

# Reducing Challenging Behaviors in Students with Autism

Workshop Agenda  
2 hours of presentation  
Thursday, September 30, 2010

Presented by

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&  
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3:00 – 3:15 Introduction

3:15 – 3:30 Purpose & Function of Challenging Behavior

3:30 – 4:00 Early Childhood through Elementary Interventions

- Prevention
  - Pre-Table Stage/Floor Time
  - Connecting: Getting the Student Involved
  - Motivators/Reinforces
  - Sensory

4:00 – 4:15 Stemming Behaviors & Calming Techniques

- Sensory Management Tools

4:15 – 4:45 Middle School to High School Intervention

- History & Management Difficulties
- Connect: Discover Interest
- Determine Triggers (change, sensory)
- Prevention, Choices, tokens, options
- Familiar Aspects
- Staying Calm

4:45 – 5:00 Question and Answer

# Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew

By Ellen Notbohm

I am first and foremost a child.

My sensory perceptions are disordered.

Distinguish between won't and can't.

I am a concrete thinker. I interpret language literally.

Be patient with my limited vocabulary.

Because language is so difficult for me, I am very visually oriented.

Focus and build on what I can do rather than what I can't do.

Help me with social interactions.

Identify what triggers my meltdowns.

**Love me Unconditionally.**

### Be the Guide not the Entertainer

- Don't look @ bh look @ purpose of bh, address the function/purpose in intervention. You can change the bh by understanding why it is happening. Antecedent: what happened b4 the bh occurred (trigger)
- Look @ why, not what is happening

### Children Communicate a Variety of Messages

The Most common Functions of a problem behavior are to:

- ESCAPE some task, demands, activity
- GET ATTENTION, help information, interaction
- Provide SELF-STIMULATION, or escape sensory stimulation
- Demand a TANGIBLE REWARD (object, activity, person)
- DISPLACE ANGER from a previous situation
- Seek RETALIATION

When these behaviors occur, we must ask ourselves, "Why or what was the student trying to achieve?"

### Challenging Behavior Communicates

- A message when a child does not have a language
- Is used instead of language by a child who has limited social skills or has learned that challenging behavior will result in meeting his or her needs

Dimensions of Communication: every communicative behavior can be described by the form and function.

- Function: the reason or purpose of the communicative behavior
- Form: the behavior used to communicate

Ask yourself; what did the behavior look like & what purpose did it serve?

### Children Communicate in Many Ways:

Forms of Communication:

- Words
- Sentences
- Point to a picture
- Eye gaze
- Pulling Adult
- Crying
- Biting
- Tantrums
- Shut down (Stops the demand)

Challenging Behavior is effective, not necessarily efficient

- Children engage in challenging behavior because "it works" for them
- Challenging behaviors results in the child gaining access to something or someone (i.e., obtain/request) or avoiding something or someone (i.e., escape or protest)

Whatever the function of the misbehavior, a crucial strategy to remedy the problem is to teach the student a more appropriate way to attain the desired reward or response. The appropriate alternative behavior can become the targeted skills for a new social skills picture sequence. Sample ideas for appropriate skills to teach for each proposed function of behavior are outlined below.

FUNCTION	INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR	TARGET SKILLS
Escape	Tantrums, physical or verbal aggression, refusals.	Asking for a break, negotiating more time, asking for help to make the task easier. Trying when it's hard, dealing with mistakes.
Get Attention	Teasing, disruptive noises, inappropriate jokes or comments, complaints of being hurt.	Initiating communication or play, joining in communication or play, asking for help, asking to tell or show something to others.
Self-Stimulation	Rocking, hand flapping, twirling.	Performing the self-stimulatory behavior in a less disruptive way, alternative ways to relax or self-soothe.
Tangible Reward	Tantrums for a toy or privilege, refusing to cooperate with anything until reward is given.	Accept no for an answer or learn to wait for what you want, negotiating skills.
Displaced Anger	Verbal or physical aggression directed at the wrong person, refusal to cooperate with any instructions.	Identifying common sources of anger (e. g., someone yelled at or reprimanded the student) and learning to say how you feel to the person who upset you rather than act it out.
Retaliation	Teasing back, hitting back, stealing from someone who upset you.	Recognizing and appropriately expressing emotions, (i.e., Saying how you feel in a positive way "I feel ___ when you ___ because ___"). Telling someone to stop, ignoring, telling an authority.

\* Resource: The Social Skills Picture Book by Jed Baker, Ph. D.

## RESOURCES

### FIRST BOOKS

Children with Autism: A Parent's Guide, Powers, M., Woodbine House (2000)

A Parent's Guide to Asperger Syndrome and High-Functioning Autism: How to meet the Challenges and Help Your Child Thrive, Ozonoff S. Dawson, G., & Mc Partland, J., Guilford Publications, Inc. (2002)

### FIRST WEBSITES

Oklahoma Autism Network

[www.okautism.org](http://www.okautism.org)

Autism Society of America

[www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org)

Autism Speaks

[www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org)

American Academy of Pediatrics

[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

Online Asperger Syndrome Information and Support (Oasis)

[www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger](http://www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger)

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American Academy of Pediatrics. (n.d.) Retrieved January 17, 2008, from <http://www.aap.org>

Association of Science in Autism Treatment. (n.d.) Retrieved January 17, 2008, from <http://www.asatonline.org>

Autism Society of America. (n.d.) Retrieved May 7, 2007, from <http://www.atuism-sociaty.org>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (April 30,2008). Retrieved May 7, 2008, from <http://www.cdc.gov/ncddd/autism/>

National Institute of Mental Health. (April 3, 2008). Retrieved May 7, 2008, from <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/healthinformation/autismmenu.cfm>

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