



PD: Socially Accessible

Autism Spectrum Characteristics

Language Characteristics

People with Autism Spectrum Disorder, to varying degrees, may experience physical and processing issues that make it difficult for them to form sounds and words, comprehend spoken language, or communicate their thoughts. Assistive Technologies including manual sign language, Picture Exchange Communication Systems (cards or items exchanged to communicate thoughts/desires/preferences), and iPad Applications. These de-

vices help people with ASD and their supporters communicate, reducing frustration and acting out and providing incentives for learning - a principle of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

Social Characteristics

Several social characteristics are associated with ASD, an individual with that diagnosis may display some or all of these symptoms to varying degrees: **limited or no interest in interacting with people**, limited use of non-verbal behaviors (pointing, eye contact, facial or other expres-

sions), limited or no interest sharing (asking or signaling for others to share a line of sight, treat, or experience), little or no imaginative or socially imitative play, little or no sign of attachment to people.

A person with any of these traits, even when high-functioning and main-streamed can find difficulty in many everyday situations. Strategies to overcome some of these obstacles include scripting, role-playing, a token system, and social stories, some of which are available in apps for tablet devices, computer

programs, books, or training in the technique.

Conclusions

Understanding of the Communication characteristics associated with ASD allows curriculum and communication designers to consider accessibility of content for parents and children, utilize UDL principles to improve overall design, and evaluate assistive technologies.

See websites listed on the back of this sheet for more info!

Working with Families with Special Needs

Understanding the circumstances of parents means recognizing they may be going through grief over the diagnosis of ASD, financial or marital stress, stress from dealing with the diagnosed child's siblings, and stress from having to learn to use new assistive devices and a new language of terms related to this diagnosis, a treatment plan, or an IEP.

Parents may be making decisions based on a survival instinct or raw emotion - not logic - or what they believe is best for their family as a whole, it is not our place to judge.

For these families an iPad, puppet, or even plastic play food could become an assistive device. We cannot dismiss any knowledge that has prac-

tical application for these parents and should look for ways to design regular instruction to provide space for people with a variety of needs and preferences based on a professional evaluation of the needs of our clients/students/families.

What needs do you see?

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Making a World of Difference to
Make a Different World



We should provide support for the whole family, the child with ASD, the parents, and the siblings at every stage of the process.



In this issue: characteristics of children and families dealing with Autism Spectrum Disorder and implications for instruction and parental involvement.

Assistive Technology

For additional examples of assistive technology using family friendly language from PBS, please visit <http://www.pbs.org/parents/education/learning-disabilities/strategies-for-learning-disabilities/assistive-technology/> where the term is defined and information is provided about how federal law impacts access to assistive technologies by students with special needs.

EdWeb.net Webinars

A full listing of webinars on Autism (ASD) and implications for instruction and parental involvement from EdWeb.net and Eden Autism Services is available with registration at <http://edweb.net>.

View this newsletter online at <http://accessible.shelbyesimmons.me/>