, “Would you like to wipe the board?” may be answered in “yes” but may not be followed by any action of picking up the duster to wipe the board.
- Prompt dependence – Many CWA rely on a lot of prompting to get them to do routine tasks. This also makes being independent a challenge. Teachers need to be aware of this so that they do not think that the child is lazy or rude because he does not do things by himself in spite of knowing it. For example, during lunch break, the CWA may need prompts for taking out lunchbox, eating food and cleaning up afterwards.

The following should be kept in mind while planning for an inclusive classroom having CWA:

1. Play to the **child’s interest**. If the child is interested in a particular cartoon character, let a puppet of that character introduce the lesson. If the child is interested in buses, try to use that in a Maths



lesson. This will go a long way in motivating the child and keeping him/her interested in the lesson.

2. Use many **visual aids**. These can be pictures, flash cards as well as writing instructions on the board.

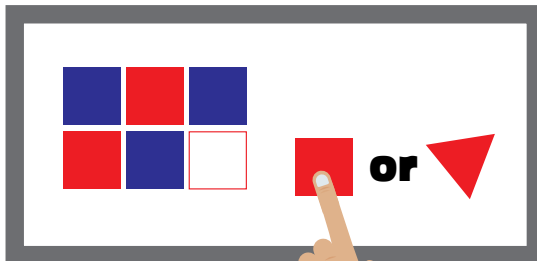
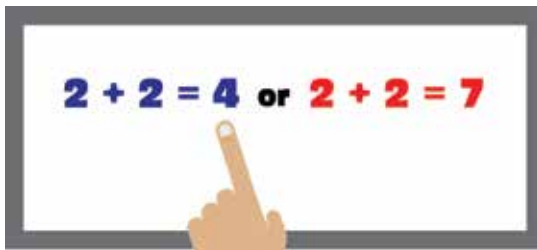


3. Give as many **concrete experiences** as possible. This will help them be engaged with the lesson. Keep the lesson



activity-based, which is one of the best ways to teach a child with autism.

4. **Structure the lesson.** Make sure that you list the concepts of the lesson in advance on the board. It would be even better if you could give the child a readymade mind map or flow chart containing the concepts being taught. As you address each concept, refer to it on the chart by pointing it out or drawing the child's attention to it.
5. Offer the child **different ways to respond.** When you ask the child a question – instead of insisting on only an oral answer, give her/him a chance to point to the answer in text or even a picture.



The paragraph below deals directly with issues that may crop up during regular teaching-learning in the classroom. Before moving on, please remember that the suggestions provided here could be helpful but may not cover all the issues you may face in the classroom. Listed below are common situations along with suggestions for managing the same in an inclusive classroom.

GENERAL CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR DURING ACADEMICS

WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE IN YOUR STUDENT	POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THIS BEHAVIOUR	WHAT YOU CAN TRY
Has difficulty in following simple instructions such as, take out your book or read from the middle of the page.	<p>Your student may not realise that these instructions are for her/him.</p> <p>S/he may not be able to keep up with the pace of instructions.</p> <p>If the child is focusing on something else, s/he finds it difficult to transfer attention to the situation at hand.</p>	<p>It is best to write the information on the board such as, name of the book, page number.</p> <p>The teacher could take the child's name intermittently while teaching, "Children, Rohan, we get most of our rainfall in the monsoon".</p> <p>Train the seatmate/ partner to help the child by addressing the child by name, followed by repeating the teacher's instructions.</p>
Sits quietly in group activities without participating.	Group activities require good communication skills.	Give everyone a chance to speak in a sequence. Ask the child to speak even if it is a word,



WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE IN YOUR STUDENT	POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THIS BEHAVIOUR	WHAT YOU CAN TRY
	<p>They also require children to understand the social rules of participation in a discussion or listening to others.</p>	<p>irrespective of it being right/wrong.</p> <p>However, do not pressurise or force, as it tends to inculcate fear. Certain group activities can incorporate different modalities focused towards drawing, making collages together; encouraging teamwork among children.</p> <p>Allow expression via pictures, drawings or collage work. If CWA is good at computers s/he can type/browse the information for the group.</p>
<p>Has difficulty in sharing materials in group activities.</p>	<p>Sharing and taking turns are abstract and involve change, making it difficult for the child.</p>	<p>Make appropriate comments like, please pass it to X, please pick it from the desk, etc. All materials can be kept in a tray at the centre of the table used by the children, and can be put back in the tray.</p> <p>Have flash cards which have pictures of “let’s share”, “pass it to...”</p>



WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE IN YOUR STUDENT	POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THIS BEHAVIOUR	WHAT YOU CAN TRY
Loses focus in group activities.	Group activities require good communication skills as well as adjustment to the informal chit-chat. The CWA may find this informality too much and lose focus of what s/he has to do.	Teacher should get involved in the same group but act only as a facilitator. Others in the group can ask the CWA questions requiring short responses.
Leaves seat often and wanders around the class.	If your student does not understand what you are saying or the lesson is purely from the textbook, s/he will lose interest because s/he is a visual learner or perhaps the child needs a sensory break.	Take short breaks in order to take questions and ask the students what they have understood in the past ten minutes. It will help all the students to revise and grasp the topic. Give simple chores such as carrying or fetching materials in the classroom. The child gets an opportunity to move and his sensory needs are met.
Often talks out of turn in the class.	The CWA may have difficulty in understanding when s/he can talk and when s/he cannot. Very often, children without autism understand	Tell the CWA that s/he may get permission to speak by putting her/his hand up. If it is a group discussion, children in the group will speak in turn, as indicated by a group leader.



WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE IN YOUR STUDENT	POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THIS BEHAVIOUR	WHAT YOU CAN TRY
	<p>without being told that the teacher’s ‘stare’ indicates no talking. The CWA does not get this and therefore may come up with her/his own rules.</p>	
<p>Has difficulty in transitioning from one activity to another, for example, craft to reading.</p>	<p>Very often, we do not like transition from one activity to another, either because we do not like the new activity or because we find the change difficult to cope with. However, we understand abstract statements like, “time is up” or “we can continue tomorrow” or since other things have to be done as well. The CWA has difficulty in understanding these statements.</p> <p>They experience —</p> <p>Anxiety in moving to an unplanned activity;</p> <p>Reluctance to give up a highly desired/ motivating activity.</p>	<p>Put the highly desired class activity for the last hour in school or before breaks, if possible.</p> <p>It is easy to get back the attention after breaks.</p> <p>Breaks also provide the much needed time window to complete the activity.</p> <p>A two-minute break before the end of each hour, by engaging in movements like walking up and down the corridor, meditation, chanting, reciting a poem together as a class, etc., will help in easy transition and act as relaxation for the entire class.</p> <p>Providing the CWA a table schedule to which the teacher/deskmate can point to may help.</p>



WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE IN YOUR STUDENT	POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THIS BEHAVIOUR	WHAT YOU CAN TRY
Crying, shouting, or screaming for no observable reason.	The main reason for this is that the CWA has difficulty in communicating her/his needs to you in words. Unlike other children, because of her/his problems in communication s/he cannot say, "I don't like this" or "the light is too bright" or "don't touch me" or "it makes me uncomfortable". It may be sensory overload which is not obvious to us.	Use flash cards or visual communication where the CWA could ask for a break, go to the toilet, etc. The teacher needs to remain alert to the sensory needs of the CWA and make the necessary changes.
Hums or repeats phrases many times in the day.	This happens with things s/he wants to know, appreciates, or that which attracts her/his attention.	Teach the child to work quietly. When the child is quiet, tell him, "Good, you are working quietly." Introduce a quiet card or start a social story on working quietly. If the behaviour does not interfere with classroom activity, ignore it.



WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE IN YOUR STUDENT	POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THIS BEHAVIOUR	WHAT YOU CAN TRY
Has difficulty in understanding terms like quickly, slowly and hurry up.	These are very abstract concepts and your student will definitely have a problem in understanding them.	Be precise. For example, instead of hurry up, say, in two minutes (along with sand timer) we will go to the classroom. The seatmate can help teachers in making the CWA understand certain instructions or words using actions.

LANGUAGE



Understanding Communication

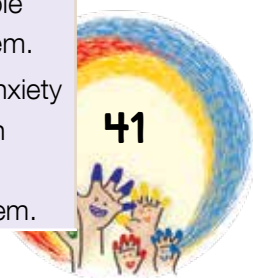
Communicating with others is one of the challenges that CWA have to cope with on a daily basis. This difficulty can be perceived in the uneven development of language. This is manifested more strongly in language classes because the learning is verbal and often very abstract. The challenges that may be faced by the child during a language class are listed below.



IN THE LANGUAGE CLASS		
WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE IN YOUR STUDENT	POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THIS BEHAVIOUR	WHAT YOU CAN TRY
Answers better when shown pictures.	Learning only by listening is very hard for some children. These children have the ability to learn better, by pairing print material with pictures, because pictures make it more understandable.	Picture books can be very helpful. Also fair drawing of pictures to understand will be useful. However, to differentiate between an apple, mango and an orange, with just the outline would be difficult as they relate through colours and shape, so it is best to use a picture book.
During poem recitation s/he does not imitate the actions.	Imitation is a big challenge for some children. They find it very difficult to transfer attention from the teacher to themselves and then copy actions. They also fail to understand the reason behind imitating an action and therefore do not imitate.	The poem can be tried with only one or two actions, so that the teacher can focus on the child. Get one or two of her/his friends to stand in front and do the action. If s/he is willing, you can gently help her/him physically.



IN THE LANGUAGE CLASS		
WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE IN YOUR STUDENT	POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THIS BEHAVIOUR	WHAT YOU CAN TRY
During storytelling s/he may have difficulty in changing attention from the picture to your words.	It is difficult for the child to focus on two different things. S/he also has to use both senses, that is, seeing and hearing, simultaneously.	Decide on a few pictures that you want the child to focus on. When you reach those pictures, take time to draw the child's attention to them specially. Use terms like 'touch the flower' so that s/he can focus. Then slowly give your statement in simple language. Keep your sentences short and simple.
During recitation s/he may say the poem in an unusual voice-very high or very low.	Some children have difficulty in speaking. When they do speak, it may be in a different way.	Do not correct the child for this. Praise him for learning the poem but advise practice with another friend. It could also be a sign of nervousness, which would be overcome with time. CWA can be assigned partners with whom they feel comfortable while reciting a poem. This reduces the anxiety of standing alone in the centre with the audience facing them.



IN THE LANGUAGE CLASS

WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE IN YOUR STUDENT	POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THIS BEHAVIOUR	WHAT YOU CAN TRY
<p>During storytelling, when asked questions s/he may give answers completely unrelated to the story.</p>	<p>Certain children get distracted very easily. While listening to a story a word may remind them of something and this then leads them to think of related things.</p>	<p>Make it concrete by drawing his attention to the story using pictures and puppets. Keep repeating the points you want to highlight.</p>
<p>Reads all the words in the text but has difficulty in answering questions.</p>	<p>Reading and understanding are two different things. Reading words is easier once one understands the rules. Answering questions requires a higher level of thinking which may be difficult for some children. Understanding language is also very difficult for some children and they often do not know what the words mean.</p>	<p>Ask basic questions. Highlight the important aspects of the story or words, which need to be learnt. Teach the story using visual and concrete aids (flash cards, picture cards, puppets).</p>
<p>Reads all the words in the text but has difficulty understanding and answering open-ended questions like “how?” and “why?”.</p>	<p>Open-ended questions are abstract and CWA face difficulty with abstract concepts.</p>	<p>Open-ended questions should be simplified into a series of short questions.</p>



IN THE LANGUAGE CLASS		
WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE IN YOUR STUDENT	POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THIS BEHAVIOUR	WHAT YOU CAN TRY
Has difficulty in narrating a story in sequence.	Putting anything in order is difficult. The child has to know what the beginning is, what is in the middle and what the end is.	Use storyboards. Allow her/him to arrange the story cards. Teach the story using flow charts with connectors.
May give answers in one or two words.	Difficulty in expressive language.	Use the child's single word answers to build up to longer sentences by prompting her/him. Provide the answers in written form for the child to read the whole sentence so that the child forms the habit of reading long sentences.
Recalls small or insignificant details from a story, and misses the larger picture.	Some children tend to focus on the details and forget the bigger picture. Thus, they can answer questions about the colour of the dress or how many birds are there but cannot describe the whole story.	Draw the attention of the child to the main points of the story.



IN THE LANGUAGE CLASS		
WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE IN YOUR STUDENT	POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THIS BEHAVIOUR	WHAT YOU CAN TRY
Repeatedly asks the same question about something from the text.	Sometimes children fail to attach meaning to the words. They repeat the question. They repeat the question because they are trying to communicate something else or they use it as an attempt to converse.	This tendency can be curbed gradually by rationing the number of times the same question can be repeated during the day. Another helpful strategy could be to give the answer in written form or preparing answer cards and showing the same to the child every time the question is asked.
Has difficulty in shifting attention from objects to speaker in practical demonstrations.	Once the child focuses on one thing, it becomes difficult to shift attention quickly to something else. During demonstration, this becomes even more difficult. In addition, the child has to make connections with all these different steps and this is difficult for the child.	Try making demonstrations, which are self-explanatory, with minimum speech. Use flow charts, sequence cards with visuals.



MATHEMATICS



Mathematics, by nature, is practical and functional. It is safe to say that to teach the early concepts of Mathematics, e.g., size, shape, quantity and number value, we have to give the child **concrete learning experiences**. Many children with autism easily grasp these early concepts because they can be taught concretely. It

is only when they move to word problems in later classes that Mathematics becomes difficult because of the use of language.

Below are some of the common problems faced by students in Mathematics classes.

IN THE MATHEMATICS CLASS		
WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE IN YOUR STUDENT	POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THIS BEHAVIOUR	WHAT YOU CAN TRY
Does addition and subtraction with concrete objects easily but struggles with problems put on the board.	Certain children learn better when given concrete objects because they can see, touch and move them around. Sums written on the board without the accompanying concrete experience make it difficult for the child.	Teach the basic operations using an abacus which is the most affordable, effective and easily usable item to demonstrate numbers. Another common strategy is to teach the use of number line for addition and subtraction.



IN THE MATHEMATICS CLASS

WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE
IN YOUR STUDENT

POSSIBLE REASONS
FOR THIS BEHAVIOUR

WHAT YOU CAN TRY

Encourage family of CWA to use numbers in the environment and talk about numbers (e.g., give the child two cups and tell him “put two cups in the kitchen”, “bring four tomatoes from the fridge” – he doesn’t have to count because there are only four tomatoes to bring), paint numbers on the steps.

Has difficulty in doing addition and subtraction with carry over.
Has difficulty in remembering the sequence of multistep problems. For example, multiplication of 2 digits by 3 digits.

This process involves many steps, followed in a particular sequence. Since CWA have difficulty in organising and sequencing, these problems become very difficult.

The entire sequence of multi step problems has to be graphically illustrated with the numbered steps written at the side. The child has to be then given sums and told to solve them while enumerating each step as s/he does this.



IN THE MATHEMATICS CLASS		
WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE IN YOUR STUDENT	POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THIS BEHAVIOUR	WHAT YOU CAN TRY
Has difficulty with word problems.	Word problems usually communicate in abstract terms. Terms like “total”, “sum of”, “less than”, “how many”, “how much heavier”, etc., have to be imagined. In addition, they involve use of language, which is a challenge to the child.	Simplify word problems, teach strategies to identify catch terms like “total”, “sum of”, “less than”, “how many”, “how much heavier”, etc., to decide the technique to be used.

In the primary classroom, there are three Mathematics activities that should be done daily. These three activities are the practical side of Mathematics and can be called “**Mathematics in Real Life**”, and hence require special focus. That is why they are discussed below separately.

1. **CALENDAR TIME**—Calendar time activity incorporates many number concepts right from number identification, to number sequencing, and before and after. The larger concept of time is also addressed as in a week and a month.



Yesterday, today and tomorrow also become easier to understand when we do calendar time every day. The circling of holidays or birthdays also helps the child understand time in the context of how many days are there to that day. It is an excellent idea to have a calendar activity every day in the inclusive classroom. This helps to gradually teach the child the concept of past and future, and to get prepared for upcoming events. At the beginning of the day, instead of just writing the date in the corner of the board, the

TOMORROW

NEXT WEEK

teacher can point to the date on the calendar, and cross it out. Next to an upcoming significant day—for example, Diwali or a child's birthday—the teacher can draw a simple

figure to represent the event and talk about the coming event. S/he can then count out the days remaining and repeat the process every day until the day arrives. Once the day is past, using the figures drawn on

YESTERDAY

LAST YEAR

previous significant days, the teacher can talk about events that are over, helping the child gradually to understand concepts like 'yesterday', 'tomorrow', 'next week', 'last year', etc., in a concrete way.

READING THE TIME – It is another classroom activity that incorporates number concepts. For example, number identification, bigger and smaller, before and after and even fractions. Reading the time can begin with knowing the numbers on the clock and then proceed to reading it at the hour, half an hour, etc. Depending on the time concept being taught (hour, half an hour) the teacher can remind the children to look at the clock at that time.





MONEY – Money also has to be made real for children in the classroom. The early classes (KG and Std. 1) can focus on coin and note identification and later classes can have a model shop in the class. Role play with travel situations like going to the movies can add to the real life situations where money is used.



Since CWA may not be able to generalise or apply some concepts, parents could be asked to point out things in the environment. For example, show the child steam when water is boiling, do counting games with vegetables, talk about size, shape, color with environmental objects.

Playground activities can be a great way to develop the skill of socialisation in CWA if they are structured well. Unstructured activities leave the CWA feeling overwhelmed or just uninterested. We can make this an enjoyable time for the CWA by creating intentional structure in unstructured activities. This may prove beneficial for inclusive classrooms having CWA.



EXEMPLAR LESSON PLAN

OUR FIRST SCHOOL

AN ACTIVITY-BASED LESSON PLAN FOR EVS, STANDARD III

CONCEPTS TO BE ADDRESSED

- Family Members and their relationships
- Role in the family

CONCEPT 1. FAMILY MEMBERS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS

PRE-PREPARATION

1. Ask children to bring photos of the members of their family.
2. Make worksheet for each child as shown on page 51 (more boxes can be added if necessary).
3. Collect the required information about family members of the CWA and customise the worksheet. The worksheet can be customised by pasting pictures before handing over the sheet to the CWA, so that s/he can fill in other desired information. Further, the number of boxes can also be made equal to the number of family members.

MATERIAL REQUIRED

- Replicate worksheet on a big chart for explanation of the task (by teacher) and for everyone to see easily;
- Printed worksheet;
- Glue;
- Coloured pens;



WORKSHEET / MAIN CHART
(WITHOUT PICTURE)

NAME OF THE CHILD: _____

CLASS: _____

DATE: _____



WHO _____

NAME _____

WORK _____



WHO _____

NAME _____

WORK _____



WHO _____

NAME _____

WORK _____



WHO _____

NAME _____

WORK _____



WHO _____

NAME _____

WORK _____



WORKSHEET / MAIN CHART

(CUSTOMISED FOR THREE MEMBER FAMILY INCLUDING CWA)

NAME OF THE CHILD: _____

CLASS: _____

DATE: _____

PICTURES TO BE ALREADY PASTED BEFORE HANDING THE SHEET TO THE CWA



WHO _____

NAME _____

WORK _____



WHO _____

NAME _____

WORK _____



WHO _____

NAME _____

WORK _____

Beginning the lesson:

- Collective singing or hearing a song/poem based on the family, for example, the poem given below. The teacher is free to choose any other poem or rhyme or song about family from the local context.

A FAMILY FINGERPLAY

This is a family *hold up one hand, fingers spread*

Let's count them and see,

How many there are,

And who they can be *count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5*

This is the mother *touch pointer finger*

Who loves everyone

And this is the father *touch big finger*

Who is lots of fun.

This is my sister *touch ring finger*

She helps and she plays,

And this is me *touch little finger*

I am learning something new each day each day.

But who is this one? *touch thumb*

He's out there alone,

Why it's Joy, the dog,

And he's chewing a bone. *wiggle thumb.*

(Adapted from: <http://www.preschoolrainbow.org/family-rhymes.htm>)

- The teacher can also organise a role play about family members, or a show with puppets representing family members. Finger puppets along with the poem mentioned above can be a good idea.



- Introduce the topic by writing the word FAMILY on the board or by showing a Flash Card.



STEP 1

Sing the whole song once more.

STEP 2

- a. Give one worksheet to each child.



- b. Repeat the song one more time by stopping at each family member, for example, mummy/mother.
- c. Show a flash card or write on the board “Mother”.
- d. Ask children to pick out the photo of their mother.
- e. Teacher picks out a photo of the Mother from her flash cards and sticks it on the main chart while directing the children to stick the picture of their mother in any box on the worksheet.

STEP 3

- a. Have a small turn-taking game where each child says a letter of MOTHER.
- b. As they say it, make different children, including the child with autism, touch each letter as it is being spelt.
- c. You can also make them spell it using hand gesture to form the letters.



STEP 4

Repeat steps from 2b till 3c for all other family members.

CONCEPT 2: FAMILY MEMBERS AND THEIR ROLE/WORK

- Write the word WORK on the board.
- Show the picture of a family washing clothes, maybe from the textbook. Ask the children to comment on it. Focus on their opinions. Let them express it in one word or one sentence.
- Show a few more similar pictures.
- Then ask the children to act out different types of work that they have observed being performed by family members.

When they have acted it out, then ask them the type of work their family members do. The teacher will write a job for one family member on the main chart and guide the children in filling the slot in their worksheet. For the CWA this might be challenging, so find out in advance from the mother what work each member does and prepare the child by writing it and then asking him to read it out.

Alternatively, the teacher can make groups of 3-4 children where they all learn and guide each other.

End by singing the family song and incorporating work into the song.

The song suggested above may incorporate work in the following manner:

A FAMILY FINGERPLAY

This is a family *hold up one hand, fingers spread*

Let's count them and see,

How many there are,

And who they can be *count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5*

This is the mother *touch pointer finger*

Who loves everyone



And fulfills every need
And this is the father *touch big finger*
Who is lots of fun and
watches TV all the time
after coming from office
This is my sister *touch ring finger*
She helps, she plays and,
At times saves me from troubles
And this is me *touch little finger*
I am learning something new each day each day.
But who is this one? *touch thumb*
He's out there alone,
Why it's Joy, the dog,
And he's chewing a bone. *wiggle thumb*

(Adapted from: <http://www.preschoolrainbow.org/family-rhymes.htm>)

ASSESSMENT

1. Looking at one's own chart, point out who is father, brother, etc.
2. Teacher points to picture and allow the children to identify the member.
3. What work does your mother/father/uncle do?
4. Look at your friend's chart and tell/point to the work that her _____ does.

HOME ASSIGNMENT

Complete the worksheet taking help from family members.



6. DEVELOPING SOCIALISATION SKILLS AND COMMUNICATION

CASE 1: *Gurnoor studies in Class 4 and faces difficulty with communication and interpersonal relationships. She finds it difficult to mix with other children and hesitates to seek permission for going to toilet or drinking water. She also exhibits a fear of playing alone in the playground and is not socially aware of what others think about her.*

CASE 2: *Ayush is a 9-year-old child studying in Class 4. He was diagnosed with ASD when he was in Class 1. He faced difficulty in following instructions. He was not able to communicate his needs and used to create disturbance in the classroom. He was unable to maintain eye contact with anyone and was barely able to make friends or maintain friendships.*

CASE 3: *At 10 years, Abhijeet enjoys coming to school. He sits in the class and copes well with his studies. However, when it comes to interacting with classmates he runs into problems. On the playground, he will not wait for his turn on the swings or slides. Sometimes, during recess he will ask for food from other children but never offers to share. There are daily fights about the same issues. His teachers want to help him to play better in a group so that he gets to enjoy all aspects of school. How can they do this?*

The examples above show how children with autism find it difficult to interact with their peer groups. One of the many reasons why CWA find it difficult to ‘fit’ within a group is the lack of peer sensitisation. The child may feel like a “Martian” amongst her/his friends, finding it difficult to understand what they interact about, and thus stays mostly within her/his own world.

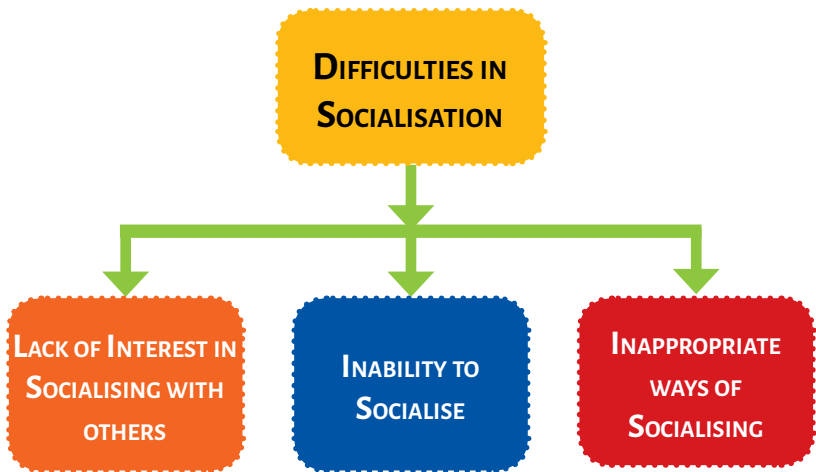
DIFFICULTIES IN SENSITISATION SKILLS

Acquisition of social skills is crucial for successful negotiation of the social world. The school day presents many occasions where understanding of social cues and rules is vital. Making friends, taking part in group discussions, knowing what contextually appropriate social behaviour is, figuring out



when one is being teased, etc., are integral to every moment of the school day. Social situations are complex and ever changing, and a child with autism often finds it difficult to process and know what he has to focus on. Children with autism often appear aloof. On the other hand, some may appear over friendly. Some children with autism may get overly focused on a particular activity and be indifferent to what the other children are engaged in.

Socialisation is challenging for CWA because they have difficulty in making or sustaining eye contact, recognising and reading social cues such as, facial expressions, tone of voice or non-verbal gestures, understanding a situation from another person's



perspective, tracking gaze, i.e., knowing what the other person is looking at or pointing to (also known as joint attention), modulating tone and pitch appropriately when verbalising, etc. The difficulties in language and communication skills, in turn, have effect on social interactions at every stage.



I. LACK OF INTEREST IN SOCIALISING WITH OTHERS

Lack of interest in socialising with others, as can be seen in the first and second case studies, can be explained in the following ways:

- ❑ Lack of interest in other peoples' activities,
- ❑ Difficulty in entering playgroups,



- ❑ Difficulty in reading other children's emotions,
- ❑ Lack of give and take in a social situation, e.g., looking at the partner smiling.

STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME LACK OF INTEREST IN SOCIALISING

- **DEVELOP A DEDICATED PLAYGROUP OF 3-4 STUDENTS FOR CWA:** CWA find it difficult to respond to large groups of children. Start with just one child first as a play buddy. As the child becomes familiar and comfortable with the buddy, increase the number of children in





the group. Developing small groups of children with faces familiar to the child with autism will ensure her/his to feel comfortable. The group members can be changed one at a time gradually, with no sudden changes by which the CWA feels overwhelmed. The buddy system is mutually beneficial for both groups of children. It can be very helpful for the child with low self-esteem to be picked as a buddy for a special child since it gives the child with low self-esteem a feeling of empowerment.

- **SENSITISE THE GROUP ABOUT THE CWA:** It is very important for the teacher to sensitise the other children so that they learn slowly how to respond and interact with the CWA. For example, explain why the child may not make eye contact so that they do not get put off. It is also important to teach the group about bullying to ensure that they protect the CWA when it occurs.
- **FOCUS ON THE INTEREST OF THE CWA:** Sensitise the children of the group about the likes of the child. If the child likes “birds” ‘encourage the other students to ask questions or talk about that topic.



- **STRUCTURE GROUP ACTIVITIES:** CWA respond better when the activity they do is structured. A simple board game or a hopscotch game is structured—this means that there are fixed simple rules to follow. *Chor-police* and game of football are unstructured games because the rules are more difficult to follow. The CWA will feel more secure and able to participate with structured activities.
- **STRUCTURE YOUR CLASS INTO INTEREST GROUPS:** Each week you can divide the whole class into different groups based on different topics. For example, countries, animals, favourite foods. Each child participates in the group and then presents to the class at the end of the week. This gives the CWA a chance to interact with different members of the group and develop social skills.
- **USE ALL NON-TEACHING PERIODS/TIME AS OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIALISATION:** Assembly time, recess, picnics, sports day or annual day can all be turned into opportunities for socialising, keeping the above tips in mind.

II. INABILITY TO SOCIALISE

Inability to socialise is different from lack of interest in Socialising. These children want to join in the groups but lack the skills to do so. The behaviour is seen when the child:



- Stands at the edge of a group and looks at it but does not join in;
- Repeatedly asks to play but does not take the initiative to join in.

STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME INABILITY TO SOCIALISE INCLUDE:

1. **TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO INCLUDE THE CHILD:** This can be done by having a game or an activity that is of interest to the child and sensitising peers to invite the child to join in the group.
2. **DIRECT INSTRUCTION:** Teaching the child to say basic phrases like – “Can I join in?” or “would you like to play with me?” will help the child to integrate more easily in the group.
3. **ROLE PLAY:** Practising these phrases in a role play situation gives the child the confidence to do it in real life.

III. INAPPROPRIATE WAYS OF SOCIALISING AS SEEN IN THE THIRD CASE STUDY

This can be observed through behaviours such as,

- Difficulty in sharing;
- Difficulty in turn-taking;
- Difficulty in seeing the other person’s point of view; and,
- Difficulty in waiting.

STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME INAPPROPRIATE WAYS OF SOCIALISING

1. **SHOW ME, DON'T TELL ME:** A key point for all teachers to remember when instructing CWA is to show them what is expected rather than just telling them. Giving instructions without accompanying gestures or demonstrations or pictures will make it difficult for the CWA to remember or even understand what you are saying.



2. **ROLE PLAY** – Having small role plays, modeling correct behaviour helps the CWA to understand what the desired behaviour is. The teacher can write a small play talking about turn-taking or sharing, in which all the children including the CWA can participate. In this way appropriate behaviour is learned as a class.
3. **SOCIAL STORIES** : These are stories about appropriate social behaviour presented in pictorial form. They have been found to be very useful in explaining social rules to CWA. The section on social stories can be found on page 131.
4. **LIST SOME SIMPLE SOCIAL RULES IN PICTORIAL FORM** : It is useful to list some social rules in the class for all students. They should be accompanied by clear visuals and a small rule statement below the visual picture. For example, we will not talk in between the class.
5. **TEACH WAITING** : Since many CWA have difficulty in waiting to get something, for example, waiting for a bus or in a line, we have to teach them waiting. This can be done with the



help of a visual schedule or teaching the child to count to 10 or getting the child used to responding to a timer. Praise the child for waiting when s/he does so.

6. **MODELING** : Sometimes, instead of correcting the child directly, teach the child to take her cue from watching her/his peers. This is a good way to deal with inappropriate behaviour. You can tell the child “Tell me what Aditya is doing... now you have to do the same”. This way the child’s buddy group becomes the model group for the child.

Difficulties in Communication Skills

CASE 4 : *Anuj is a 9-year-old with ASD. He is good in studies and adjusts well in the classroom. He loves to go for class assembly. For Class 4, the class assembly day is fixed and usually happens once in week where all sections of Class 4 participate on rotation basis. In the current week his class was to participate. A topic was assigned. Anuj was also slated to participate and was to say one sentence on the given topic. He was prepared for that and looked forward to it. One day before the assembly, the class teacher announced that everyone had to wear white or orange “dhoti” for the assembly. Next day everyone came in “dhoti” except Anuj. Can you guess why?*

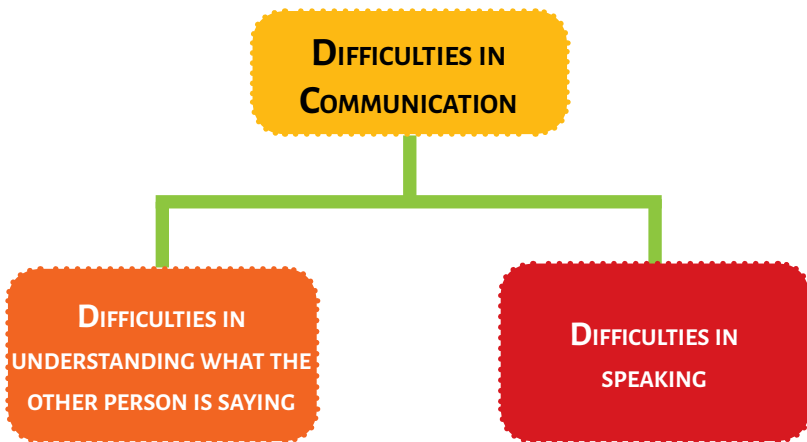
CASE 5 : *Paras is a student of Class 4. He tends to stay quiet, aloof and seems lost in his own thoughts. He is able to copy bits and pieces from the board and solves simple sums. However, there are certain things he is not able to understand, for instance, the need to visit the washroom. He likes sitting with the same child everyday and feels upset when the child is absent.*

CASE 6 : *Viresh is 10 years old and is in Class 5. He sits quietly in class and appears attentive. However, when he is asked a question, he does not answer and just looks at the teacher. During physical education class, he has difficulty in following the instructions given by the teacher. Sometimes he passes comments which appear to have no connection with the topic at hand. For example, during a Mathematics class on money, he talked about a TV show he had seen.*

The examples above depict how children with autism find it difficult to communicate with other people.



Language comprehension and expression are challenging for children with autism. This can manifest in different ways. Some children remain non-verbal all their lives. Some develop a limited vocabulary, consisting of some rote phrases and words through which they communicate their needs. Sometimes CWA have the tendency to use made up words or phrases which make no sense to someone unfamiliar with them. For example, one child would keep on saying “It is time for prayers”. This was his way of saying “it is time to go home”. Anuj, in case 4, mentioned earlier might have strong sensory reaction to the way dhoti is worn and its feel on the body. Some children develop a very extended expressive repertoire, but may still face challenges in understanding abstract



notions, intentions, double meanings, sarcasm, etc. The teacher would need to gauge what level of comprehension and expression the child is capable of and address the child accordingly.

As a rule, the teacher should cautiously use simple and clear language while communicating with a child with autism.

I. DIFFICULTIES IN UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE OTHER PERSON IS SAYING CAN BE SENSED WHEN THE CHILD DOES NOT:

- Understand what is being explained (e.g., the need to use dustbin),



- Does not follow instructions,
- Does not answer a question when asked or gives a wrong answer.

STRATEGIES TO HELP THE CHILD UNDERSTAND

WHAT YOU ARE SAYING:

1. **GIVE ME TIME TO PROCESS (PROCESSING TIME)** – Very often we speak fast to children with autism and always expect an immediate response. We should mentally prepare ourselves to speak slowly using fewer words as well as give the child more time to respond. Giving the child time to respond after asking them a question allows them to process what was asked and frame an appropriate response.



2. **SHOW ME, DON'T TELL ME** – It is one of the most important strategies to communicate with children with autism **as most children with autism are visual learners. At this point it is important to use the communication book of the child for basic instructions.** Supplement verbal information with pictures, visual schedules, gestures and written directions. Rather than saying an apple can be red, show two apples, one red and one green, and say this apple is **red** and this is **green**.



3. **SAY THE NAME OF THE CHILD** – One reason that children with autism find it difficult to understand what people are saying is because they may be focused on something else. Even though we look at the child while speaking, we have to call out the name of the child to help her/him understand that the question or instruction is for her/him. This helps her/him to focus on what is being said. While addressing the class, in addition to general instructions such as, *everyone take out your colouring book*, also say “Raman, take out your colouring book”.
4. **ARTICULATE YOUR INSTRUCTION CLEARLY** – If you want the child with autism to read, then say “Read the paragraph that starts with ‘The ball fell...’”, rather than saying “Continue reading.” Say, “Come and stand in front of Abhijeet” rather than saying “Form a line according to your height”. You can also write the words on the board.



5. **KEEP INSTRUCTIONS SHORT** – Give instructions one at a time. Do not say “open your bag, take out your book, open to page 64 and then start reading”. Give one instruction and wait for a while, and then follow it up with the next.
6. **GIVE INSTRUCTIONS IN A POSITIVE FORM (AVOID NEGATION)**
 - Rather than saying “don’t run” or “don’t talk” say “walk slowly” or “talk quietly.”

II. DIFFICULTIES IN SPEAKING OR COMMUNICATING WITH OTHERS IS SEEN WHEN THE CHILD:

- Does not request for things that s/he wants and takes things without asking;
- Gives wrong answer to a question;
- Repeats phrases continuously (*echolalia*);
- Does not ask for help when needed;
- Cannot communicate when others have upset/bullied him;
- Does not ask for help when needed, e.g., needs to go to the toilet or is feeling sick;
- Does not initiate or sustain a conversation.

STRATEGIES TO HELP THE CHILD COMMUNICATE BETTER:

- **DIRECT INSTRUCTION** – Model ‘Asking’ accompanied with visuals. In other words, teach the child to ask by saying “when you want someone’s pencil you have to ask for it saying, ‘please can I have your pencil?’” Show a picture with the question underneath.
 - **ROLE PLAY** – Have small role plays where the whole class participates in learning how to ask for help in the appropriate way. Choose situations where the child shows difficulty, e.g., asking to use the bathroom or difficulty in opening his tiffin.



DEALING WITH ECHOLALIA

A common characteristic seen in the speech of CWA is *echolalia*. Echolalia consists of repeating words and phrases or repeating what the other person says. For example, the child may keep humming 3-4 words of a song over and over again, or at times, when a person asks the question “What is your name?”, the child repeats “What is your name?”

Strategies to deal with echolalia include: i) Ignore it whenever possible. If the child is humming or repeating a phrase without disturbing the class then ignore it. ii) When you want the child to answer a question, cue her by giving her a word or a gesture. For example, when you ask the question, “what is your name”, you can say, “My...” and then wait for a response, or you can point to the child so that s/he knows it is with reference to her/him.

- **VISUAL SCHEDULES** – A visual schedule is used to help a child understand the order of events. But it can also be used as a means to increase communication. Making the child talk about the schedule and describing it allows the child to develop better communication.
- **COMMUNICATION BOOK** – If the child struggles with speech, then the teacher must encourage the child to use a communication book. This is a book which contains pictures to help the child communicate better.
- **PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION BOOK** – Rather than putting the onus of carrying information back and forth between the school and home on the child, have a “teacher said” note book where the teacher and parent can communicate with each other regarding the lessons or any other concerns. The child can be encouraged to read the notes.



7. ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

The CWA, like other children, may fear examination as it expects an output in a limited period. The children may get anxious about examinations, therefore certain measures need to be taken to make the child feel comfortable.



- Tell the child as early as possible the date, time and duration of the exam.
- Be very specific about what topics and modules are being tested. Perhaps revision guidelines can be provided to ensure they cover all the relevant areas. (There can sometimes be a tendency to focus on details rather than the whole picture, the student may need directions to attend to areas which they are not especially interested in.) This information needs to be shared with the parents.
- If the student seems very anxious about seating arrangements, draw a plan of how the chairs and desks will be arranged. If you know the seating plan (for example, alphabetically) in advance let them know. Help them to work out the general location of where they will be sitting (this need not be precise – on the left hand side as you enter the hall, in the back section and so on should suffice).
- On the day of the exam, if required, offer the opportunity to arrive early so that they can become comfortable with the environment. (For example, one very able student could not write a word until he had run his hands along all the walls of the exam hall.)
- Be flexible. If the student has trouble concentrating among large groups of people, let them arrive later than everybody else, or consider accommodating them in a

side room. If they are hypersensitive and become distracted easily by the noise of scribbling pens, creaking chairs, etc., consider aids that may minimise this such as, ear plugs.

- Likewise, if the student engages in repetitive behaviours – such as, muttering, clucking — try to plan in advance for such a situation, as it may irritate other students but may be hard to address on the day of the exam. Make special seating arrangements for such a child.
- Distraction/Replacement techniques may help – For example, if the student is allowed to chew gum, it may prevent muttering and other verbal habits. It is essential to understand that these behaviours may serve a useful function for the student — they may reassure or relax them. The aim should not be to remove them completely but to adapt them to a more acceptable form or to replace them. It may be useful to role-play the exam situation so any possible problem can be discovered.
- The student may need direct input from the teacher. Addressing the whole hall may not be helpful for the child — they may need one-to-one instructions to understand what they are expected to do.

The following Table lists some of the behaviours exhibited by CWA during assessment or examination, and the reasons for the same. The Table also suggests some strategies that may be adopted in situations like these.

BEHAVIOUR	REASON	STRATEGY
Child has started attempting the questions, after some time he seems lost. (Assuming that s/he knows the answers.)	The paper is lengthy.	Paper should be divided into parts to give them breaks in between, so that they can perform better.

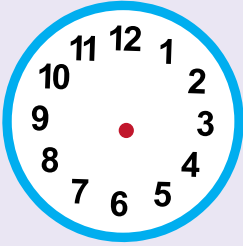



BEHAVIOUR	REASON	STRATEGY
Scribe has been provided to the child; however, the child: is not able to attempt the paper.	Difficulty in expressing the thought (difficulty in communication.)	Scribe does not provide much help because they have difficulty in communication. Scribe could be provided to give support if they are stuck in between. For example, to remind them regarding time or just to say “write, you know”.
Child is very stressed in the examination room.	Examination is a stressful situation.	They should be allowed to take some sensory stuff like a rubber ball to the examination hall as a stress buster.
Child does not want to enter the examination room.	New room (difficulty with changes).	The exam venue should be in proximity of the study place to give them comfort.



The Table below provides examples of how the traditional questions of an assessment can be **modified** to address the needs of the CWA. The first column (left) contains questions taken from the examination paper of Class 3 of a reputed school in Delhi. The second column (right) mentions modified questions which may replace the

traditional question in the question paper, **thereby making the question paper inclusive, in the true sense of the term.** This strategy can be adopted in case the school authorities do not want to print separate question papers for CWA.

PATTERN OF EXAMINATION (CURRENT)	STRATEGIES TO MAKE IT SIMPLER
Write a number larger than 299.	Encircle the number bigger than 299: 197, 298, 982
<p>Show 9 o'clock time on the given clock:</p> 	<p>Which clock shows 9 o'clock?</p> 
List the months which have 31 days.	<p>All the months can be listed out for the child. For example, January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December.</p> <p>And then the child can be asked, "Circle the months with 31 days."</p>
Saturday comes after _____.	<p>This question can also be modified similarly by asking the child to just circle the required day of the week:</p> <p>Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday.</p>



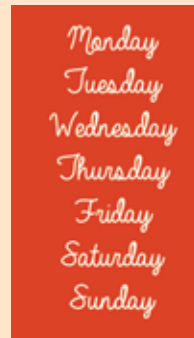
For the question given below, pictorial representation can be employed to make it more interesting for the child. For example, a picture of an earthworm can be drawn near the word earthworm.

Match:

a. Length of earthworm 2cm



b. Number of days in a week August



c. Eighth month of the year 10 km



d. Distance from your school to home 7



8. DEVELOPING SOCIALISATION SKILLS AND COMMUNICATION

CLASSROOM SPECIFIC

As already mentioned, children with autism find it difficult to interact with their classmates or friends. They lack certain social skills that are needed by students in classroom set-ups. It does not occur to CWA that different people require different treatment. Both the teacher and friend seem same to her/him, the sense of hierarchy is abstract and difficult to understand. Determining what is relevant and what is not becomes difficult for the CWA. Given below are some situations for thought and action:

- The teacher needs to **GRAB THE STUDENT'S ATTENTION BEFORE DELIVERING AN INSTRUCTION OR ASKING A QUESTION**. The question should not be a general statement, if it is meant for CWA. For example, many teachers have the habit of asking, "Who all have done the homework?" The CWA may not be able to understand that s/he is also expected to respond, unless the same is repeated to her/him by name. It will be appropriate to say, "Raman, have you done your English/Mathematics/Hindi homework?"
- **CONSIDER THE STUDENT'S PROCESSING CHALLENGES AND TIMING**. (for example, begin an instruction with the student's name – this increases the likelihood that s/he may pay attention by the time you deliver the direction.) For example, "who wants to eat a chocolate?" is an ambiguous question. It is appropriate to say: "Raman, do you want to eat a chocolate (five star, dairy milk, kitkat, etc.)?"
- A child with autism **WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PROCESS INFORMATION FAST**, so we have to slow down and give various options one by one. For example, "do you want to play, read, write or lie down on the desk?" You will generally notice that s/he will answer *play*, because that is the first word s/he will understand and retain, and the rest s/he will not be able to comprehend. However, if you just ask one thing at a time "Raman, do you want to play?/Raman do you want to write?", etc.,



s/he might answer differently. To grab her/his attention, first try to make eye contact, and address her/him directly. For example, call him by his name “Raman!”

- **AVOID COMPLEX VERBAL DIRECTIONS**, information and discussion. Keep instructions short or give information in chunks. For instance, instead of saying, “go to the bathroom and come to the playground for a football match”, say “go to the bathroom and come back. Then let us go to the field to watch a football match”.
- **USE SHORT SENTENCES WITHOUT NEGATION**. Avoid using ‘don’t’, instead say ‘do this’. Instead of saying “don’t run”, say “walk slowly”. Instead of saying “don’t talk”, say “keep quiet”.

**AVOID
USING
DONT**

KEEP QUIET

DO THIS

WALK SLOWLY

- **ALLOW ‘WAIT-TIME’** be prepared to wait for a response, whether it is an action or answer. Avoid immediately repeating an instruction or inquiry.
- If the child repeatedly asks, “Where is Mussorie?” Ask the child, “Where is Mussorie?” s/he will tell you the answer. Sometimes s/he would not be able to convey it in the desired manner.

- **SUPPLEMENT VERBAL INFORMATION** with pictures, visual schedules, gestures, visual examples, written directions. It will be better to show an apple and say, *it is red*, rather than saying *apple is red in colour*. It will be difficult to imagine colours without seeing it.
- **AVOID SCOLDING THE CHILD FOR “NOT LISTENING OR RESPONDING”** as it only serves to highlight her/his challenges and it may be overwhelming. The fear of being noticed always makes them vulnerable.
- Teach students to **LOOK FOR AND USE VISUAL SUPPORTS THAT ALREADY EXIST IN THE ENVIRONMENT**: calendars, signs, door numbers, name placards, drawer labels, the display on a cash register and body language.
- **BE AWARE OF ECHOLALIA**, a condition in which a student repeats phrases s/he has heard before. Sometimes this is seemingly self-stimulatory behaviour, but many individuals with autism also use functional echolalia to comment, inform or request. For example, “Does your head hurt?” might be a way of telling you that her/his head hurts.
- Many students with autism have a **FAVOURITE TOPIC** or special area of interest that may interfere with schoolwork or social interaction. To shape the student’s expectations and to minimise the impact of this obsession, the following steps can be practised. Provide scheduled opportunities to discuss this topic.
 - ▣ If appropriate, use a visual schedule.
 - ▣ Establish boundaries (when it is, or not appropriate to discuss this topic).
 - ▣ Set a timer to establish duration.
 - ▣ Support strategies for expanding to other topics.



- Reinforce the student for talking about other subjects or accept absence of the topic. Allow her/him to speak if it is relevant, or sternly ask her/him to concentrate on what you are saying. Never use any form of violence or harsh words that may harm the student in the end.
- **TEACHING WAITING:** Several possibilities exist to teach this skill, depending on the child and the skills s/he has. The teacher could teach the child to count up to ten, or to watch a visual timer for a gradually increasing interval of time, or simply give the child verbal prompts and reminders, and praise the child when s/he pays attention.

- **WATCHING OTHER CHILDREN WILL HELP THE CHILD UNDERSTAND WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE:**

To teach the child to self-regulate, instead of directly telling the child that s/he is wrong, it is a good idea instead to prompt the child to look



around her/him and notice what others are doing, and asking her/him to name it and then ask her/him what s/he should be doing.

- **TEACH CONVERSATION SKILLS:** modeling and verbal prompts. Start with basic greeting, and as the vocabulary expands, teach the child to ask and answer questions from peers. Questions will start from need-based asking, and then extend to comments and sharing of information.

- **BUDDY SYSTEM:** Ask a peer to provide prompts and cues. It is very important to give the peer a lot of cues and reinforcement, and to rotate peers so that no child



ends up being a ‘captive slave’. It can be very helpful for a child with low self-esteem to be picked as a buddy for a special child and to feel empowered. It is also good to help build sensitivity in children with bullying tendency.

9. UNSTRUCTURED TIME

This is the time duration in school when there is no pre-determined activity or task in which the child can be engaged, but the time is at the disposal of the child to indulge in any activity s/he may like. Times like these may be few and much less as compared to structured activity time, yet they provide opportunity for creating memorable moments by indulging in favourite activities in school. The unstructured time may be in the form of recess, play time, picnics, etc. These times require a little pre-preparation on the part of the teacher so that the same becomes enjoyable for all children, including CWA. The paragraphs below present some strategies for a few identified unstructured times.



RECESS, LUNCHTIME AND FREE TIME

Recess and lunch breaks are times which reverberate with life as other students wait to break free from the normal schedule. However, children with autism find it very difficult to deal with unstructured time. A child with autism will have

difficulty in making sense and in organising her/his time. The excessive sensory overload may be uncomfortable and too much input may be overwhelming for some children. The child can be given a schedule that offers options for quiet time and a graduated increase in interaction with peers.



SOME POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

- A lunchtime schedule needs to be prepared and provided with lots of choices of preferred activities.

Some activities to practise during free times like lunch/recess:

- Swinging,
 - Shaking rattles,
 - Playing in sandboxes,
 - Bouncing on an exercise ball,





- Climbing,
- Playing on slides,
- Running, jumping, spinning.



Things to be taken care of during lunch breaks:

- Support the child and promote as much independence as possible (for example, let him/her get his napkin, teach him/her to ask for her/his meal in the canteen, etc.).
- Create a quiet spot, if necessary, for mellow activities or a less hectic lunchtime.
- Encourage peer interaction through activities like sharing tiffin, taking turns in simple games, small group play, etc.
- Create a group called “Lunch Bunch” and dedicate a quiet space for this group. Tell children about the group and tell them that, those who want to be friends with the CWA should come to that space. Provide for some board games like Ludo, Snakes and Ladders, stress buster balls, story books, a tape recorder, etc., every day. These activities can be on rotation along with the children who participate in it.

Following is an example of a schedule that is easy to create with or without photos:



LUNCH	
EAT LUNCH.	
PUT LEFTOVERS IN THE LUNCH BAG/BOX.	
CLEAN THE DESK.	
PUT GARBAGE IN THE GARBAGE CAN.	
ARRANGE THE BAG AND GO OUTSIDE.	
CHOICES OF PLAY ACTIVITIES.	



FOR THE PLAYGROUND

- Keep a buddy bench for kids who have difficulty in making friends, or having a hard day. Decorations or signs should distinguish a buddy bench from other benches in the playground. Few kids may be appointed as buddies and given a badge to wear to



indicate who they are. Having a number of kids share the buddy role will ensure that any youngster using the buddy bench socialises with different kids and does not become too reliant on one peer.

- Relaxation techniques like the following could reduce anxiety before it becomes overwhelming:
 1. Breathing deeply,
 2. Counting up to ten,
 3. Jumping on a trampoline,
 4. Kicking a ball,
 5. Punching a punching bag,
 6. Stretching,
 7. Squeezing a stress buster ball.
- Set up and explain rules of playground games. If the playground is too much for a child, designate a quieter area for board or card games with a peer.
- Give peers the opportunity to be a buddy (this often works better than assigning a buddy, as it selects students who are motivated to take on this role) to support and shield a vulnerable child—it may be helpful to have support from other members of the school staff in finding a way to pair children in the absence of volunteers. Aim to engage more than one buddy to allow for absentees.



- Be aware of the vulnerability of students with autism and the propensity for them to be victims of bullying behaviour. For example, in the playground the CWA may not get the opportunity to get their turn on the swings/slides/batting/bowling due to difficulty in verbalising their need.



PICNICS

Picnics are always fun, though CWA need a little extra preparation to enjoy a picnic outside. These are unstructured times, which the children with autism might have slight difficulty in dealing with. Picnics, though seeming a little difficult to organise, can bring together all children.

The teacher and parents can play a big part in easing this situation if they take the time to prepare the child well in



advance. During the calendar activity in the morning, the teacher should start talking about the upcoming picnic at least a week earlier and mark the day on the calendar. The teacher can use pictures of the place to be visited, and talk of the things that can be done on the trip – e.g., the bus ride, the sights to be seen, the activities that will take place, and the people they would meet. Lay stress on the aspect that is likely to motivate the child. If there is a possible stressor – talk about it and ways in which the teacher would help the child to cope with it. The parents should also be roped in, so that they can continue talking about it to the child at home. Allow the children to carry along with them something that could be a distraction and a comfort – for example, a favourite toy or their book or a small music player or favourite food.

Above all, look for ways in which the experience can be made enjoyable for the child. Try to understand whether



s/he is getting stressed by the crowd or sounds or smells, and look for ways in which s/he can be shielded. Talk to the child throughout the picnic, labeling the new experiences and the sights. Take photos where possible – even with a mobile phone. Afterwards, using these photos, recall the experience with the child and help her/him remember the names of all the new things s/he experienced. Encourage her/him to talk about it to others. Dwelling on the experience will enhance her/his language and in turn, bring down the level of anxiety.

DURING AND BEFORE PICNICS WATCH OUT FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- See that all the children are together.
- Do not allow aimless wandering.
- Play music so that the noise around is less and it relaxes the kids.
- Try to label the activity of eating outside with friends in a new place as picnic.
- Pretend play the picnic. Do not use real food material, but pretend as if you are serving food; just do the actions. It will help her/him engage and build imagination.
- Schedule an activity that allows the child to engage with others.

SPECIAL EVENTS AT SCHOOL

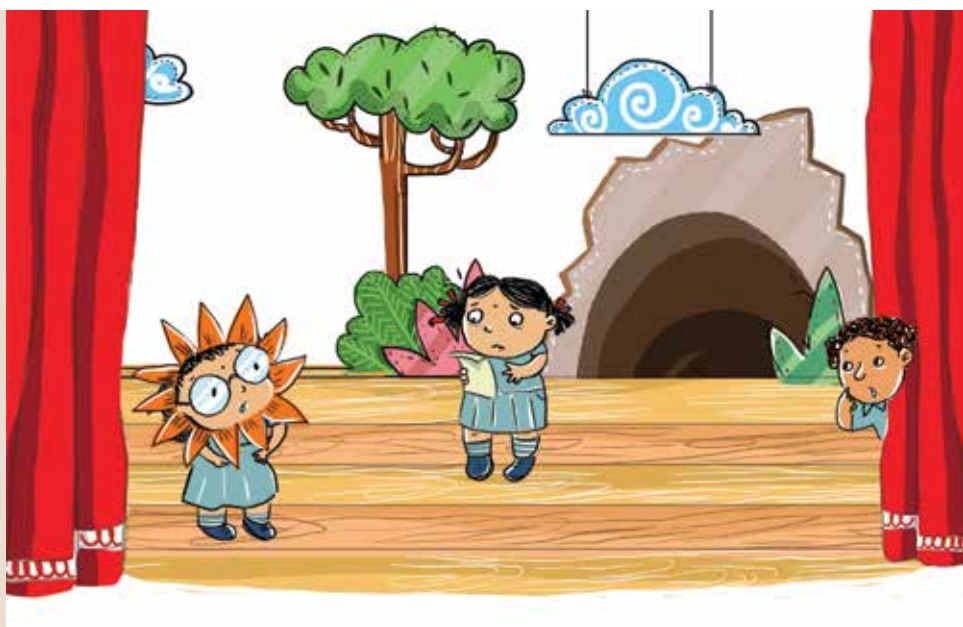
Every school organises and celebrates a few special days and events such as, the school's annual day, national festivals (Republic Day, Independence Day, etc.), annual fete, sports day, cultural and religious festivals (Holi, Diwali, Christmas), etc. All these events offer ample scope for unstructured time during planning, preparing and rehearsing for the celebrations as well as on the day of actual celebration. The key to reducing the uncertainty and sensory overload for CWA lies in pre-preparation via social stories, visual schedules, etc., that would help the CWA to be aware of the situation



beforehand. If the CWA is told about the flow of events and her/his role or participation in such events beforehand, s/he may not feel as overwhelmed by the frequent change in scenario. Moreover, a buddy may be assigned to the CWA who can guide her/him with the turn of events.

THINGS TO ENSURE DURING PLANNING OF SUCH EVENTS

- A visual schedule/social story may be prepared that helps the CWA to understand the flow of events and the timings according to which these events progress to the next one before rehearsals start.
- A buddy could be assigned for directing the CWA in times of need, during the rehearsals or during the day of the event.



- The parents of the CWA should also be involved in the preparation process so that the same instructions may be reiterated at home as well.



- Since these events attract a lot of crowd, the CWA may find it difficult to cope up with the same. For cultural events or national events, the school may allow the CWA to see the programme from a distance or a height to avoid the crowd if s/he is not directly participating in the event. In situations when crowds become unmanageable, the parent/caregiver of the CWA should be allowed to attend (e.g., in annual fetes).
- The CWA should be given equal opportunity to participate in dance programmes, singing competitions, etc., as per their comfort and capabilities.

Children with autism may have difficulty in organising themselves. In addition, they often have difficulty in perceiving social requirements and expectations behind certain behaviours. Simply telling them what the expected behaviour is, (how they should behave) may not always work. Recreating a particular situation that the student may have to face, and having the student practise the expected behaviour has proved to be an effective way of teaching skills. The other is to write and introduce stories in a positive language around expected social situations, the expectations of those around, and the behaviour expected from the individual with autism.

10. USING THE TOILET

Teaching children to use the toilet correctly can be a difficult task, whether they have autism or not. For a CWA, the process of developing a toilet routine can take longer, and involve its own particular challenges.

Teaching a CWA to use the toilet presents two challenges. The first is teaching the child to indicate the need for toilet and the second is actually using the toilet correctly.

Many schools have a built-in routine for toilet time. While teaching the child to indicate the need for toilet, the teacher can keep a card on the child's table or on a page of the communication book. A similar picture has to be stuck on





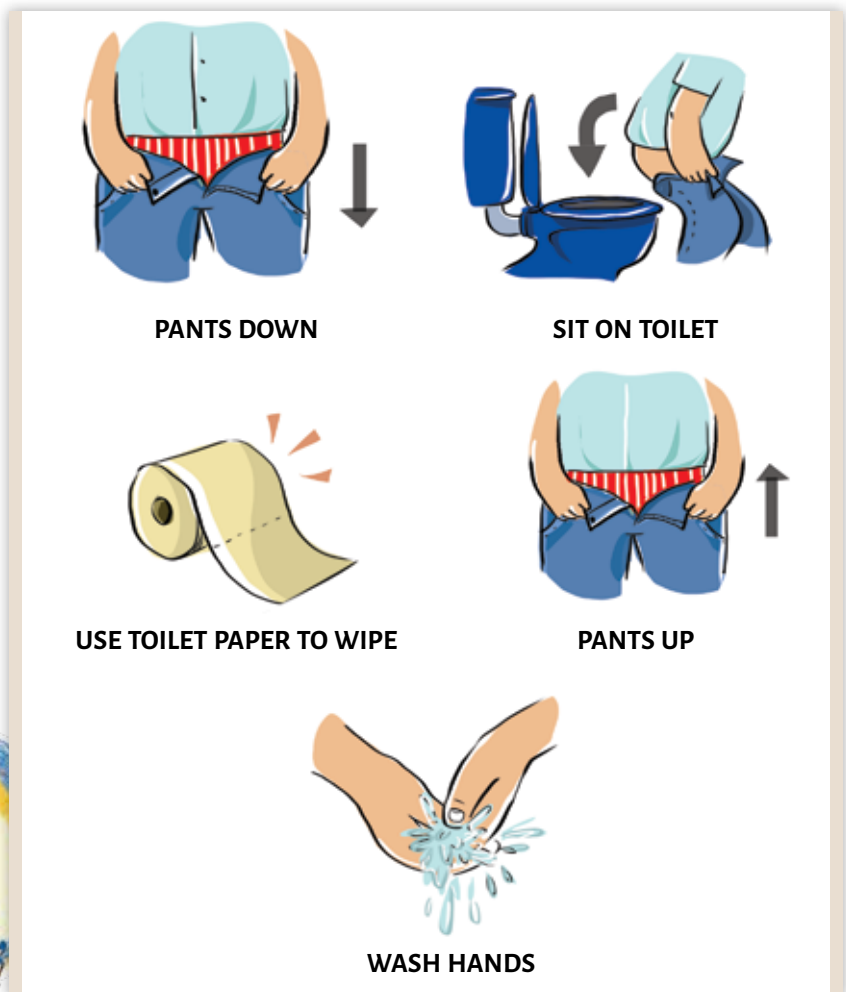
the door of the toilet. The child can be taken to the toilet and shown the picture on the door along with the matching card in his hand and told, “when you need to go to the toilet give teacher the card.” Prior to toilet time the child can be prompted to give the card and the teacher can say, “oh, you want to go to the toilet? Good you asked.” The child can then be taken to the toilet. This can also be practised in a role play situation.

Using the toilet correctly can be taught by breaking down the steps of use. Having a visual sequence beside the toilet can help the child understand what is expected of the child; for example, trousers down, underpants down, sit on the toilet, pee/poop in the toilet, wash, pants up, trousers up, flush toilet, wash hands, dry hands.



Following is an example of a visual schedule that includes the steps useful in a toilet and (below) the social story explaining the same:

- Walk to the toilet;
- Pull down pants/skirt;
- Sit on the toilet;
- Pee/poop in the toilet;
- Use toilet paper/water to clean your self;
- Check skirt hem pulled down neatly/wear pants properly;
- Flush;
- Wash hands.



For washing hands, another picture routine can be placed at eye level near the wash basin. Make sure the pictures are very clear to avoid misunderstanding.

Everyone working with the CWA should follow the agreed approach; make sure child's parents are aware of the routine followed at school. Remember that using toilet independently is the ultimate aim and may take many months. However, there will be many small steps and successes along the way.

THINGS TO ENSURE

Make the toilet a positively peaceful place, use colours the children enjoy, soft light that do not trigger meltdowns, etc. Make the toilet a happy place for her/him to visit by putting stickers (Bob the Builder, Spiderman, Doraemon) all over the door and give her/him little matchbox cars to divert their attention and avoid smearing faeces.

- Ensure that the child wears clothing which can be easily unzipped or taken off.
- Keep visuals of what to do (To-do List/Checklist) after each step on the wall next to the wash basin for easy reference.
- Give the child picture cards that they can use to communicate the need to go to the bathroom if they cannot articulate.



11. CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The co-curricular activities provide a child with autism a chance to pursue special interests or things they are good at. They also get the chance to meet others who are interested in the same things. It helps them build social skills and confidence, as well as build skills that might be useful in later years. Some of the co-curricular activities usually practiced in the schools are:

- Sports,
- Art and Craft,
- Music and
- Drama.

SPORTS

Sports period can be made fun-filled for the child if it is well structured and broken up into activities organised in smaller groups in which rules are demonstrated and rehearsed. Sports provide an opportunity to improve gross motor, imitation, teamwork and socialisation skills.



SOME OF THE STRATEGIES TO BE CONSIDERED:

- Have a small group when explaining a game to a child with autism or break up the entire class into smaller groups.
- Explain each rule with a practical demonstration. For example, while playing football, familiarise the child with autism with his team's goalpost, either with colour or with a picture.
- Prepare the child in advance about the concept of losing and assure him that it is okay to lose. This can be reiterated in other environments as well.
- Make use of the child's buddy to help her/him enjoy the game.
- Encourage the child to slowly increase her/his level of participation in the chosen sport.

ART AND CRAFT

Art is a good way of building fine motor skills. It is easier to engage the children during art class. Colouring, drawing, sketching, using crayons to colour the pictures can be taught easily to children with autism. It is best if each child is given her/his own material. Art and craft allows the child to improve emotional and creative expression. Art should be an essential part of a child's daily routine. A child with autism may indicate her/his needs using non-verbal communication such as grabbing the teacher's hand to request something. An art teacher can ask, "What colour is the crayon?" If the child responds with the correct answer, s/he should be praised. If not, the art teacher can say, "Say 'red crayon'" to elicit the correct response.

STRATEGIES TO BE ADOPTED

- Drawing on surfaces like newspaper on walls, in sand, etc., builds muscle control which helps in the





development of writing skills. Art should not be limited to the drawing book; other options like finger painting, stamp painting and drawing in sand can be provided.

- Sometimes children are not comfortable handling messy materials like paint or glue. In this case, the child can be given an option to use other materials like a glue stick or crayons. The activity can also be broken up so that the child participates in the non-messy part of the activity.
- While copying, be aware that the child may not replicate the drawing on the board. Accept the child's drawing, praise her/him, and encourage the child to add on the remaining things.
- Art and Craft is about observation and sensing. Encourage the children to go out into the environment



and collect materials that interest them such as, leaves, stones, twigs, feathers, etc., to compose their own collage.

- Teach togetherness and teamwork by making them draw in the same sheet by turns, e.g., hand prints. It supports the theme of team work.

MUSIC

Most children with autism have a good sense of pitch and rhythm. Many children learn phrases of songs faster than they pick up communicative language. Music can therefore be used as an important tool to teach language and it can be a therapeutic de-stressor. It can help in building concentration, attention to detail and memory.

IN A MUSIC CLASS, THE FOLLOWING COULD BE HELPFUL:

- Children should be allowed to tap or clap or both with rhythms, and even move around the room to dance. In the initial years, the focus should be on enjoying the music rather than on formally learning singing.
- Use of basic instruments like *manjira*, tambourine, xylophone, keyboard, mouth organ, etc., may be explored.
- Doing coordinated actions along with action songs like “when you’re happy and you know it”, “Incy Wincy Spider” helps build the child’s ability to coordinate her/his actions with others and use multiple senses at one time.
- Be aware that music class can sometimes be a cause of sensory overload. Help the child slowly desensitise.
- The child may need prompts to start and stop at the right time.



- It is important for teachers to teach stage performance using class as an audience. The whole process of overcoming stage fright, and singing and playing music in front of the class helps everyone, including the CWA.

DRAMA

- Drama experience will aid some children with autism in learning about social interactions.
- Drama includes singing, rhythm and music that provide structure and an enjoyable creative outlet.
- It also helps the kids to imitate, mimic and act.
- Role-playing may be difficult for CWA as they may lack imaginative power or imagine in a different way from other kids.

12. CREATING SUPPORT SYSTEMS

In order to facilitate teaching and learning of CWA in the mainstream/regular classrooms, a support system that consists of a wide range of approaches and strategies is crucial. Certain amount of preparation is needed before schools start enrolling children with autism.

Some of the steps the school can take in this regard are:

1. SENSITISATION AND AWARENESS PROGRAMMES

A sensitisation cum awareness workshop or event can be organised for the school staff/management, family members and other students to create awareness and understanding of the various issues concerning autism.

The sensitisation program can focus on the following issues:

- Sensitisation must aim at treating the child as a person first and then see autism or any other disability as a part of the child. It will also focus on the rights of the child to be educated in an inclusive setting. This

will help create sensitivity and empathy towards the child with autism. The same is mentioned in the RTE-SSA Policy on Inclusion (2009) which ensures that every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided meaningful and quality education. Hence, SSA has adopted a zero rejection policy. This means that no child having special needs should be deprived of the right to education and must be taught in an environment which is best suited to her/his learning needs.



- Information about autism may be discussed in terms of learning and behavioural characteristics, mainstreaming educational challenges and needs of the children with autism and any associated conditions.
- How to handle insensitive attitude towards children with autism and remove misconceptions.
- How to provide schoolwide support to include children with autism.

SOME IDEAS FOR CREATING AWARENESS AND SENSITISATION

- Invite a local organisation/NGO working in the field to provide sensitisation and awareness. Awareness lessons can be conducted by special educators, counsellors, therapists and other professionals of the field.
- Teachers can create PowerPoint presentations to provide awareness to both teaching and non-teaching staff during assembly and other school events.



- Information about autism can be displayed on the School Bulletin Board.
- Invite successful adults or students with autism to share their views and experiences.
- Invite parents and other family members to talk about their experiences in dealing with autism.
- Schools can prepare handouts about autism and distribute them to spread awareness.
- Other awareness activities include: awareness walks, fun-day events, role plays, skits, celebrating “World Autism Day” (2 April), etc.

2. TRAINING SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL STAFF

Class teachers, subject teachers and other staff need regular training sessions in order to support the child with autism in their classes. They need to make sure that students with autism possess the appropriate preparatory or readiness skills to participate in mainstream classrooms. Therefore, training should focus on identifying the student’s strengths, difficulties, learning preferences, needs, and then plan appropriate goals, instructional and behavioural strategies.

Teachers and other school staff also need to be equipped with resources and strategies to handle various challenging situations that might arise such as,

- Communication with angry, frustrated and uncooperative parents;
- Demanding and unsympathetic administrators;
 - Pressure of showing academic performance of students with autism and other special needs;
 - Time constraints;
 - Resource constraints;



- Crisis situations involving students with autism;
- Work and life-related stress.

Training sessions can be in-house or provided by an outside agency working in the field of autism.

3. SUPPORTIVE, STRUCTURED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND ACCESS TO RESOURCES

Creating a supportive and safe learning environment is crucial for inclusion. This should include both physical environment and social environment. The environment should be free of physical barriers and attitudinal barriers to promote social inclusion and facilitate learning.

Some steps include:

- modification of the curriculum in terms of goals, for example, have learning goals in keeping with the child's ability level;



- modification of the curriculum in terms of the kinds of evaluation—less focus on writing long answers, modified question papers with more visuals;
- providing a safe and structured schoolwide environment to move around, interact with others and participate in school activities;
- creating autism-friendly classrooms;
- providing appropriate visual and other modes of support;
- creating easy to follow schedules and routines;
- providing access to a resource room with different learning materials;
- providing access to assistive devices such as, computers, key boards, pictures and objects, etc., for alternative means of communication;
- providing peer support or creating a buddy system to handle difficult situations; and
- providing assistance during transitions from one task or activity to another.

4. TEAM SUPPORT

In order to support a child with autism in a mainstream classroom, team effort is essential. A collaborative school team effort involving school administrator or principal, the class teacher, subject teachers, non-teaching staff, special educators and counsellors ensures that children with autism are provided the best support for full and successful inclusion. A resource person trained in special education can act as a team coordinator and collaborate with others in the school. Last but not the least, peers should play an active part in this collaboration.

A Resource Person or a Special Educator in an inclusive set-up often works as the case manager for children with special needs and provides the following support:



- provides direction and support with inclusion programs for administrators, general classroom teachers and other school team;
- develops, implements and monitors the Individualised Education Plan (IEP) for children with special needs with support from the educational team;
- co-plans instructions, lessons and schedules with the class teacher for children with special needs;
- co-plans curriculum modifications and classroom accommodations for children with special needs;
- helps in developing learning materials based on the child's learning style;
- helps in assessing the special needs student's ongoing performance;
- collaborates with other team members and para-professionals. **A School Counsellor** provides the following support:
 - provides awareness and sensitisation on various aspects of disabilities including autism to other students, parents and school staff;
 - participates in and provides support to the education team;
 - provide strategies to students to build their academic, social, emotional and inter-personal skills;
 - provides strategies for stress management in students;
 - imparts life skills training;
 - supports the class teacher in behaviour intervention programmes;
 - helps in advocating for the child with disability or special needs;
 - provides counselling and guidance to parents and family in helping the child to cope well with the school system; and



- supports in the overall well-being of the child.

Often a **shadow teacher** or a **CARE GIVER** in the classroom, who is well versed with how to help a child with autism, can be a great boon for the teachers. Training support is also needed for a shadow teacher or a care giver.

The team should meet regularly to:

- discuss the concerns or issues regarding the student's learning and behaviour.
- plan and implement strategies for learning, classroom management, behaviour management and student assessment.
- provide referrals for further assessments, therapies and medical interventions as and when needed.
- collaborate or work with other professionals such as, physiotherapists, occupation and speech therapists, and medical professionals.
- partner with parents and family members.

5. COLLABORATING WITH PARENTS AND FAMILY

Parents are children's first and best teachers. They can provide valuable information on their child. They know what motivates, interests and comforts their child. Parents of children with autism need to be an essential part of the child's education process. Children with autism often have difficulties generalising skills and concepts learnt in one setting to another, especially in social skills, communication and self-regulation areas. If parents are made aware of what skills and concepts the child has learnt or is required to learn, they can also try to implement learning of the same skills at home. Siblings and grandparents also provide valuable resources in the child's education process. Some steps to involve and work with parents and family members:





- involve parents in the educational planning.
- provide awareness about autism.
- share strategies and tips that work in the classroom such as how the child learns, interacts, etc.
- communicate with parents as to what difficulties and challenges the child is facing and ask for suggestions.
- communicate with parents to know what motivates the child, what are her/his interests, strengths and talents, to help the child.
- help create parent self-help or support group to share some of the responsibilities. Regular parent or grandparent volunteering in classrooms, school events such as picnics, sports day can be mutually beneficial to the teachers and staff.
- provide a set of tools or resource materials such as flash cards, visual schedules, etc., to the parents to train the child at home or vice-versa.
- provide regular feedback on the child's progress, for example, maintain a communication diary.
- home visits by members of the school team can help to better understand the child.



6. PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Children with autism often exhibit gaps or uneven skills in different areas of development such as, gross and fine motor skills, language, cognitive, social-emotional, self-help development. This will pose a challenge in the functional ability of the child. Additionally, many children with autism have associated mental and physical health problems that require intervention. Early identification and therapeutic intervention would greatly enhance classroom learning and school level participation of the child with autism. Classroom teachers and other school staff need to collaborate with therapists and medical professionals to provide additional support to the child.

School team can make an outside referral to such professionals or have them consult or visit on a regular basis to provide appropriate therapies and medical treatment. In this direction, schools need to invest in setting up the required equipment and arrange for the space needed for such therapies and treatments.

Here is a list of support provided by **para and medical professionals**.

- **GENERAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER:** Usually provides the primary medical care and assists in referring the child to other specialists.
- **PAEDIATRICIAN:** Specialises in child health and provide diagnosis, treatment and prevention of childhood health problems.
- **CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRIST:** A qualified medical doctor who specialises and helps the child and family in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of any associated mental illness and emotional problems.
- **PSYCHOLOGIST:** Assesses the child's developmental level, intellectual, social, emotional and behavioural functioning of the child and provide psychosocial and behavioural interventions. They also work with



parents and teachers to develop strategies for the child in the home and school settings.

- **SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPIST:** Assesses problems in speech and language development and provides therapy to develop speech, language development skills and social communication skills.
- **OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:** Provides therapy to improve a child's ability to perform a wide range of play, self-care, social and school-related activities, to maximise the child's skills for living.
- **GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS:** The services of Child Guidance Clinics are available across all government hospitals, extended towards the developmental well-being of the child at nominal rates.
- **NUTRITIONIST:** Generally the role of nutritionists is to monitor the dietary intake of clients and suggest do's and don'ts based on specific bodily needs and requirements. In case of CWA, the role gets slightly altered, since here the nutritionist is expected to help children with autism achieve optimal health by providing information and advise about health and food choices to the parents or the **CARE GIVERS** of the child. This is called Nutritional Therapy. There is a growing evidence that nutritional therapy can really make a big difference in the condition of children with autism. Many have severely disrupted digestion, so restoring balance in the gut is a key focus for nutritional therapy. Also important is balancing blood sugar, checking for brain-polluting heavy metals, excluding food additives, identifying food allergies and possible nutrient deficiencies, and ensuring an optimal intake of essential fats.



PART III- DELVING DEEPER INTO BEHAVIOURAL MANIFESTATION

This section addresses the causes of certain behaviours that children with autism may display. It provides an in-depth understanding of the basis of such behaviour. Following this, an understanding of the basic principles of good teaching applied to children with autism, who present perhaps the most complex of puzzles faced by a teacher, are also discussed. This understanding will enhance and enrich the teaching skills of a teacher for the benefit of all children.

1. UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR

As mentioned earlier, each child with autism is a fresh puzzle. While many children with autism or other special needs may have the same challenge—for example, difficulty in staying in their seat, or follow instruction, or resistance to certain activities—they may have it for very different reasons. **Understanding the cause for each child’s behaviour is crucial to find effective ways to help that child.**



A reaction or consequence that leads to the increased likelihood of repeating that action in future is called REINFORCEMENT, and an aversive consequence that leads to a reduction in future repetition of a specific action is called PUNISHMENT. REINFORCEMENT could be the delivery of a pleasurable sensation or the removal of an unpleasant sensation. Both desirable and undesirable behaviours get strengthened through the process of reinforcement.

Examples:

- The teacher smiles and bends down to listen carefully and responds gently when a shy child attempts to answer a question. The child is more likely to attempt to speak and respond in the class in future because s/he feels valued by the teacher.
- The teacher says that those who submit their assignments first will be allowed to accompany the teacher when she goes shopping for books for the school library. The opportunity of going on a shopping trip with the teacher is very attractive for students and all try to finish their assignments on time.
- The child with autism starts getting restless during long assemblies and school gatherings and disturbs the class. The teacher watches out for signs of restlessness, and offers a choice of a ‘Go Work’ or



‘Stay Here’ card, and takes him to an adjoining verandah where she gives him puzzles or worksheets that s/he can do on her/his own. The child soon learns to ask the Teacher on her/his own for a ‘Work Break’ when a crowd situation becomes overwhelming instead of disturbing others.

- Gambling is inappropriate behaviour that gets strengthened by a chance occasional windfall.
- Bribing policemen is inappropriate behaviour that gets strengthened by the avoidance of a challan.

As stated earlier, a consequence that leads to a reduction in behaviour is called PUNISHMENT. For the purpose of this chapter please do not associate the usually prevalent meaning with this term. Think of it only as a consequence that reduces the future probability of an individual displaying certain behaviour. Just as Reinforcement could strengthen both appropriate and inappropriate behaviours, Punishment can reduce the possibility of both appropriate and inappropriate behaviours.

EXAMPLE OF APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR <i>INADVERTENTLY/ UNINTENTIONALLY</i> WEAKENED BY PUNISHMENT	EXAMPLE OF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR WEAKENED BY PUNISHMENT
The students laugh at a child when he gives the wrong answer in class. The child hesitates to volunteer to answer in the future.	The teacher cancels dance class for those who made fun of the child who gave wrong answer.
The children’s laughter has had a Punishing influence on the child’s willingness to try and respond to the teacher.	The children are careful not to make fun of the child, at least in front of the teacher, in future. The loss of Dance Class acted as a Punishing influence on the behaviour of teasing.



EXAMPLE OF APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR INADVERTENTLY/ UNINTENTIONALLY WEAKENED BY PUNISHMENT	EXAMPLE OF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR WEAKENED BY PUNISHMENT
A person quietly waiting his turn at the Doctor's office finds that s/he has to wait longer because others are skipping the queue and getting ahead by badgering the attendant. He is unlikely to wait quietly the next time.	A baby touches a hot cup of tea and feels pain. The baby no longer touches the cup of tea.

The above examples demonstrate how consequence of an action affects the future probability of the action being repeated by an individual based on how the individual perceives the consequence. This process affects all behaviour and awareness of this process can help us to create an environment in the classroom to help all children function more effectively.

As mentioned earlier, a consequence that is reinforcing to one person may have no effect or may even seem punishing for another. A child with autism, in particular, may be indifferent to many experiences that other children find rewarding. Instead, s/he may perceive them to be a source of stress. For example, if a child with autism is hypersensitive to certain frequencies of sound, s/he may find places like the playground or a school function stressful because of the level of noise. Her/his inability to understand abstract nuances in a story due to poor language development may make a story session uninteresting. Poor social skills and imaginative skills may make free playtime or drama time difficult.

On the other hand, a child with autism may be extremely fascinated with a particular object or activity to the point of obsession, and may get very stimulated by music, movement, particular textures, a specific class of objects, etc., – for example, trains, strings, alphabets and numbers, certain words and phrases, etc.



A sensitive teacher needs to get to know each child's individual preferred 'menu' of reinforcing experiences and use them judiciously by making access to them conditional on the child joining in or responding to an activity. This helps the child to slowly get exposed to more activities and in turn expands her/his capacity to be reinforced by activities that are enjoyed by all children. Also, when the teacher observes that a child is finding a particular activity stressful or is not stimulated by it, s/he needs to creatively find a way to reduce the child's stress or target the weak skill area so that the child starts finding the activity reinforcing.

USING REINFORCEMENT TO IMPROVE SKILL DEFICIT AREAS

Reinforcement is a powerful process, yet often poorly understood and underutilised, which can enhance the learning experience. When used judiciously, it can help get a child with poor attention to stay on a task longer; help the child continue working at a difficult or aversive task, helping him acquire a difficult skill; reduce problem behaviours and increase the rate of learning. Reinforcement is most effective when it is immediate and is contingent on the display of the target behaviour. Many teachers unknowingly weaken an emerging skill by forgetting to reinforce instances of the child attempting to display the skill. (For example, with a child with emerging social skills or language skills, failure to respond immediately with eye contact, a smile, a nod or echoing clearly what the child attempted to say or point to, can lead to the child doing it less frequently and not building on the skill.) Whatever the form of reinforcement used, it must be accompanied with social praise that is specific about the particular skill or behaviour that is being targeted. In the long run, the goal must be to help the child learn to get motivated by more appropriate and readily available social reinforcement, and pleasure in his work.



THINGS TO REMEMBER



Use a reinforcer that is actually reinforcing for the child. First ascertain what the child likes and is able to discriminate. If the child likes movement – access to swings or a chance to distribute books, can be a reward for keeping still and listening to the teacher for a short achievable interval of time. If a child likes playing with trains – use trains to teach colours, numbers, stories about trains, to teach reading or social skills, etc.



Always pair the chosen reinforcer with specific praise – so that social praise also slowly becomes reinforcing for the child, helping the child learn to be reinforced by what can be more easily delivered.



Praise is more effective when it is specific. Rather than saying – ‘good boy’ or ‘Shabash’, say ‘I am so happy that you coloured within the lines’ or ‘I am so proud that you waited for your turn’.



Do not over reward. If the child is allowed to play for an unrestricted amount of time on the swings after completing only a little work, access to the swings is unlikely to be an effective reward for the rest of the day/duration.



Deliver reinforcement immediately after the action is done. The closer it is to the action, the more effective is the learning that, a particular action was rewarded. Acknowledge at least by a nod, a smile or a pat on the back, rather than delaying it.





On the other hand, if the reinforcement given is too little as compared to the effort of the task, it is unlikely to be effective. Instead break the task into smaller parts and praise or encourage the child for achieving each part – thus helping the child complete the whole task. For example, when asking the child to stay still and focused during a storytelling period, instead of expecting her/him to sit quietly for the entire length of time before praising (which may be too challenging for her/him),—use visuals and puppets, etc., to make the story more concrete and understandable, ask the child direct questions in between and praise him for answering or let him manipulate the puppet occasionally. This reduces the length of time s/he has to stay passive, and gives her/him the opportunity to hear praise at shorter intervals.

The value of a particular reinforcer is itself something that changes over time, depending on the level to which that reinforcer has been accessible. It is when one is hungry that one is more likely to do an action that will give access to food (such as, going to a restaurant or canteen, opening one's tiffin, going to the fridge and looking for a snack, asking if it is time for lunch, etc.) **Motivation for a particular reinforcement is heightened through deprivation, and reduced through satiation.**

ENVIRONMENTAL CUES THAT EVOKE BEHAVIOUR

The specific behaviour that we choose to display when driven by a particular motivation is influenced by the cues in the environment. When hungry and at home, one would do a different set of actions as opposed to while in a shopping center or at place of work. If a person is tired, the presence of a bed is a likely cue to take a nap, but at the place of work, and if the boss is around, the same person is likely to opt for a cup of coffee instead.



In the classroom too, the child is in an environment which cues certain behaviours. A wise teacher will try to provide cues for appropriate behaviour and remove cues for inappropriate behaviour. The use of visual cues, clear instructions and demonstration of what is expected, direct questions, prompts, etc., are cues for appropriate response. Similarly, as far as possible, the teacher must seek to remove triggers for inappropriate behaviours before they occur. A child who gets very distracted should be placed in a seat where s/he cannot look outside and the desk kept clear of things that the child is likely to fiddle with. A child who finds waiting hard, should be given activities to keep him occupied.

REDUCING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOURS

All behaviours, even inappropriate ones, are strengthened by Reinforcement. If we can identify what is the specific reinforcement that makes this inappropriate behaviour more frequent, we can look for ways to stop the reinforcement from being available when the behaviour is likely to occur. This will lead to a gradual reduction or 'EXTINCTION' of the behaviour. Simultaneously, we can try to provide particular reinforcement for other more appropriate behaviour, thus further reducing the likelihood of inappropriate behaviour. For a child with autism the source of reinforcement may not be obvious. The teacher, with the help of parents and special educator, must therefore analyse and probe the possible source, much like one would try to identify the source of an allergy, through a process of elimination. The teacher may use the following method (also known as ABC Analysis) to understand the cause of the undesired behaviour and plan strategies that would help reduce or eliminate inappropriate behaviours accordingly. The steps used for identifying and analysing reasons for undesired behaviour are explained with the following example. The same steps may be used for other undesired behaviours faced by the teacher.



BEHAVIOUR: THROWING OBJECTS

ANTECEDENT (WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE THE BEHAVIOUR)	BEHAVIOUR (WHAT IS THE ACTUAL BEHAVIOUR)	CONSEQUENCE (WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE BEHAVIOUR)	POSSIBLE FUNCTION/ REASON FOR THE BEHAVIOUR
Teacher instructed Sachin to put a simple two piece puzzle together.	Sachin threw the puzzle pieces along with the board on the floor.	Teacher took the puzzle set and put it away.	To escape the activity/task; To get teacher's attention.

As explained in the above example, the teacher can analyse and understand the reasons for the undesired behaviour by asking the following questions:

Q: WHEN DID SACHIN EXHIBIT THE UNDESIRE BEHAVIOUR? Is there an activity, a place or a person that usually sets it off? Had he been asked to do some work? Was the work within his capacity? Was there anything in the environment that could have led to him being uncomfortable – any specific sounds, instructions, excess crowd? Did something stop – or did anyone leave? These could indicate the triggers for the behaviour.

A: Sachin threw the puzzle pieces when he was asked by the teacher to work on the puzzle-building task and put them together.

Q: WHAT UNDESIRABLE BEHAVIOUR DID SACHIN EXHIBIT?

A: Sachin threw the puzzle pieces and the board from the table on to the floor.

Q: WHAT HAPPENED AFTER HE THREW THE PUZZLE PIECES AND THE BOARD ON TO THE FLOOR?



PRINCIPLES TO REDUCE INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOURS

When we observe a child indulging in inappropriate behaviour that comes in the way of the child's learning and participation in school activities, we need to come up with a strategy to help the child stop repeating that behaviour. Strategies that could be used with a child who does not have the challenges faced by a child with autism, may not work here, because of the sensory defensiveness or poor social skills or difficulty in understanding language, faced by a child with autism.

CHOOSE PIVOTAL BEHAVIOURS: While the child with autism may have several maladaptive behaviours that need to be modified, it is important initially to prioritise and choose only one or two behaviours that impede the child's learning or social inclusion the most. Once these have been reduced, then new target behaviours can be chosen.

TEACH AN ALTERNATE APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR: For every inappropriate behaviour that we seek to reduce, we need to think of an alternative behaviour that delivers the same reinforcement, otherwise the child may develop other inappropriate means of getting that reinforcement. Think of a child who throws tantrums when s/he is hungry. Merely forbidding her/him from throwing tantrums or ignoring the tantrums is not enough. We need to teach her/him to ask for food in a more appropriate way – perhaps through pointing if s/he is non-verbal, or by using a simple phrase if her/his language is unclear, etc. Similarly, if a child's misbehaviour is to seek companionship, s/he needs to be taught to approach other children in an appropriate way. If a child with autism moves out of the seat often to approach the teacher, the teacher could teach him through prompting and gesturing to raise his hand instead to catch the teacher's attention.



REDUCE MOTIVATION FOR THE REINFORCEMENT BY PROVIDING EASY ACCESS IN THE ABSENCE OF THE INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR:

A child who craves physical stimulation through movement or textures or sound, etc., should be allowed periods of the day when s/he has free access to this stimulation in age appropriate activities like gym, dance, taekwondo class, craft activities, swimming, etc. A child who seeks attention through inappropriate means should similarly be helped to be included in different activities and be given special attention by the teacher when the child is **not** exhibiting the inappropriate behaviour; this can be a very effective means of reducing such inappropriate behaviour. A child who is seeking to escape work through inappropriate behaviour should also be taught ways of asking for help, or a break, and the work may be made easier so that s/he does not find the work so aversive.

PROVIDE ALTERNATE FORMS OF REINFORCEMENT BY MAKING THE TEACHING ENVIRONMENT ENGAGING:

Our classrooms and teaching interactions must be opportunities for the child to get access to a rich and varied mix of reinforcement for appropriate learning behaviours such as, sitting, listening, responding, asking questions, etc. This could be in the form of well paced exciting instructions, without long periods of passive waiting, quick and effective attention through praise, eye contact, smiles and nods, sensory stimulation through the use of multisensory teaching material and physical movement opportunities, bright attractive teaching environments, etc. A child who throws tantrums to go to the swings may be taught to earn access to swings by gaining an appropriate number of tokens for tasks completed, or for a period of time elapsing without tantrums for swings.

IF POSSIBLE, REDUCE ACCESS TO THAT REINFORCEMENT WHEN THE INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR OCCURS SO AS TO REDUCE SUCH BEHAVIOUR:

For example, Palak enjoys getting attention from her teacher by making strange noises during lessons. The teacher may try to extinguish Palak's behaviour by ignoring her. By removing the attention or reward, Palak's behaviour would eventually disappear.

MORE EXAMPLES

REINFORCEMENT SOUGHT

Escape from an unpleasant sensation,

Examples: loud noise, cloth of certain texture, fluorescent colour, etc.

.....

EXAMPLE OF BEHAVIOURS THAT COULD BE DISPLAYED

- Covering ears when particular pitches of sound are heard
 - Banging head or pressing temple because of pain/discomfort
 - Refusal to wear certain clothes because of hypersensitivity to certain textures
 - Refusal to work with wet sticky textures
 - Moving out of rooms with flickering lights
-

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE UNDESIRED BEHAVIOUR

It would be unethical to force the child to tolerate the sensation that may be causing a lot of distress. So the child can be taught to get desensitised slowly by gradual and graded exposure to the sensation. For example, for a child who is very sensitive to loud voices and resists crowds and classrooms, the teachers can use taped/recorded sounds of laughing and shouting children that they expose the child to at soft volumes and gradually increasing the volume to help the child overcome her/his sensitivity. Seek to teach the child to communicate distress and ask for relief in more appropriate ways such as, use visual supports – use a ‘loud’ symbol and a picture symbol showing the use of ‘defenders’.

Moreover, for a child who has difficulty tolerating different textured clothing – a relaxation can be made in the norms of the school uniform, so that similar clothes in a texture the child can tolerate are used instead.

If the problem persists, consult a doctor to seek medical attention.



CASE STUDY 1

Priya is an 8-year-old girl with features of autism. She faces difficulty in adapting to new places. Recently she had to be shifted to a new school because of her father's transfer. She studies in Class 3. The uniform of this school is very different from what she used to wear in her previous school. The new uniform has a different texture and is blue in colour as opposed to the red colour of the previous school's uniform. Due to this reason, she does not like coming to school and throws tantrums. *What can be done?*

The child can be sensitised towards the colour blue by gradually exposing her to blue-coloured objects and later blue coloured cloth of a different texture that she prefers. Till the time she feels comfortable, the school can make some relaxation with the norms of the school uniform, so that similar looking clothes in a texture the child could tolerate can be used instead.

REINFORCEMENT SOUGHT

Seeking some pleasurable physical sensation,

.....

EXAMPLE OF BEHAVIOURS THAT COULD BE DISPLAYED

A child rocking or jumping – may be seeking physical movement.
A child flinging things or banging – seeking sound.

.....

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE UNDESIRED BEHAVIOUR

Allow the child access to swings, trampolines, etc., after short intervals; send him/her on errands that give her/him an opportunity to move around in school. Allow the child to have access to a drum set or bells as a reward for completing a task.

Put a carpet or table cloth to muffle the sound.



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CASE STUDY 2

Sulabh is a boy studying in Class 2. He exhibits a peculiar behaviour that is, playing with clay and pasting it on classroom walls during art and craft class. *What can be done?*

The teacher can allot a space where all children can put their art on display instead of pasting them. When the child pastes the clay on the wall, the child should be discouraged verbally. Alternatively, the child can be engaged in activities of pasting her/his drawing made on paper on the wall, or allowing to do craft work involving cutting, pasting, paper folding, etc.

REINFORCEMENT SOUGHT

Escaping an academic or social situation that the child is not able to comprehend or participate in.

EXAMPLE OF BEHAVIOURS THAT COULD BE DISPLAYED

Flinging books, banging head, tearing paper, possibly crying or being aggressive

Running away, asking to go to the toilet, asking irrelevant questions

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE UNDESIRED BEHAVIOUR

Analyse the situation and understand what skill or task the child finds difficult. Seek to make the task easier, – breaking it up into smaller tasks, or increasing prompts, using things the child is fascinated by in the lesson, making concepts more concrete, etc.

Ignore tantrum and work through, teaching the child to ask for a break through the use of picture cards if communicating the same becomes difficult for the CWA.



CASE STUDY 3

Harshita is a student of Class 1. She is hyperactive and she is never in her seat. She does not like staying in the classroom and sometimes walks out during classes. She also becomes very aggressive when somebody pressurises her to stay in her seat.

What can be done?

The teacher can use different methods of teaching such as, role plays, using some objects in mathematics classes to teach counting, using abacus, etc., that are of interest to the CWA. As long as the child's attention remains engaged, s/he is unlikely to move out of the seat.

REINFORCEMENT SOUGHT

Getting attention from adults or peers – through inappropriate behaviour because appropriate language and social skills are lacking.

EXAMPLE OF BEHAVIOURS THAT COULD BE DISPLAYED

Inappropriate hugging, taking away others' things, screaming, asking repetitive questions.

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE UNDESIRED BEHAVIOUR

Teach the child to respect others' bodies and property; teach child appropriate ways of greeting and playing with children; prompt others to respond when the child approaches in a relatively appropriate manner.

Ignore the child as far as possible when child is being inappropriate.

CASE STUDY 4

Rishi is a boy studying in Class 2. He exhibits a the peculiar behaviour of screaming loudly and seeks the attention of teacher by doing this. *What can be done?*

The teacher should avoid paying attention to his peculiar behaviour because the purpose of the child engaging in this behaviour was seeking the attention of the teacher. When Rishi screams, he should be discouraged verbally, and could be made to engage in an alternative activity. Attention-seeking behaviour should be reinforced only when the child engages in adaptive behaviours like following instructions, maintaining discipline in class, etc.

HANDLING VERY DIFFICULT BEHAVIOURS

Some children with autism can occasionally go through phases where they exhibit extremely difficult behaviours for a period of time, at the risk of danger to themselves and others. The long term goal will be to help the child stop or at least reduce these behaviours in intensity and frequency. Earlier sections have already outlined ways to handle such situations. The short term goal must be to find ways to protect the child and others. All efforts must be made to avoid a situation where the child is barred from school altogether and loses the right and opportunity to participate and benefit from the school environment.

These difficult behaviours could range from self-injurious behaviour like banging their head, or aggressive behaviour to peers or staff like biting, hitting, kicking, etc., or destruction of school property like tearing charts, throwing furniture, etc. If these behaviours happen often, it is time for a plan to be made to handle future occasions in a manner so as to ensure the safety of all concerned.



How does a teacher and the school management prepare themselves to handle this situation?

Some principles to be remembered:

- Safety of the child and of those in his or her surroundings must be the first concern.
- Use the least restrictive and most humane and respectful means possible to stop the child from harming herself/himself, peers, the staff and the surroundings.
- Move all breakable items away, or move the child into a relatively isolated but safe area.
- Redirect peers to other activities in alternate locations.
- Equip staff members with easily accessible protective clothing that they can put on quickly to protect their hair from being pulled or skin from getting bitten. For example, towels to cover hair and exposed skin, long sleeved jackets or thick shirts with hoods, motorcycle helmets, etc., if necessary.
- Restrain the child from hurting herself/himself by blocking her/him or holding her/him manually in a respectful and calm manner.
- Remember that the child will not at that moment be able to process a long explanation or scolding, and that instead, it may make her/him more anxious and more reactive.

Be calm, act calm, and sound calm.

- Direct the child gradually to do self-relaxing exercises like deep breathing or slowly counting down.
- Praise compliance and slowly redirect to a non-stressful activity.
 - Do not offer bribes or reinforcers – as you may inadvertently strengthen this behaviour and make it more likely in the future.
 - Watch out for signs of the child looking anxious or upset, or events in his environment that have in the





past led to the child displaying such behaviour. Take steps to calm the child before the child loses control and move him into a safer environment.

- Sensory stimulation like soothing music, a rocking chair or swing, deep pressure massage, a simple repetitive task like putting together a favourite puzzle, drinking a glass of water and rinsing his face, going for a walk, etc., are activities that can help the child regain his or her equilibrium.
- It is also important to analyse the cause of the behaviour, by taking data on occurrence, circumstances surrounding it, and by talking to all concerned – including parents and all concerned staff members. If necessary medical professionals can also be consulted.
- Find out if there has been any major change in the child's life at home or in school. Has there been any illness? Is there some activity that is causing anxiety or stress? Has the child been teased or bullied? Does the child's day have adequate opportunities for access to



enjoyable activities or is s/he in a routine that is not making sense to her/him and that s/he is unhappy with? Is s/he getting adequate help for activities that are difficult? Does s/he know how to communicate if s/he wants a break or if s/he needs help? Has there been an unexpected change in routine that s/he has not been prepared for?

- Once the cause of the behaviour and the cues that evoke it have been identified, then a plan should be put into place to reduce such behaviour and to alleviate any underlying issues. Help the child communicate her/his distress or anxiety in more appropriate ways, and provide the necessary help or support. **Adequate assistance must be given to the teacher by the school team so that s/he is able to implement this plan consistently without stress.**

2. HELPING TOOLS

The paragraphs below give a detailed explanation of some of the strategies mentioned earlier.

VISUAL SCHEDULES

A daily visual schedule is a critical component in a structured environment like school. A visual schedule will tell the student with autism what activities will occur and in what sequence. Visual schedules can be prepared for various tasks such as, lunch breaks, sports room, daily class routine, using toilets, etc. Visual schedule is a helpful tool to let children know and remember the schedule of activities, and to indicate a change – particularly for those children who have difficulty in dealing with change. It makes things more comprehensible and gives a predictable structure to the day.

For example, instead of saying, ‘We have English, Math and Science today’, which might sound abstract, make a visual schedule with appropriate pictures for each subject. Maths class could be represented in the schedule with numbers and ‘+ - * %’ signs. This prepares the child for the event

and helps him reduce the anxiety level in understanding things. The child can determine her/his day by looking at the schedule and this helps her/him understand better. The pictures need not be elaborate, but simple line drawings will suffice.

A visual schedule can also be used to break up an activity into smaller steps. When the teacher points to the pictures, s/he can use simple phrases to describe each step, and use the same phrases to describe the activity. For example, while teaching a child toileting skills, the teacher could paste the pictures of the steps that the child needs to follow to use the toilet, follow hygiene rules and maintain privacy. Every detail can be drawn and put in the box format and stuck to the toilet doors, both inside and outside.

Eventually, the child can be encouraged to prepare her/his own visual schedule (with the help of the teacher in school or parents at home) which will help in understanding the daily routine and at the same time encourage the abilities to grasp knowledge.

VISUAL SCHEDULES ARE IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM BECAUSE THEY:

- help address the child's difficulty with sequential memory and organisation of time.
- assist children with language comprehension problems to understand what is expected of them.
- lessen the anxiety levels of children with autism, and thus reduce the possible occurrence of challenging behaviours, by providing the structure for the student to organise and predict daily and weekly events. Schedules clarify that activities happen within a specific time-period (e.g., understanding that 'lunch break time' is coming, but **after** 'science class'), and alert the student to any **changes** that might occur.
- assist the student in **transitioning independently** between activities and environments by telling them where they are to go next. Visual schedules are useful



in all environments (e.g., classroom, Occupational Therapy, Speech/Language Therapy, home, playground, etc.).


















































- schedules are based on a ‘first-then’ strategy; that is, ‘**first** you do ____, **then** you do ____’, rather than an ‘if-then’ approach (i.e., ‘if you do ____, then you can do ____’.) This **first-then** strategy allows the ‘first’ expectation (whether a task, activity or assignment) to be modified, as required. The modification is in terms of task completion and amount of prompting, in order to accommodate the student’s daily fluctuations in the ability to process incoming information. **Then** s/he can move on to the next visually scheduled task/activity. **Example:** A student is having particular difficulty completing a Maths worksheet due to anxiety, sensory processing difficulties, communication, difficulty generalising, internal/external distracters, change, etc. The assignment can be modified so that the child only has to complete three maths problems **first**, and **then** s/he has a sensory break, as indicated on the visual schedule.
- can incorporate various **social interactions** into the student’s daily schedule for example, showing completed work to a teacher/parent.
- can increase a student’s motivation to complete less desired activities by strategically alternating more-preferred with less-preferred activities on the student’s individual visual schedule. For example, by placing a “computer” time after “language”, the student may be more motivated to complete language knowing that “computer” time will follow.

A visual schedule for a student with autism must be directly taught and consistently used. Visual schedules should not be considered as “crutches” for students with autism, from which they should gradually be “weaned”. Instead, these individual visual schedules should be considered as “prosthetic” or “assistive” devices. For the student with

autism, consistent use of a visual schedule is an extremely important skill. It has the potential to increase independent functioning throughout her/his life – at school, home and community.

However, a word of caution: once the child has outgrown the need for a particular visual schedule, it may be discontinued.

The weekly timetable in pictures may look like the following:

	 MATHS	 ENGLISH	 MUSIC	 HINDI			
	 SCIENCE	 LUNCH	 EVS				
MONDAY							
TUESDAY							
WEDNESDAY							
THURSDAY							
FRIDAY							
SATURDAY							

A similar schedule for **home** may also be prepared with pictures that can be easily understood by the child, with which the child can relate herself/himself:



WAKE UP



TOILET



BRUSH



GET READY



BREAKFAST



GO TO BUS STOP



GO TO SCHOOL



DEVELOPING VISUAL SCHEDULES

A teacher can design her/his own visual schedules with her/his understanding, keeping in mind the needs of the child. In general, visual schedules should be:

- arranged from a ‘top-to-bottom’ format or ‘left-to-right’ format;
- Should include a way for the student to manipulate the schedule to indicate that an activity is finished or ‘all done’. Cross/mark off with a marker/pen/pencil, place the item in an ‘all done’ envelope/box/bag, check off the item, draw a line through the scheduled activity, etc.

A minimum of two scheduled items should be presented at a time so that the student begins to understand that events and activities happen in a sequential manner, not in isolation. Visual schedules can be designed using a variety of formats, depending upon the needs of the individual student.

Teacher and parents can mutually decide on using the clipboard schedule, file folder schedules, dry erase board schedules, velcro strip across the top of the desk, etc., depending on the ease of usage and availability. Various visual representation systems can be used for an individual’s visual schedule including real objects, photographs, simple line drawings, written words/lists, etc.

SOCIAL STORIES

Social Stories are perceived as a tool to help children with autism better understand the nuances of interpersonal communication so that they can interact in an effective and appropriate manner. Social story as a product, is a short story that



describes a situation, concept or social skill using a format that is meaningful for children with autism. Social Stories:

- Provide information in an accurate and supportive manner;
- Describe an unfamiliar or uncomfortable situation;
- Prepare the CWA for an upcoming event; and,
- Help an individual understand what is going on around them and the expectations of the situation.

HOW TO WRITE A SOCIAL STORY?



STEP 1: PICTURE THE GOAL

Clarify what is the purpose of the story, what behaviour the child needs to learn or understand. For example, during discussion or classroom-teaching learning time, Raman, a child with autism, sits in such a way that his peers have learnt to move away from him. He would not raise the hand when the teacher asked questions. He also made inappropriate noises and comments. The desired behaviours in this case are: to sit in a proper way, raise hand if s/he knows the answer and keep quiet during lessons.

This case provides an opportunity for developing three different stories, one each for sitting properly, raising hand to answer and staying quiet during lesson.

STEP 2: GATHER INFORMATION

The information such as, when this happens, at what frequency, how many times, which time of the day, in whose presence, etc., requires careful information collection and analysis. For the case mentioned above, Raman may be displaying inappropriate behaviour more often in language class or in the proximity of a particular classmate.

STEP 3: TAILOR THE TEXT

This requires developing the story in short simple sentences along with supporting pictures. Let us develop a Social Story for Raman, with the goal of making him sit properly during lessons.

Example: Sitting properly in the class

- I am in the classroom.
- Teacher is teaching the lesson.
- Other children are also in the classroom.
- I am sitting with Sitara.
- Sitara is sitting with legs properly folded.
- Her legs do not touch mine.
- I see my friends.
- They are also sitting properly without touching anybody/ their seatmates.
- I also need to sit properly without touching anybody.
- I am sitting happily with Sitara without touching her.

WHILE DEVELOPING SOCIAL STORIES PLEASE REMEMBER THAT:

1. social stories need to have an introduction, body and conclusion and should use positive language (i.e., where possible, describe what should happen, rather than what should not).
2. social stories need to be as accurate as possible and should include words like sometimes and usually for situations where a particular outcome is not guaranteed.



3. social stories should interest the child. Avoid using words that may cause anxiety or distress.
4. the content and presentation of Social Stories should be appropriate to the child's age and level of understanding.

COMMUNICATING THROUGH PICTURES

This helps children with ASD and other children with communication problems in communicating through pictorial representation, their wants or desires or schedule of the day or any changes within. A chart or pack of cards containing various pictures depicting actions like washroom, not able to do something, feeling thirsty/hungry/pain, etc., are collected and provided to the child predominantly by parents with the help of the teacher. The child is familiarised with each picture along with its uses as to how and when the picture is to be used. Usually the child approaches and gives a picture of a desired item (photo, object, etc.) to the teacher in exchange for that item or permission. The teacher or other persons may also initiate a conversation with the CWA using pictures. For example, if teacher desires to seek the child's opinion about a certain food item or toy or time out, then the same can be done using appropriate pictures.

WHY COMMUNICATE THROUGH PICTURE?

Impairment in communication is one of the core features of autism. For children who do not develop typical verbal and non-verbal communication skills, learning to express wants, needs and sharing experiences could be challenging. Delays in developing these skills can cause frustration both for the child and the caregiver, and may lead to behavioural challenges. Communicating through pictures can be a highly effective tool in helping to decrease challenging behaviours and increase the use of appropriate functional communication. Non-verbal children with autism may attempt to communicate using objects or





I WANT



I SEE



THANK YOU



COOKIE



APPLE



CAKE



BOOKS



SAND



WATER



FARM



PUZZLE



SWEATER



PANTS



COAT



SOCKS



PENS



CHIPS










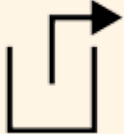




SHOES



pictures. Many children with autism tend to be visual learners and visual means of communication can help them to understand and use the process of communication. Communicating through pictures aims at teaching spontaneous social communication skills by means of symbols or pictures. The use of this type of communication system provides the child a way to communicate and most importantly, teaches the child a spontaneous way to initiate a functional communicative exchange.

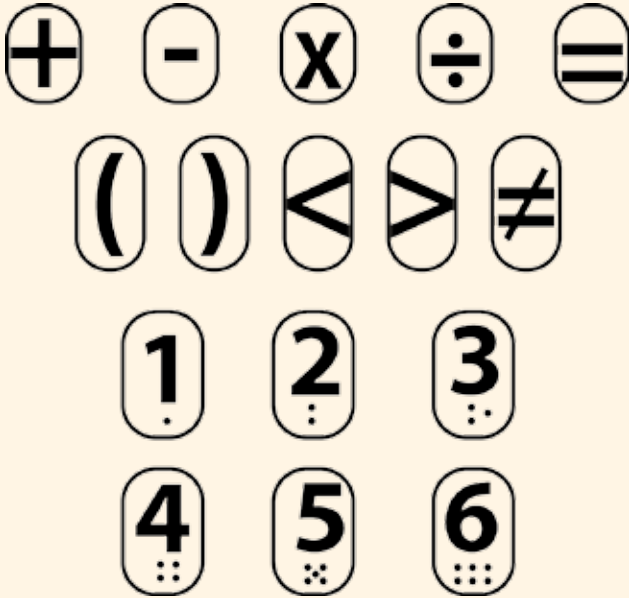
The number of picture cards will vary for each individual. The decision to use photos versus pictures or line drawings should be based on the preferences of the CWA. The picture cards can be extended to language classes or mathematics classes by choosing and creating pictures that are appropriate for the subject.

The itsy bitsy spider climbed up the waterspout. Down came the rain and washed the spider out. Out came the sun and dried up all the rain and the itsy bitsy spider climbed up the spout again.

CARDES FOR "ITSY BITSY SPIDER"			
			
THE ITSY BITSY SPIDER	CLIMBED	UP	THE WATERSPOUT
			
DOWN CAME	THE RAIN AND WASHED	THE SPIDER	OUT
			
OUT CAME THE SUN	AND DRIED UP	ALL THE RAIN AND	THE ITSY



VISUALS FOR MATHEMATICS



CARDS FOR WEATHER



**TOO
DARK**

**TOO
BRIGHT**

**TOO
WET**

**TOO
COLD**

Once the child gets used to the picture-based communication system, it can be used for expressing various emotions, which otherwise the CWA is sometimes unable to express.



FEELINGS



HAPPY



SAD



SICK



EXCITED



ANGRY



BORED



CONFUSED



FRUSTRATED

FEELINGS



BEING SCARED



BEING CALM



BEING FUNNY



BEING SURPRISED



TIRED



TOO LOUD



TOO HOT



SHAPING

Shaping is the process of providing gradually weaker prompts to prepare the child for independent display of a skill/behaviour with close approximations to the target behaviour. Put simply, *shaping* is the formal name given to the process of gradually teaching a child to acquire a skill better. When combined with reducing access to reinforcement for inappropriate behaviour and increased reinforcement made available for better attempts at the target appropriate behaviour, shaping can be an extremely effective strategy in the teachers arsenal to help a child with autism or other challenges.

It incorporates both the reduction of problem behaviour and an inaccurate display of a skill, and the simultaneous teaching of an alternative appropriate behaviour or target behaviour. For example, Rohan never does his mathematics homework. This is an undesired behaviour and the desired behaviour would be regular completion and submission of mathematics homework. Being a teacher, one way to reinforce desired behaviour of completing his homework on a daily basis is to break down the desired behaviour into sub-steps that are progressively more demanding. One step should be practiced for at least two days (or may be more depending on the case and situation).

1. Rohan will write his name on the top of the worksheet.
2. Rohan will complete one problem of his choice.
3. Rohan will complete five problems of his choice.
4. Rohan will complete either all the odd numbered problems or all the even numbered problems.
5. Rohan will complete all problems except one.
6. Rohan will complete all problems.

As Rohan masters each step, the teacher will tell him that he must now move on to the next objective to receive a reward (like a praise, being applauded in front of the class, time out to play, etc.) If the jump between two steps is too

difficult, then the teacher must break down the steps into even smaller increments.

PROMPTING

Helping the child to give the correct answer by providing appropriate cues, and fading the cues gradually. Prompts are usually classified into verbal, gestural, modelling and physical prompts. Prompting is used to help a child learn a new skill independently over a period. When teaching a new skill, prompting needs to go from maximal to minimal. Let us understand this better with the help of certain common situations in classroom settings.

SITUATION 1

A physical education class is in progress and the teacher is getting the class to do yoga exercises.

- a. **VERBAL PROMPTS:** Teacher instructs students “Put your hands on your hips and keep your knees straight.”
- b. **GESTURAL PROMPT:** Teacher pointing to the student’s knees to remind her/him that s/he needs to straighten them.
- c. **MODELING PROMPT:** Teacher standing in front of the student and doing the yoga exercise.
- d. **PHYSICAL PROMPT:** Teacher standing behind the student, and physically guiding the student through the steps of the exercise. This can also be done by assigning a buddy to guide the CWA through the steps of the exercise.



SITUATION 2

Teacher asking the class questions about a story just heard – e.g., the ginger bread man. Question: Who was chasing the ginger bread man?

- a. **VERBAL PROMPT:** Could be the beginning sounds of the names of the animals – e.g., “c”, “ho”, “fo”, for “cow, horse, fox” respectively, etc. A lesser prompt could be – “the animal that gives milk”, or “the animal that runs very fast” or “the animal that is very, very cunning”.
- b. **GESTURAL PROMPT:** Pointing to the pictures of the animals in the storybook used during the reading of the story.

SITUATION 3

Teaching a child to share. The teacher may give a general talk about why we must share. S/he should give specific examples of what sharing is and what it is not. The teacher could tell a story bringing out the value of sharing. During free playtime, the teacher could use the following prompts to cue the child to share. Once the child has done, the teacher must remember to reinforce the behaviour with specific praise.

- a. **VERBAL PROMPT:** Could range from – “Raman give Rachana some of your colours” to “Remember we talked about sharing – Rachana has no colours – what should you do?”
- b. **GESTURAL PROMPT:** The teacher could nudge the child and point to the empty box in Rachana’s hand – and the excess colours in Raman’s box – and pantomime giving.
- c. **MODELING PROMPT:** The teacher could cue another peer to share his crayons with Rachana, and praise him saying – “Wonderful sharing”.
- d. **PHYSICAL PROMPT:** The teacher could guide Raman to put some colours into Rachana’s box and cue her to say – “Thank you, Raman”. If the child is seeking



some particular sensation or reinforcement – either physical or social – it is not enough to just stop that behaviour but to also teach the child a more appropriate way to access that reinforcement.

GROUP CONTINGENCY

Group Contingency is a strategy that involves a group of peers in providing reinforcement to the child whose behaviour we are trying to modify. This fulfills several purposes. It frees up the teacher somewhat – though s/he still needs to monitor the process closely to make sure it is working. It provides the child with peer appreciation for any effort made towards acquiring the target behaviour – which is hugely effective. It also leads to the peers ignoring or keeping quiet about times when the child makes an error – again very beneficial, particularly if the behaviour was attention-seeking or if the child's self is affected by negative comments given by her/his peers.

PROCEDURE

In group contingency, a group is rewarded for the behaviour of a member of a group, a segment of a group or the group as a whole. A teacher who praises her/his class because they performed well in special assembly is using group contingency. Similarly, dividing the class into two teams, and scoring each team for individual responses made by team members to random questions can help build up the level of everyone's involvement. But it can be used in many more creative ways and can help enormously with classroom management or in improving classroom response, and in helping the differing needs of particular children. It taps into the natural competitive urge of children, and enhances peer influence on specific children. A few examples of its application are listed below.



EXAMPLE 1 – HERO PROCEDURE:

A group gets reinforced for a particular member displaying a target behaviour.

Mrs. X managed a classroom which had several children with disruptive behaviours. She divided the class into teams, assigning each team one of



the children with difficult behaviours. The teams sat together in the class, and were allowed to choose names for themselves. Mrs. X put up a big chart with the names of each team on it. Each team was told that when their 'hero' – i.e., the child whose behaviour was being targeted for change, did something from a list of positive target behaviours, they would get a star. The list of positive behaviours for each 'hero' is different and is based on each individual child's specific skill profile and challenging behaviours. For example, in the case of a child who is frequently out of her/his seat, the team got a star when s/he stayed in her/his seat for a whole period, and completed her/his worksheet without throwing it. For the child who grabbed other children's tiffins, the team was rewarded if s/he shared her/his tiffin and exchanged what s/he had brought for what they had. For the child who rarely answered any questions, the team was rewarded every time that child responded to the teacher. Mrs. X said that the team that got the most stars would get 10 extra minutes of Computer time. This was a big incentive as the children loved going to the Computer Lab. Instead of complaining when their 'hero' made

an error, each team is encouraged to begin actively helping their 'hero' succeed, and report every positive effort. This improves and aids in the interpersonal relationship between the previously ostracised child and her/his peers, and leads to a significant change in the targeted behaviours. It helped Mrs. X enormously in managing classroom behaviour in a positive manner.



EXAMPLE 2 – GOOD BEHAVIOUR GAME

The Good Behaviour Game is an approach to the management of classrooms behaviours that rewards children for displaying appropriate on-task behaviours during instructional times. The class is divided into two teams and a point is given to a team for any inappropriate behaviour displayed by one of its members. The team with the fewest number of points at the end wins a group reward. If both teams keep their points below a preset level, then both teams share the reward.

STEPS OF IMPLEMENTATION

STEP 1: DECIDE WHEN TO SCHEDULE THE GAME. The teacher first decides during which period(s) of the school day, the Game will be played. As a rule of thumb, the teachers should pick those times when the entire class is expected to show appropriate academic behaviours. Time devoted to reading, mathematics, content instruction, and independent seatwork would be most appropriate for putting the Game into effect.

STEP 2: CLEARLY DEFINE THE NEGATIVE BEHAVIOURS THAT WILL BE SCORED DURING THE GAME. Teachers who have used the Good Behaviour Game typically define three types of negative behaviour that will be scored whenever they appear during the Game. Those behaviours are:

- leaving one's seat;
- talking-out, and
- engaging in disruptive behaviour.

Out-of-seat behaviour is defined as any incident in which a student leaves her/his seat without getting permission first from the teacher. Teachers often build in certain exceptions to this rule. For example, in some classrooms, children can take a pass to the bathroom, approach the teacher's desk for additional help, or move from one work site to another in the room without permission as long as these movements



are conducted quietly and are a part of the accepted classroom routine. Children who leave their seats intending to complete an allowed activity but find that they cannot (e.g., walking toward the teacher's desk and then noticing that another student is already there) are not scored as being out of their seat if they quickly and quietly return to their desk.

Talking-out behaviour is defined as any incident of talking out loud without the permission of the teacher. Permission is gained by raising one's hand and being recognised by the teacher before speaking. Any type of unauthorised vocalisation (speaking aloud) within the hearing range of the teacher is scored as talking-out, including shouts, nonsense noises (e.g., growling, howling, whistling), whispers, and talking while one's hand is raised.

Disruptive behaviour consists of any movement or act that is judged by the teacher to be disruptive of classroom instruction. For example, knocking on a table, looking around the room, tearing up paper, passing notes, or playing with toys at one's desk – would all be scored as disruptive behaviours. A good rule of thumb would be to regard as disruptive behaviour any action that does not fall under any other category but is perceived by the teacher as annoying or distracting.

STEP 3: DECIDE UPON SUITABLE DAILY AND (PERHAPS) WEEKLY REWARDS FOR TEAMS WINNING THE GAME.

Teachers will need to choose rewards that they feel will effectively motivate students to take part in the Game. Most often, teachers use free time as a daily reward, since children often find it motivating.

When choosing rewards, teachers are advised to consider using reinforcers that fit naturally into the context and mission of a classroom. For example, allowing winners to play quietly together at the end of the school day may help to promote social skills, but dispensing material rewards (e.g., comic books) to winners would probably be less likely



to contribute directly to educational and social goals. Of course, if both teams win on a given day or a given week, all members of both the teams receive the same rewards.

STEP 4: INTRODUCE THE GAME TO THE CLASS

Once behaviours have been selected and clearly defined by the teacher, the next step is to introduce the Game to the class. Ideally, time should be set aside for an initial group discussion. The teacher mentions that the class will be playing a game and presents a schedule, clearly setting forth the instructional times during which the game will be in effect.

Next, the teacher divides the classroom into two teams. For ease of playing and keeping score, it is usually recommended that the teacher divide the class down the center of the room into roughly equal halves. Some teachers have used three teams successfully as well. To build a sense of team spirit, students may be encouraged to name their groups.

The children are informed that certain types of behaviour (i.e., leaving one's seat or talking without permission, or engaging in disruptive behaviours) will earn points for the team to which they belong. Students are also told that both teams can win if they earn no more than a certain number of points (e.g., 4 points maximum per day). If both teams happen to exceed 4 points, then the team with the lowest total at the end of the day is the winner. In case of a tie, both teams earn the reward. The teacher is the final judge of whether a behaviour is to be scored. (As an option, students can also be told that the team with the fewest number of points at the end of the week will win an additional reward.)

It is a good idea when introducing the Game to students to clearly review examples of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. After all, it is important that all children know the rules before the Game begins. To more effectively illustrate those rules, children may be recruited to demonstrate acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, or the teacher may



describe a number of behaviours and ask the class to decide with a show of hands whether such behaviours are to be scored or not.

STEP 5: PUT THE GAME INTO EFFECT.

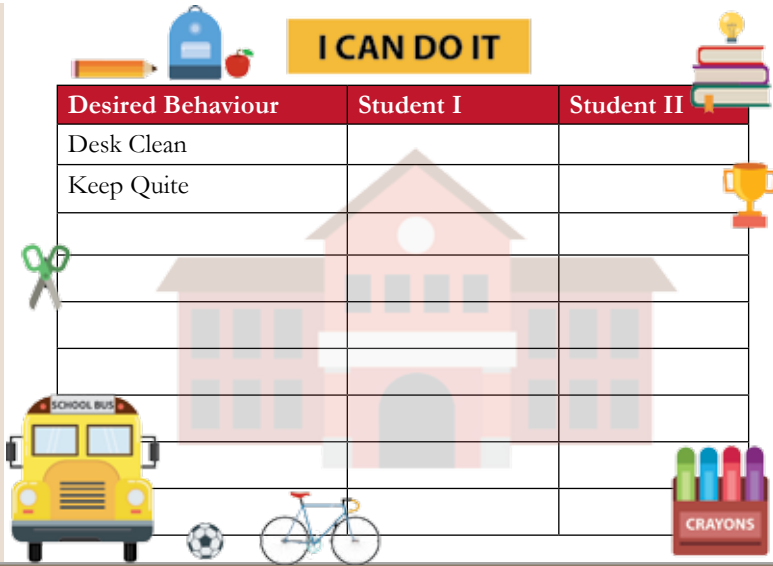
The teacher is now ready to start the Game. During those times that the game is in effect in the classroom, the teacher continues to carry out his or her usual instructional practices. The only alteration in the routine is that the teacher is also noting and publicly recording any negative points incurred by either team. The teacher might want to post scores on the blackboard or on a large piece of paper visible to everyone in the room. If working with children in a small group, the teacher can record negative behaviours on a small notepad and later transfer them to the blackboard. Teachers can also choose to publicly announce when another point has been earned as a reminder to the class about acceptable behaviour. It is helpful to keep a weekly tally of points for each team, especially if teams are competing for weekly as well as daily rewards.

Care should be taken to be as consistent as possible in scoring negative behaviours. Winning teams should be praised as well as rewarded for their efforts. Teachers may want to alter the Game as required (e.g., changing rewards or more carefully defining acceptable and unacceptable behaviours with students). Obviously, any alteration of the Game, no matter how small, should be shared with the classroom before being put into effect.

TOKEN ECONOMY

Children with special needs, and particularly children with autism, need a dense schedule of reinforcement to acquire all the different skills that they lack. Within an inclusive classroom it is advisable for a teacher to do so for the entire class, by ensuring participation of all children. This will facilitate the child with autism to learn to wait to get a promised item.





Token Economy may work as a dense schedule of reinforcement that can be introduced in a classroom in a fun and interactive manner, and also has a possibility of being used to display loss of privilege – known as the **response cost** procedure – as a consequence of inappropriate behaviour. A token system is appropriate for use with the enhancement of a skill that a child is already able to do independently but whose frequency needs to be increased, or for the reduction of an inappropriate behaviour that a child is aware of doing and is capable of controlling – but needs help to increase or reduce the frequency.

What can be used as tokens?

The term “token” suggests something physical, however tokens can also be shiny star stickers, stickers with smiley faces, ticks on a chart against children’s names, stars on a list, etc., that appeal to the children in class. The token should be such that it attracts the children.



HOW TO PREPARE A CHART FOR TOKEN ECONOMY IN CLASSROOMS

- Make the chart colourful and appealing to the children.
- List down the behaviours/rules that include the classroom rules that the children need to follow. For example, keeping the classroom clean, keeping the desk clean, maintaining friendly behaviour with classmates, engaging in classroom interactions, homework completion (make the language as simple as possible; the first column should have the rules or desired behaviours leading to token, the top row can have names of children listed). The target behaviour can be different for different students, depending on the need and ability of the child.

PROCEDURE

1. Behaviour to be reduced or skill to be enhanced is identified.
2. A set of possible rewards that can be earned by the child for a predetermined number of tokens is identified. These could include things like a chance to be the class monitor for a day, extra playtime, chance to decide the song to be sung during music period, etc. Different rewards should have different token values based on their value for the child. The reward list should be displayed in the class along with the number of tokens required for a particular reward.
3. A token that can be easily managed is decided. The child should not have access to these tokens from anywhere else.
4. The children are informed that for every instance of the target behaviour, s/he will be given a token. At the end of the week or day, s/he can 'exchange' the tokens received for a reward of her/his choice.

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WHERE AND WHEN CAN TOKEN ECONOMY BE USED?

During academic sessions, the teacher could give a star on a card that is kept pasted on the student's desk for independent

effort to complete a unit of work. Once a predetermined number of tokens have been earned, the child could be given access to some preferred activity. Over time the quantum of work that needs to be completed can be increased.



During free playtime, the teacher could put a pebble in a jar for every five minutes spent without grabbing toys from others. Once the jar is full, the child may be given special access to her/his favorite toy.

Other situations where token economy may prove beneficial are:

- to maintain performance over extended periods of time;
- to increase attention to otherwise neglected rules/behaviours;
- to decrease disruptive behaviour; and,
- to increase motivation towards completion of tasks.

A WORD OF CAUTION

The effort required to earn a token:

- should not be so large as to make it unattractive;
- nor should it be so low that the teacher gets overburdened with having to keep on giving out tokens.



CONCLUDING NOTE TO THE TEACHERS

Thank you for reading till the end. After reading the handbook, do not assume that we have provided a handy solution to each and every problem. Please remember, like the syndrome itself, each child is different. As the spectrum has various shades, so has the kid. Therefore, always remember, **one size does not fit all**. Keep questioning your presumptions, as they sometimes could just be stereotypes.

School children with Autism Spectrum Disorder are born with different hues, but this makes them special. Each child is as special as you are to the world. This is when you get an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of budding minds. What you do today, will make her/his tomorrow. Remember, every child has a dream.

*I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.*

– W.B. Yeats

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Andhra Pradesh
9. Madhavi Kumar
Associate Professor (Rtd.)
CIET, NCERT, New
Delhi
10. Parasuram Ramamoorthi
Chairman
VELVI
Madurai
Tamil Nadu
11. Purnima Jain
Director, Teacher Training
Cell,
Tamana, School of Hope
New Delhi
12. Satyam
Clinical Psychologist
Asst. Professor, Clinical
Psychology

- Department of
Psychiatry
P.G.I.M.E.R.
Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia
Hospital
New Delhi
13. Shyamala Dalvi
Autism Consultant
Freelancer, Mumbai
14. Suma Sastry
Counsellor/Trainer
Information and
Resource Centre
- (For Autism and
other Developmental
Disabilities)
Bengaluru, Karnataka
15. Taposhi Ghoshal
Designer and Illustrator
Freelancer
New Delhi
16. Tripti Mathur
Scriptwriter and Freelancer
New Delhi



APPENDIX 3

SUPPORT GROUPS AND ORGANISATION

ANDHRA PRADESH

AARAMBH

H8-3-966/27

Behind Ameerpet-Kamma Sangam, Road
No. 3

Nagarjuna Nagar

Yellareddy Guda

Hyderabad – 500 073

Tel: 96180 76870

Email: aarambhyd@gmail.com

Website: www.aarambh-autism.org

ASAP

(Autism Society of Andhra Pradesh)

Pravara Educational Trust

Road No. 63A, Jubilee Hills

Near Jubilee Hills Check Post

Hyderabad – 500 033

Tel: 40-64502596, 98485 13192

Email: info@asap.org.in

Web: www.asap.org.in

Development Centre for Children with Autism

1143 Sri Siddartha Campus

Srinagar Colony

Hyderabad – 500 073

Tel: 040-23732285

Email: eadara_raj@yahoo.co.in

ASSAM	<p>Assam Autism Foundation House No. 10, ANANDAM, Lakheswar Baruah Path, Guwahati – 781020 Tel : 0091-9864027292, 9706014608 Email: autiassam@gmail.com, shabinaloveschildren@gmail.com Website: www.aaf.org.in</p> <p>Shishu Sarothi, Ramakrishna Mission Road, Birubari, Guwahati Tel: 0361-470990</p>
BIHAR	<p>J.M. Institute of Speech & Hearing Road No. 5, Indrapuri P.O. Keshari Nagar Patna, Bihar Tel: +91-612-2264805, +91-612-6414441</p>
CHATTISGARH	<p>Akanksha, Lions School for Mentally Handicapped Lions Den, Jalvihar Raipur – 492007</p>
GOA	<p>Diuli Daycare Centre cum Preschool 841/1, Alto Porvorim, Goa – 403 521 Tel: 08322414916</p> <p>Jyot Special School Kutarkar Residency Near Multipurpose School Borda, Margao, Goa – 403 601 Tel: 0832-2765097</p>



GUJARAT

Disha Charitable Trust

319, Race Course Towers, Gotri Road,
Vadodara – 390 007

Gujarat

Tel: 91-0265-2325250

Fax: 2321229

Email: dishatrustbaroda@gmail.com

dishaautismcentre@yahoo.com

Website: <http://www.disha.org/>

Divine Academy

9-10, Ankur Commercial Complex,
Ankur Cross Road, Naranpura,
Ahmedabad – 380 013 Tel: 079-27452517

PNR Society

Smt. P.N.R. Society for Relief and
Rehabilitation of the Disabled, 51,
Vidyanagar, Bhavnagar – 364 002,
Tel: 0278-2423917

HARYANA

ORKIDS

35, Gulmohar Marg, DLF II, Gurugram,
Haryana – 122 002 Ph:124-4362258

Arpan Institute for Mentally Handicapped Children

Gandhinagar, Rohtak – 124 001

Khushboo Welfare Society

Near Lions School Center for
Children with Multiple Disabilities
Sector-10, A, Gurugram, Haryana
– 122 001 Tel: 0124-4140887



JHARKHAND

Deepshikha Arya Samaj Mandir
Swami Shraddhanand Marg, Ranchi

PATH (People for the Advancement of the Handicapped)

H6/1, Chenab Road, Sakchi,
Jamshedpur – 831 001
Tel: 0943196502

Asha Kiran School

Opp. Telco Main Hospital, Telco Colony,
Jamshedpur – 831 004
Tel: 0657-6694290

KARNATAKA

Academy for Severe Handicaps and Autism (ASHA)

L-76/A, (Opposite to L-50)
Kirloskar Colony,
HBCS 3rd Stage, 4th Block,
Basaveswaranagar,
Bengaluru – 560 079.
Tel: 080-23225279/23230357
Email: info@ashaforautism.com
Web: <http://www.ashaforautism.com/>

Autism Society of India

60, Vittal Mallya Road
Bangalore – 560 001
Tel: 98459-53473, 080-41511345
Email: autismsociety@gmail.com,
autismsocietyofindia2006@gmail.com
Website: www.autismsocietyofindia.org

Sunshine Centre for Autism

280, 6th Cross, Domlur Layout
Bengaluru – 560 071
Tel: 08065360892
Email: sunshineautism@vsnl.net

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KERALA	<p>Autism Training Centre (State Child Welfare Council) V/524, Mythri Nagar, Peringavu, Thrissur – 18 Kerala Tel: 0487 2360946. Director’s No. 9745614208 Website: http://www.autismschoolthrissur.com/</p>
MADHYA PRADESH	<p>Kanha Society for Creative Development for Autism M-8, Sector 2-B, Saket Nagar, Bhopal – 462 024 Tel: +91-9826951010</p> <p>Nirman Educational Society Nandanvan, 1 M.G. Road, Indore Tel: +917312510440</p> <p>Composite Regional Centre for Persons with Disabilities Near Nutan College, Link Road No. 2, Shuivajinagar, Bhopal – 462 016 Tel: 0755-578073</p>
MANIPUR	<p>All Manipur Mentally Handicapped Persons Welfare Organisation Keshamthang Top, Lerak, Imphal – 795 008 Tel: 223 537</p>



MAHARASHTRA

Aarambh Autism Center,
Plot No. 24,
Mahda Colony, Near Sangram Singh
School,
Shahanoor Miya, Aurangabad,
Maharashtra
Tel: 8275284178
Email: ambikanidhu@gmail.com
Website: www.aarambhtrust.com

Ashiana Institute for Autism,
Nityanand Marg Municipal School,
Opposite Garware, Sahar Road, Andheri
East, Mumbai
Tel: 022-26845062, 26125742
Email: ashianainstitute@gmail.com
Website: www.ashianaforautism.com

ASPIRE Educational Services
205AA
LBS Marg
Ghatkopar (W)
Mumbai
Tel: 9967485161
Email: aspiedu@gmail.com

MEGHALAYA

**Dwar Jingkyrmen School for Children
in Special Education**
Stoniland,
Shillong – 793 003
Tel: 0364-221226

**Mary Rice Center for Special
Education Lady Veronica Lane**
Laitumkhras
Shillong-3
Tel: 0364-02210630



<p>NEW DELHI & NCR</p>	<p>SOCH Sector-27, Gurugram – 122 009 Tel: 9910199877 Email: msamnani77@gmail.com Website: www.sochindia.org</p> <p>Action For Autism (AFA) The National Centre for Autism Pocket 7 & 8, Jasola Vihar New Delhi – 110 025 Tel: 91-11-65347422 Tel: 91-11-40540991, 40540992 Fax: + 91 11 4054 0994 Email: afa.india@autism-india.org helpline.afa@autism-india.org email.afa@autism-india.org Website: http://www.autism-india.org</p>
<p>ODISHA</p>	<p>ARMAAN N-2/36, IRC Village Bhubaneswar – 751 015 Odisha Tel: 0674 2552030,09556934191 Email: armaan@blossomsschool.in</p>



ODISHA

**Centre for Autism Therapy,
Counselling and Help (CATCH)**

26, Madhusudan Nagar

Unit 4

Bhubaneswar – 751 001

Odisha

Tel: 9937004040

Email: jenareeta@hotmail.com

Website: <http://www.catchindia.org>

Manage Autism Now (MAN) Trust

Flat No. 411 Krishna Arcade Dolamundai

Odisha 751 007

Tel: 9437315517

E-mail: mantrust2010@hotmail.com,

mama.chinu@hotmail.com

Website: www.manodisha.org

PUNJAB

**Blue Rose School for Children
with Autism**

5, Hargobind Nagar, Sirhind Road,

Opp. Govt. Press, Patiala

Tel: 0175-2360958, 93567-67367,

8054259491

Email: autismindiatoday@yahoo.com

Darpan

175A, Sarabha Nagar,

Ludhiana

Tel : 09417160463, 0161-4613463

Email: darpanautism@hotmail.com

Website: darpanautism.org

PUNJAB

Soch

13, Gujral Nagar
Jalandhar City
Tel: 98143 60213, 9814060213
E-mail: soch.jal@gmail.com,
anjali.dada@hotmail.com
<https://www.facebook.com/anjali.dada>

RAJASTHAN

Approach Autism Society

41, Nemi Sagar,
Vaishali Nagar,
Jaipur: 302 021
Tel: 0141-6599102, 9214309551,
9990022330
Email: approach.autism@gmail.com
Website: www.approach-autism.in

Sambhav

B-4/24, Chitrakoot
Ajmer Road
Jaipur
Mob: 09214350987
Email: aartitiwari_7feb@yahoo.com

Sambhav Special School for Autism

28, Kasturba Nagar, Nirman Nagar
Ajmer Road, Jaipur
Tel: 0140-3155580, 09309374871,
09680249165
Email: sambhavjpr@gmail.com
Website: sambhavschool.org



TAMIL NADU

PMAID (Parents Movement for Autistic and Intellectually Disabled)

No. 687, HIG II, 3rd Street
Mogappair Lake,
Chennai 600 037
Tel/Fax: 044-43500056

Resource Centre:

No. 5, Blue Beach Road,
Neelangerai,
Chennai – 600 041
Tel: 044-65461010
Tel: 044-42862221
Email: info@wecanindia.org
Website: www.wecanindia.org

Sankalp Learning Centre

Q-9, New No. 41, 6th Avenue.
Chennai – 600 040
Tamil Nadu
Tel: 044-42113947
Email: sulata.sankalp@airtelbroadband.in



UTTAR PRADESH

Well Being Special School

218, Gyan Khand-1
Indirapuram, Ghaziabad
UP – 201 001
Tel: 91-120-2691296, 6583395,
9911958619
Email: drritavats@hotmail.com

Muskan

Special Education Centre for Autism
M.S. 39, Sec-D (Near Puraniya Chauraha),
Aliganj, Lucknow
Tel: 0522-2334811, 09794904682

Parents Network for Autism

C-213, Patel Park
Nirala Nagar
Lucknow – 226 020
Tel: 0522-2786508



WEST BENGAL

Alokdhara School

1/2D, Prantik Pally, Bose Pukur Road
Near Bose Pukur Durgapuja Club
Kolkata – 700 042
Email: sudeepgo@rediffmail.com

Autism Society West Bengal

D/1/A, Katjunagar, Jadavpur,
Kolkata – 700 032
Tel: 033-6458 1576, 9830139173
Email: autismsocietywb@gmail.com,
aswb.information@gmail.com
Website: www.autismsocietywb.org

Creating Connections

(Mrs. Shneel Mukerji)
10/4 Block B
6 Sunny Park
Kolkata – 700019
Mobile: 09830941233, 09810225923
Email: shaneelm@gmail.com



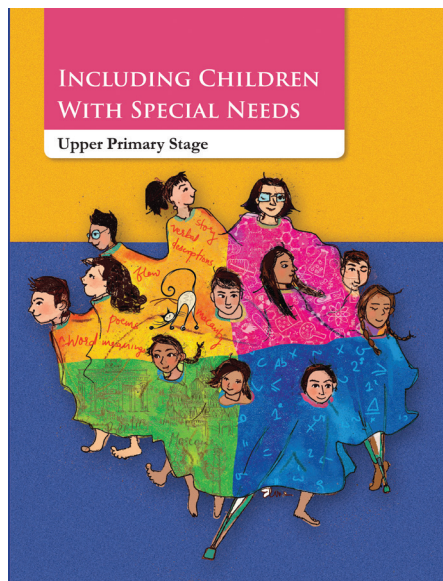
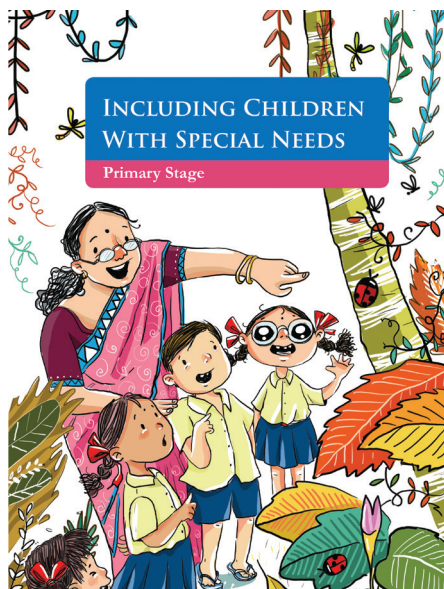
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ISBN—978-93-5007-332-2

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IN A NUTSHELL

- Always use VISUAL AIDS when teaching the CWA and other visual forms when communicating with the child.
- REINFORCE the child constantly.
- Seat the CWA IN FRONT OF THE CLASS so that it provides easy access for the teacher to communicate with her.
- Ensure that you have provided the CWA with a BUDDY GROUP.
- Ensure that the EXAM PAPER IS ADAPTED according to the guidelines given in this handbook.

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विद्यया ऽ मृतमश्नुते



एन सी ई आर टी
NCERT

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