



Autism and Tertiary Behavior Supports
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November 2012

Reducing the Impact of Holiday Hustle and Bustle

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November marks the beginning of the holiday season and the end of our routine as we know it. As a self-proclaimed Holidayholic, even I will admit that the Grinch may have had a point when he said, "Pooh-pooh to the Whos". Surviving the holidays is a little like getting through an elective surgical procedure. The air is chilly. There are frequent unidentifiable smells and people you don't even know smile at you. You inevitably find yourself dressed in something you wouldn't be caught dead in at any other time. While knowing it is "for the best", you are still not quite sure how you will pay for the whole thing. In the end, you are left dazed and in need of rest. For most, there is a certain amount of stress to be found in the midst of the holiday celebration. Our students are not immune. The hustle and bustle of the season can result in disrupted routines, both at home and school. Out of sync schedules result in out of sync kids. Any changes, even the most joyful ones, can trigger an increase in anxiety. Here are a few tips for maintaining classroom cheer and decreasing the likelihood of abominable meltdowns:

- Remember, we all experience our environment differently. Sights, sounds, feels and smells may be pleasant to some, while being physically

painful to others. Be prepared to turn off twinkling lights or stash the pumpkin scented potpourri, if it irritates a student.

- Prepare students for the upcoming visual changes in the classroom. If you have pictures of your classroom during the holidays, show your students before you change the room to prepare them. If you don't have pictures, take them this year! For students who enjoy maps, draw a very simple schematic of where things will go in your room.
- Decorate and take down in stages. Sudden changes may be distracting for some and anxiety building for others.
- Always indicate a change in routine on the student's schedule. You can't assume that because you have been talking about an upcoming activity, your student understands the impact it will have on his own schedule.
- Keep daily routines intact whenever possible. It is easy to skip seemingly mundane parts of the schedule when our lives are so packed; however, for some, these small tasks may be the

glue that holds the day together.

- 🌀 Teach students how to appropriately leave a situation or ask for help when things become too overwhelming. Even highly verbal students may have difficulty finding words when overwhelmed, so provide them with other options to let you know they need to leave the area.
- 🌀 Give the student a calendar that indicates special events, shortened school days and vacation days. Encourage parents to add their own information to the calendar, especially if they will be traveling.
- 🌀 Teach appropriate holiday social interaction. Provide written scripts and topic boards to help the student practice seasonal phrases and conversation topics with peers and staff. Use the student's calendar to indicate the time frame these topics end (I.e., we stop asking what someone is doing for Christmas after December 25).
- 🌀 Enjoy your students. Enjoy their persistence in maintaining their individualism in a challenging environment. Enjoy the strength of their fascinations. Most of all, enjoy the triumph of being a positive influence in the life of a young person.

Have a safe and joyous holiday season from TASN Autism and Tertiary Behavior Supports!

TIPS FROM THE CORNER: Behavior Intervention Plans

Very often, I meet with a school and look at the behavior plans that are developed for the student and notice a few reoccurring things. Many behavior plans don't clearly step out what is to be done to support appropriate behavior. They go from, "student will behave appropriately" to "student will be removed" with almost no steps in between. Below are some things to consider:

1. Plans should be written off of specific student data. If no data has been collected or function of behavior

determined, you have nothing on which to write a plan.

NOVEMBER TRAININGS

NOV 1-2, 8:00AM-4:00PM

Autism Diagnostic Team (ADT) Training
Presented by Sarah Hoffmeier & KU Med CCHD - Junction City, Kansas

NOV 20, TIME: TBD

Tertiary Behavior Support Team Training, Part 2
Presented by Linda Wilkerson - Wichita, Kansas

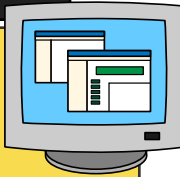
NOV 27, 3:30-4:15PM

Webinar Series - Modifications in an Early Childhood Setting
Presented by Lindy McDaniel - Online

NOV 30, 9:00AM-1:00PM

Autism Diagnostic Team (ADT) Re-Trainings
Presented by Sarah Hoffmeier - Topeka, KS

For more information, please visit our Training Calendar, found on our website - www.KansasASD.com



determined, you have nothing on which to write a plan. You must identify function and maintaining consequences prior to writing steps on a behavior intervention plan (BIP) or you could reinforce behaviors you don't want.

2. Plans should be detailed

Behavior plans are meant to be a detailed list of steps taken if a child's behavior becomes problematic. It should list what will happen if inappropriate behavior occurs and how they will guide the student back to acceptable behaviors. It should show steps, alternative plans, and personnel that will be involved in the plan. If necessary, it should detail the emergency safety intervention (ESI) plan, listing personnel being used in each step. Personnel must have appropriate training when involved in ESI situations.

3. Plans should be available to ANY staff /personnel that might have contact with the student

Teachers of all classes the student is enrolled in, lunch workers, bus monitors/drivers, hall monitors, school nurse, etc... should all have a copy in hand and know what to do if a situation occurs. If necessary, they should also know the ESI plan.

Remember, "cooling off" outside of the school setting and without instructional support may count as OSS. See Process Handbook page 219. Be very cautious when placing such steps on a BIP.

