



## New Students with Autism

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As an early childhood special education teacher before working as an autism consultant, I know the anticipation and sometimes the worry getting new students can bring. This can be especially true when a student has a diagnosis or educational verification of autism.

Don't let this be the case for you. I can honestly say that working with students on the autism spectrum has been the greatest source of satisfaction that I have had in my professional career. Partnering with educators as an ASD consultant has given me the opportunity to observe some teacher qualities that I think are essential for success with students on the autism spectrum. In this article I am going to share my top 3 teacher qualities in hopes that they will help you prepare for your new student(s) with autism.

1.) Have a sense of HUMOR! There are just some days you have to laugh at yourself or the situation. I remember one occasion when the principal was in the classroom doing my annual evaluation. For some reason one student with autism decided to take off all of his clothes and put on a pink tutu, from the dress up center. It could have been a very stressful event, but thankfully we both saw the humor in it. It was also a really good sensory experience (scratchy tutu) as well as a functional dressing activity for the student.

2.) Learn all you can about autism. This one is so critical to working effectively with students who have autism. If you

understand autism, you will be able to look beyond behaviors and skill deficits to find solutions. Understanding autism also helps you not take social errors personally. This is really important for you to develop a good relationship with the student. People with autism often have the great gift of being direct. I've been told that I am too short, laugh too loud, am a bad cook and the list goes on. These things are all true but I understand autism and have learned not to be offended easily. I do recommend making a note to work on this with the student later so he/she doesn't offend someone else who doesn't understand autism.

3.) Know what motivates the individual. I think this is the most overlooked simple strategy that there is in effectively working with students with autism. To effectively teach new skills, or shape existing skills, increase compliance, etc. you need to find what the child likes and get control of it. Let's face it, we all work for a paycheck and the same is true for individuals with autism. What is motivating to someone with autism can be different than what motivates peers so you might need to be creative! A great resource on using special interests to support students with autism is a book called *Just Give Him the Whale!* By Paula Kluth.

These are just a few tips to get you started with your new students. Hope you have a great year.

Did you know...

We have an extensive list of local supports in your area! Here is how to find them:

1. Visit our web site
2. Click on the Local Service Search
3. Click on the drop down arrow to find local supports in your area!
4. If you have something that you would like added, please email us.



Direct link to our website:

[www.KansasASD.com](http://www.KansasASD.com)

[www.TASNBehaviorSupports.com](http://www.TASNBehaviorSupports.com)

### TIPS FROM THE CORNER:

At the beginning of the school year there are so many details that require your focus. When it comes to effective investment of time we've identified four key practices that are proven to impact the success of your school year.

#### 1) Positive Relationships

Invest time and effort in developing rapport with your students. Quickly learn and address students by name. Conduct an interest inventory to learn about student's interests and accomplishments. Be positive and enthusiastic. Share your love of teaching and excitement to be spending the school year getting to know your students and teaching them your content. Students are more likely to follow your directions and engage in learning when they feel trusted, safe and valued. Your initial investments can reap huge benefits for your students and your learning environment.

#### 2) Expectations and Procedures

Ensure students that you have created a positive learning environment with clear expectations for safe, respectful, and responsible behavior. Explicitly teach expectations and procedures like you teach academic skills following the Teach Show Practice Feedback model. Rather than beginning with a long list, begin with a few key expectations and procedures that illustrate your learning environment as a safe place where students respect each other and follow expectations for learning.

#### 3) Specific Frequent Feedback

If you want to ensure the expectations and procedures you teach are repeated, provide frequent specific feedback during the acquisition stage of the new skill. Avoid non-specific feedback like, "Good job." Instead state specifically what the student did to follow the expectation or procedure. That way there is no question as to what all students should do to be successful in your classroom.

## SEPTEMBER TRAININGS

**September 10, 3:00-3:45; 4:00-4:45**

**Autism Spectrum Disorders: The Basics**

Link to register:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JNVN9TB>

**September 11, 3:00-3:45; 4:00-4:45**

**Developing an Overall Classroom Schedule**

Link to register:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NLQTWXQ>

**September 17 & 18, 3:00-3:45; 4:00-4:45**

**Two Part Series: Getting Ready for your New Student with ASD**

Link to register for Part 1: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NLMRLFM>

Link to register for Part 2: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NLG2YTJ>

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NLG2YTJ>

**September 19, 9:00am-11:30 am**

**K-CART/ TASN KS Autism Insurance Update**

Link to register:

<http://www.kansasasd.com/trainingcalendar.php?m=9&y=2014&d=19>

**September 24-26**

**TBST Functional Assessment Based Interventions Training**

This training is by application only.

**September 24, 3:00-3:45; 4:00-4:45**

**Administrators & ASD: What You Need to Know**

Link to register:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NVLD3CJ>

#### 4) Active Engagement

When students are actively engaged in instruction, they are much less likely to engage in disruptive behavior. Be clear in your learning expectations for students, what does it look like/ sound like to be a responsible learner in your classroom. Provide frequent opportunities for all students to respond; vary responses from verbal responses, written responses, and action responses. Alternate individual with group responses.

By implementing the practices outlined, you will be on the road to establishing effective, prevention-based classroom management strategies that foster positive relationships between teacher and students and help to create a productive learning environment. Look for additional ideas in next month's newsletter.

