



EVIDENCE -BASED

CONSULTING

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Hello all!

Field trip, those two words put smiles on the faces of children and fear into the hearts of adults. One of my favorite field trip memories is that of my dripping wet colleague exiting a school bus after a field trip. In tow was one of our students, slightly less dripping wet. "You didn't add, 'Walk around ponds' to the rules", she huffed. The truth is that neither one of us had reason to suspect this student would wade through any body of water prior to that day. A walkthrough of the site may have reminded us of his intense love of frogs and put us on guard for potential problems. Field trips offer a break from the classroom routine and an opportunity for students to experience new places.

Those 2 elements are exactly what can turn field trip fun into field trip meltdown for some of our students. There are a few things you can do prior to field trips to reduce stress for everyone.

✚ Prepare early:

- Visit the field trip destination ahead of time. Do a walk through and look for potential problem areas, restroom locations and spots for your student to "chill out" if things get tense. While you are there, take pictures for a social narrative. Pictures of field trip locations may also be found on websites.
- Introduce a social narrative to the student several days prior to the trip. Include a description of the trip as well as important trip rules in the story. State rules as a "do" statement instead of a "don't". For example: "Walk with your buddy" instead of "Don't run away". Send a copy home so parents can review also.
- Have a plan B and C. This may include emergency phone numbers, extra adult supervision and potentially an alternate ride back to school if the student is unable to stay the entire trip.

✚ Prime the student before leaving:

- Review rules. Make sure they are written or represented by pictures depending on the student. Power cards are great to keep in a pocket.
- Review a visual schedule of the day's activities. A schedule reduces anxiety. Take it with you!

✚ Plan for down time:

- Unstructured time can be the most difficult. Have a picture or word choice list prepared that represents activities to choose from during wait time, bus rides, or an early school return. Take along those activities in a bag. If you don't offer choices, the student may choose to do something you don't like.

This month's featured article is: Social Stories, Social Scripts and the Power Card Strategy, written by Elisa Gagnon. It can be found on line at <http://www.education.com/reference/article/social-scripts-stories-asperger-ASD/?page=2> . Other good resources for learning more about social narratives include the Social Narrative Module at http://www.autisminternetmodules.org/user_mod.php and our Classroom Materials page at kansasasd.com .

Happy reading and safe travels!

Lori Chambers
Regional Systems Coordinator, KISN
lchambers2@kumc.edu