



Meet the Quinter Team  
Josiah, Tracie, Ryan, and Kynda

# Q x 2

## QUALITY TEAMWORK

### QUINTER, KS



The ASSIST TEAM in Northwest KS  
Assessment, School Support, Interventions for  
Students and Team members.

TASN ATBS is excited to highlight a team who understands the value of TEAMWORK. This team from NKESC in western Kansas has attended several TASN trainings including Summer Institute on Structured Teaching, Social Competencies, It's All About You, VB Mapp, Verbal Behavior Bootcamp, Basic Skills, and Advanced Verbal Behavior. In this month's newsletter read about the Quinter team's journey with a student named Josiah and his progress from preschool through 4<sup>th</sup> grade. You'll hear from each team member and see photos of his supports and program. Please understand this program was individualized for one student and as you consider your own programming keep in mind the unique strengths, needs, and preferences of each of your students.



**Tracie Betz, Special Education Teacher**  
**ASSIST Team Member**  
[tbetz@nkesc.org](mailto:tbetz@nkesc.org)

When I first got to know Josiah, he was minimally verbal and had some challenging behaviors. We are so proud of his progress and are happy to report he is now labeling, requesting, and sharing. His communication skills have improved and increased. Josiah now moves through centers and is learning so many new things. Josiah participates in what we call learning rotations. Learning rotations take place three times a day and include: direct instruction, independent work, self-directed choice, sensory break, and life skills activities. Josiah also participates in the general education classroom with the support of his general education teachers. Over the years Josiah has used a variety of visual schedules. His first was an object schedule. He then progressed from a photo flipbook to a first/next schedule. Currently he uses a posted schedule that he checks at every transition. For organization an expanded folder is kept at each station with his verbal behavior program materials, and other specially designed instructional activities to support his engagement.

The collaboration of Josiah's team has been integral to his success and has increased my confidence in supporting him. Our autism consultant, Teri will share ideas for structure and is always there to problem solve collaboratively. Teri has had the same trainings and therefore we have the vocabulary to easily discuss programming. Our OT provides us with ideas for the sensory room and how to provide self-regulation instruction. Josiah has had three different SLP's over the years and all of them have impacted his progress to this day. They have provided therapy in his classroom, practiced core/fringe words, and have implemented aspects of the verbal behavior program while using the same target concepts in other speech-language activities to support generalization of the skills. I have also been blessed to have wonderful paraprofessionals who are willing to learn, support his program, and believe in him.

A critical component of creating a program like this is the commitment to training all staff. This commitment allows my paraprofessionals to attend training two times a year provided by our ASSIST team in Oakley. We are fortunate to have a district and cooperative that supports training our paraprofessionals and other certified staff. Josiah's general education teachers also continually support his progress and inclusion. Collaboration, communication, and organization are key to this support. Being in a smaller district with all staff under one roof helps support this, however intentional planning must take place.

Besides the supportive staff I have at school, I also have strong support from Josiah's mother. We keep the lines of communication open through a home and school communication system as well as texts and phone calls. Our ASSIST team also provides training to parents and families and Josiah's mom has taken advantage of this opportunity. I do believe all of the training our team has attended through TASN has helped us create a cohesive and successful program. While our program is very successful and we see Josiah making great gains it has taken time, dedication, flexibility, and a team who is willing to tackle the challenges and create new ideas based on individual student needs every year. It definitely takes a village and a big toolbox! ~Tracie

**Ryan Walt, Speech-Language Pathologist**[rwalt@nkesc.org](mailto:rwalt@nkesc.org)

I have been on Josiah's team for three years and have seen tremendous progress over this time. Specifically, we have seen growth in his expressive language skills. This year we are hearing more spontaneous requesting and the use of simple 3+ word phrases to communicate throughout the day. We have used several supports and methods over the years, and I believe it was a combination of all of these strategies that have supported his communication and growth.

Early on, his team used language aided boards that allowed Josiah to point and imitate words that contained highly motivating things. The team also used low tech versions of Core Word boards and Words for Life-Lamp APP on the IPAD. We incorporated a word of the week with imitation and modeling from the staff in conjunction with teaching Core Words. Josiah was able to point to pictures and would imitate with verbalization. The team continues to evaluate the best methods for Josiah's communication needs throughout the day. Josiah's use of pictures has decreased as he gains new vocabulary words to use verbally throughout the day. Our team continues to use visual communication prompts to support Josiah with initiating language and he has Core Words available to use when he needs them.

This past year our team implemented the verbal behavior program. Tracie approached the team with this program following a training she attended. I trust Tracie and wanted to keep an open mind that all kids need different approaches based on their needs. I went to both the Bootcamp and Basic Skills trainings and felt that we should try these strategies with Josiah. He is making weekly progress. Tracie and I work closely together, and I use their pictures and data program book to implement the VB program at the beginning of every therapy session. It takes 4-5 minutes and then Josiah completes an activity with the same targeted concepts in different carryover activities so he can continue to grow with the target concept and other skills he needs to communicate. For example, some of his current targets are tacting (labeling) actions, so I might include books, games or play-based activities to practice those same actions. I am used to taking data every day on all my students, so I was interested in the data system that was used for the VB program. The beauty of the program book we use to keep data is that it allows us to systematically keep track of his targeted concepts through the cold probe with graphs and a detailed list of all targets he has mastered. It is nice to see the book and the graph each time. It allows us to see his progress and guides us to make programming changes if he is not understanding a concept. This team approach allows Josiah to work on the same set of skills and target concepts throughout the day and gives him numerous opportunities to work with a variety of staff and in different settings. ~Ryan

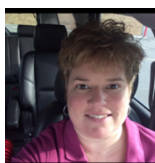
**Kynda Wolf, Para Educator**[kwolf@nkesc.org](mailto:kwolf@nkesc.org)

This is my second year working with Josiah. His schedule is amazing for both Josiah and all of the staff. We all know what is happening throughout each day. It's also important for us to use it if there are changes in the day so we can prepare him ahead of time. He can see the changes visually and this supports him as he transitions and helps him prepare for changes. I get to do a full rotation with him every day. The expanded folder at each rotation supports the structure of each area. It helps us stay organized and helps him see what is expected of him and when the reinforcement is coming. He also has a first/next box we use throughout the activities. It helps keep Josiah motivated and on task. He gets to choose his reinforcement. He works for a variety of things that include writing/drawing, letters, beads, goldfish, M&Ms, and toy box. He used to pick writing every time, so we structured the reinforcement from USED/ NOT USED. He picks from the "not used" section and we move it to the "used" section. This allows us to rotate reinforcement. It's been amazing to see how he will now label verbally what he wants instead of just pointing to the pictures. I have enjoyed watching his communication progress. When Josiah has his visuals available, he communicates verbally more often.

I have been implementing the verbal behavior program since the beginning of this year. I went to the card sort training offered by ASSIST team members: Teri, Tracie, and Amity. It was three days combined into one, so it was a lot of information. I did get to learn and practice with another para from our district, so it seemed less intimidating. They also showed us how to graph and input the data. I now do the cold probe every morning and update the graphs, I do think it is fun to see his strengths come out in the graphs. It's great to see his progress on paper. At first, it is overwhelming, and it did take a few weeks to feel comfortable but doing it daily has allowed it to become second nature. I do think for me it was about not putting too much pressure on myself and realizing it is okay to make mistakes. This has allowed me to become more at ease with implementing. This intensive teaching has supported his vocabulary and he has soared with tacting (labeling) of items, echoic (verbal imitation) skills and has helped improve his speech as well. It has not only supported him verbally tacting the pictures we practice but he is now labeling more items in his environment as well.

Josiah's program works because of the connection we all build. If your student knows you love them, and they like you and you like them it will make things flow easier. For me getting on that child's level has been extremely important. Even if that means I have to get on my hands and knees to bark like a dog and to be silly with him. Josiah likes something he calls the "mouth" (clapping my hands big in front of me). Interacting with him this way has supported our relationship.

You really can't say "I am too good for that or too mature for this" it is really what we signed up for as educators. How awesome that I get paid to have fun. Another key component is good communication between the staff and making sure we are all on the same page, using the same cues asking for the same responses. Of course, being organized and having a great leader to guide the process and team makes all the pieces fit. Tracie Betz is a phenomenal leader who continues to support us and organize us all. I love what I do. ~Kynda



**Teri Berggren, Autism and Low Incidence Consultant**  
**ASSIST Team Coordinator**  
[tberggren@nkesc.org](mailto:tberggren@nkesc.org)

I have known Josiah since he started preschool. His team has always been great about implementing with fidelity, trying new ideas, and reporting his progress. When I first shared the structured teaching framework that I learned at the Summer Institute, Tracie was the first teacher to embrace it. As a consultant I may not get to work with kids on a daily basis, but I do get to support teachers as they implement evidence-based practices and provide programming suggestions to improve student outcomes. I do enjoy collaborating with staff and hope that I can bring another set of eyes to the situation.

Over the years I have supported Josiah in the use of an object schedule, helped with rotations in preschool, supported direct instruction in kindergarten, and helped with sensory strategies. Currently I help support his learning rotations. I believe Josiah's program is successful because of the consistency and dedication of Tracie and her paraprofessionals. They support each other and are always willing to try new strategies. This commitment to collaboration by Tracie and her team results in a solid program for Josiah.

Two years ago, Tracie and I, with the support of TASN staff began a Verbal Behavior Mapp assessment with Josiah. As a result of this on-going assessment, the team decided to implement a highly structured activity, the card sort, during his direct instruction time to enhance his vocabulary, improve his ability to follow directions, increase his imitation skills, and to increase his level of engagement. This intensive teaching strategy uses errorless teaching, error correction, daily data collection, and tracking of reinforcement. Implementing this type of programming did require practice and training the staff. Members of our ASSIST team that attended the Verbal Behavior Bootcamp hosted a full-day workshop in Oakley to train anyone interested in this new method of instruction. Even Josiah's mom came and was so thankful to see the strategies in action. She felt as if she understood the methods and could see why the team wanted to pursue this type of instruction. I do feel that this intensive teaching time and the use of the data program book has resulted in consistency across the staff. I love coming to see the book, the graphs, Josiah's progress and exactly what the current targets are at any moment.

It is obvious that the combination of learning rotations, visual supports, positive behavior interventions, schedule and work systems, verbal behavior interventions, speech/language therapy, OT therapy, and Tracie's phenomenal organizational skills have all resulted in a quality program for this young man. The teamwork in Quinter is amazing. Everyone has a role and takes pride in it. They all want to see him succeed. ~Teri



**Tara Woofter, Occupational Therapist**  
**ASSIST Team Member**  
[twoofter@nkesc.org](mailto:twoofter@nkesc.org)

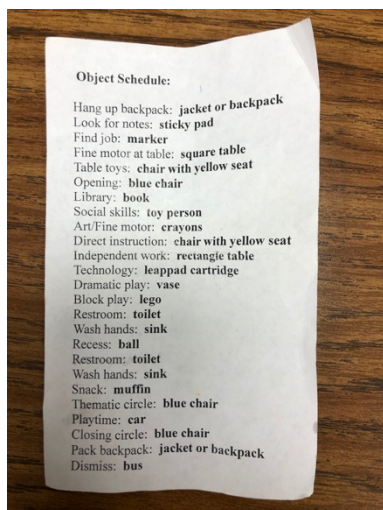
When I first met Josiah, what stuck out to me the most was that he seemed dysregulated. He had difficulty sitting and required many motor breaks in order to complete his work and to be able to transition from one place to another. As a team we have collaborated to provide these necessary breaks throughout his day. His breaks might be getting a drink, taking a walk, or visiting the sensory room. He does have access to the sensory room throughout the day, but it is strategically put on his schedule. As Josiah's Occupational Therapist, the most noticeable change I have seen in him is his ability to regulate himself. I have always felt Josiah's multi-disciplinary team of teachers, Occupational Therapist, nurse, Speech-Language Therapist, Autism Consultant, Psychologist, parents, and administrators have collaborated well together, we talk things over as a group, develop our thoughts, and come up with a plan together. In Quinter, they have great communication between disciplines, which is extremely important for me as I am not there every day. Knowing Josiah's transitional cues, schedule, and reinforcements are important for our therapy times as now I can see him anywhere in the building and it doesn't throw him off. We can now change what we do in the sessions or who sees him and where. He knows the system and feels comfortable. This year I have seen improvement in Josiah's ability to communicate verbally. He has been able to name his feelings and request things. This ability to communicate has supported his regulation and our goals for him as well. Josiah is an amazing kid to work with and it is exciting to see him progress. ~Tara



# SCHEDULES

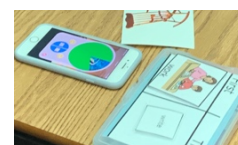
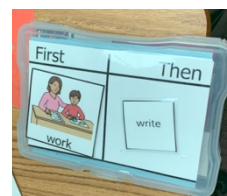
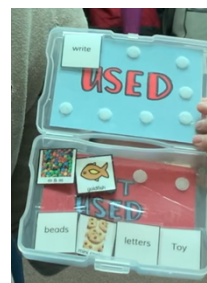


The object schedule used in preschool



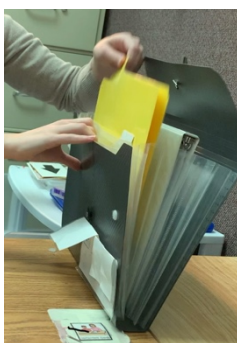
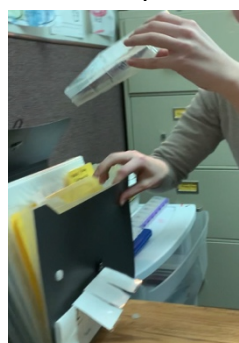
His current schedule is pre-set in sections for quick access throughout the day. He checks in with a name card and takes the next picture to the area. The team is considering making it a matching/functional activity at the end of the day so he can reset his schedule for the next day.

# DIRECT INSTRUCTION



This is our direct instruction area. We use a work system (below), first/next case, and timer to organize this area. We recently added a ball chair that sits inside a crate. We keep his program book here and have a data sheet to keep track of his work and prompting levels. Once a task is mastered it will be moved to independent work.

The first/next case is used for him to choose what he is working for and it helps us visually keep him on track. By implementing the not used/used inside he can rotate his reinforcement and helps us to expand his motivational tools.



The work system is an expanding folder with numbers 1-4. The card sort is usually in file 1 with other specially designed instruction for math, reading, and writing in the other files. We also do a segment with News 24 on here. These tasks are changed out for every rotation except the card sort that is completed every rotation.

# INDEPENDENT WORK (IW)



We store material for direct instruction in this drawer system. We can change out material each rotation and are prepared for our time. Being organized and ready is important for him to be successful.

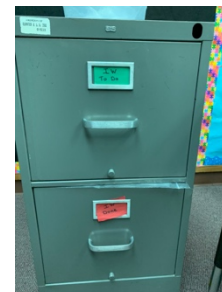
# INDEPENDENT WORK (IW)



Here Josiah uses the same expand file #1-4. He gets work out and completes independently. Our team is looking at putting a "help me" card on the desk to encourage the initiation of requesting. (manding attention when he needs assistance.)



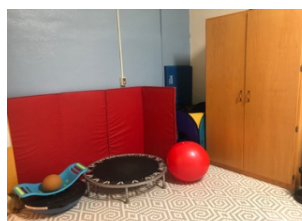
As Josiah completes his work, he moves it to the bin in the desk. We store materials for independent work in this file cabinet. The drawers are labeled IW-To Do and IW- Done. This way we can vary the tasks from session to session. He usually does not see anything twice in the week. When the "To Do" drawer is empty we just switch the tags! ☺



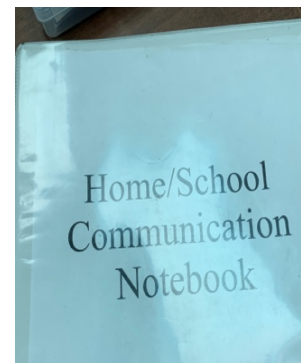
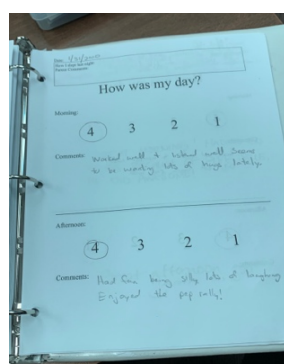
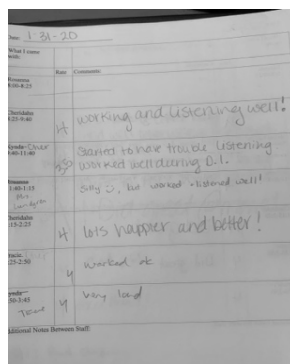
# ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS



Josiah loves to be with his classmates and here he is coming from the gym. He carries around this soft case which allows him to keep his favorite items close. He used to carry all of his favorite items in his hands. This has allowed his hands to be free to participate and yet keep items near.



A few pictures of our sensory room.



The first page is how our staff documents the day for each section. It is averaged, and we circle the number on the second page for parent notebook. This notebook goes home, and parents can use it to share how his night and morning routine went.



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