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Autism Agenda



Linn Benton Lincoln ESD-Cascade Regional Autism Program

Autistic Behavior vs Misbehavior

By Lisa Jo Rudy

How can you tell whether the poor behavior is the result of autistic symptoms or if it's ordinary naughtiness? It's not always easy to distinguish between "autistic" behaviors and "misbehavior."

Many of the behaviors that are typical of children on the autism spectrum might be deemed discipline problems in other kids. For example:

- Kids with autism may screech or yell when overwhelmed or frustrated.
- Some autistic children bolt from the room, hit others, or even injure themselves when upset.
- Children on the spectrum may not look directly at a person when speaking.
- Autistic kids may rock, flick, or pace when they are expected to sit still.¹
- Children with autism may be self-absorbed and inattentive to events or emotions around them.
- In school, children with autism may over or under-react to others' requests or needs (for example, pushing other children in line or ignoring requests to move or hurry).



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AUTISTIC BEHAVIOR VS MISBEHAVIOR CONTINUED....

DIFFICULTY RESPONDING TO KINDNESS

But that's just the tip of the iceberg because autistic children may also have a tough time managing their responses to adult or peer "kindness." Perhaps these examples sound familiar:

- Grandma comes to visit. She sees her autistic grandchild, opens her arms, and asks for a big hug. The grandchild runs in the opposite direction at top speed. Grandma follows him and gives him that hug, only to be rewarded with a kick in the shins.
- Grandpa gives his autistic grandchild a gift, and his grandchild says, at an age when he or she should know better, "I don't like this! I wanted a ___!"
- A kind peer from school agrees to a play date and finds himself ignored for several hours while the autistic host plays alone. Even worse, the guest may spend two hours being told, "Don't touch that!"

All of these behaviors can be embarrassing, and all can lead to hurt or even angry feelings. Yet all are typical of autism, and, in most cases, result from sensory, communication, or behavioral challenges that are part of autism.²

DISTINGUISHING AUTISM FROM MISBEHAVING

Autistic behaviors are usually the result of a few very specific challenges. Because every person with autism is unique, the challenges will look different for each child, but they exist, at some level, in anyone who is correctly diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder.



Sensory Challenges

People with autism are almost always likely to either overreact or under react to sound, light, smells, and touch. The child who runs away from Grandma may actually be responding to the smell of her perfume. The child who hates hugs may dislike the sensation of being squeezed but actually feel affection toward the hugger.

A sensory challenge can be something as minor as the buzz from fluorescent lights.

Sensory challenges may also be the reasons behind "misbehavior" when in a crowded or loud auditorium, squeezed between people online, and so forth. How can you tell when sensory issues are causing a problem? Take these steps:

- **Ask.** If your child is verbal, they may be perfectly capable of explaining behaviors if asked.
- **Watch.** If your child is covering their ears while bolting from the room, it's reasonable to assume that something about the sound in the room is causing a problem.
- **Keep tabs on behaviors.** If your child is usually able to handle church, but on one occasion becomes loud or runs out of the room, it's fairly apparent that something specific has occurred to cause the behavior. But if the behavior is consistent, there may be an ongoing sensory challenge in the environment.

Social Communication Challenges

Everyone with autism has a tough time with social communication at one level or another.² It can be difficult or even impossible to "read" others' emotions, or it may be very difficult to avoid overreacting to others' feelings. It can be very tough to "watch and imitate" others' behaviors.

The fact that others are sitting still and being quiet may not register for an autistic child. How can you tell if your child is having difficulties with social communication?

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AUTISTIC BEHAVIOR VS MISBEHAVIOR CONTINUED....

Notice your child's intent. Difficulties with social communication can make it hard for a child with autism to tell when his actions may be hurtful. Walking away out of boredom or a desire to do something different may look mean-spirited, but there's a very good chance that your child doesn't recognize how his behaviors are likely to affect others.

Remember that your child has developmental delays. A typical 12-year-old should be able to graciously thank grandma for a gift he doesn't really want. A typical 8-year-old may not be able to handle the situation as well. Children with autism are usually quite immature for their age; a teen on the spectrum may behave like a much younger child.

Be aware of how instruction is provided. A teacher says your child is misbehaving at recess by pushing in line, taking extra-long turns on the swings, and so forth. But children with autism, because they rarely learn through imitation, need direct instruction on behavioral expectations.

Did the teacher actually tell your child about the rules of recess play? Provide visual supports and social stories? If not, how was your child supposed to know the rules?



Behavioral Challenges

"Autistic" behaviors are usually self-evident because they are generally quite different from typical behaviors. As a result, you should be able to tell at a glance whether you're seeing misbehavior or autistic symptoms. Here's what to look for:

- **Self-stimulation (stimming):** Many people with autism use unusual physical behaviors such as rocking, pacing, flicking fingers, and humming to calm themselves and stay focused.¹ When you see such behaviors, you can be almost completely certain that they are not a form of misbehavior.
- **Lack of eye contact:** For many people with autism, eye contact can be difficult if not impossible to manage, particularly during a conversation.³ While it is possible to teach a person with autism to maintain eye contact, lack of it is not a form of misbehavior.
- **Self-abuse:** In some cases, particularly (but not exclusively) for people with severe autism, self-abuse is common. Head banging, skin picking, and other behaviors are not intentional though they can be disturbing and should be managed.¹
- **Lack of focus or attention:** People with autism may find it very easy to focus on something and very tough to focus on others.⁴ Often, they are attending without appearing to do so. Sometimes, they are not attending because they are having a tough time following rapid speech or abstract ideas. Very rarely, they are intentionally ignoring a speaker.
- **Noise-making or bolting:** While kids with autism are perfectly capable of making noise or leaving the room just to be annoying, the chances are that they are doing so for other reasons. They may be screeching, humming, or chattering to calm themselves, or bolting from the room to get away from a disturbing situation. As a parent, you will usually be able to tell the difference.
- According to one study, lack of eye contact is a way for the autistic person to decrease unpleasant sensations caused by an over activation in one particular area of the brain.³

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AUTISTIC BEHAVIOR VS MISBEHAVIOR CONTINUED....

ADDRESSING AUTISTIC BEHAVIORS

So you've determined that your child's behaviors are not "misbehaviors" but are, instead, "autistic" behaviors. Now what?

You can, of course, do nothing. And in some cases, that's perfectly reasonable. Why shouldn't your child with autism rock, flick, or pace? If he's hurting no one and creating no problems for himself, why trouble? Often, however, autistic behaviors, while they are not intentional, can cause significant issues. They can cause embarrassment (both for you and your child), create hurt feelings or even angry feelings, or lead to your child being ostracized or excluded from an important group, activity, or setting.

What can you do about that? You can take action on many different levels, depending upon the importance of the situation, your child's abilities and challenges, and your philosophy. Here is a list of options.

Provide Direct Instruction

If your child is able to respond to and act on direct instruction, provide it! Use words, video, modeling, practice (rehearsal), and social stories to teach your child how to behave in church or at a concert, how to respond politely to grandparents, or how to interact at a birthday party.

None of these is likely to come naturally to your child, but in many cases, instruction and repetition are the keys to success.

Remediate Challenges

Grandma's strong perfume is causing her grandchild to run away, so the best choice is to say "Hey, Grandma, don't wear that perfume." Similarly, you can avoid squeezing a child who dislikes hugs, put in incandescent bulbs if fluorescents cause a problem, turn down the sound level on the TV, and otherwise make life more comfortable.

You can ask for similar accommodations in school, though it's tougher to get them in an inclusive setting.

Choose Settings and Situations With Care

If your autistic child hates loud movies, don't go to loud movies. Alternatively, a pair of noise-blocking headphones may make the sound level more comfortable. Consider going to "autism-friendly" events, or selecting instructors who seem to "get" your child.



Grow a Thicker Skin

Parents of kids with autism are occasionally likely to experience embarrassing situations. Thin-skinned parents are going to be embarrassed by an awful lot. Best bet? Get over it!

Change the Situation Completely

In some circumstances, your child's school, your home, your activity choices, or your location may need to change.

This may sound like an extreme response, but if your child's school is unable to serve her needs, your neighbors are intolerant, or your preferred activities are simply impossible for your autistic child, you may need to consider options such as private school, a different neighborhood, or a change in your routines.

Continued on page 5.

AUTISTIC BEHAVIOR VS MISBEHAVIOR CONTINUED....

ADDRESSING REAL MISBEHAVIOR

No good parent would punish a child for age-appropriate behavior or out of his control. Babies cry. Two-year-olds struggle with toilet training. Tweens need help managing their time.

On the other hand, no good parent would make it easy and acceptable for their child to lie, hit, hurt others' feelings, or behave in ways that are embarrassing to themselves or others.

It is tempting to say (or to allow others to say) "Oh well, the child is disabled, so I don't expect much." But while it does make sense to modify expectations and change situations based on special needs, everyone needs—and deserves—both structure and limits.

Without these tools, it is almost impossible to build self-discipline, a skill that is absolutely essential to independence, resilience, success, and self-confidence. As with any other child, therefore, your job as a parent is to:



- **Set and communicate limits and expectations.** Hurting people (physically or emotionally) is not OK. Nor is lying, acting out when you can control yourself, and so forth. Everyone needs to know their limits and expectations; kids with autism may need to learn about those limits very directly, through instruction, visual tools, social stories, and other means.
- **Recognize misbehavior.** You know your child's abilities, so in the vast majority of situations, you will know whether he or she is intentionally lying, ignoring your instructions, or hurting another person.
- **Respond quickly and clearly.** If you catch your autistic child misbehaving, you will need to be extremely clear as to what the issue is, why it is wrong, and how you feel about it. Sarcasm, the "cold shoulder," or other techniques may be misunderstood or ignored altogether.
- **Provide meaningful, consistent consequences.** In the best of all worlds, your child's misbehavior will cause its own negative consequences (deliberately dumping cereal on the floor means no cereal for breakfast). Consequences that are meaningful to your child, (no TV, for example) can be very effective.
- **Offer support for improving behavior.** Some children respond well to earned rewards for good behavior (eat breakfast properly for a week, and I'll make your favorite meal on Sunday). Children with autism often need immediate reinforcement for a job well done; that can be in the form of a small treat, high fives, or just a big smile.
- **Notice and respond to good behavior.** It's important to be responsive when your child does behave well and to be very specific about what is good about their actions. For example, "Joey, you did a great job sharing your toy with your sister."

<https://www.verywellhealth.com/autistic-behavior-or-misbehavior-4047387>

15 BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN

15 Behavior Strategies for Autistic Children

Written by [Rachel Wise](#) (article republished with permission)

This is a condensed version of this article

In this article you will find 15 supportive behavior strategies for children on the autism spectrum (some strategies can be used with adults as well). Many of the strategies can also be used to help children without autism who have challenging behaviors. When caring for or working with a child with autism, a parent, teacher, or other adult may become frustrated with the child's behavior. Behaviors can come on suddenly, last for hours, be hard to control, or make the adult scared or embarrassed.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AUTISM CAN INCLUDE:

- trouble using and understanding language or certain aspects of language such as sarcasm, expressions, and body language.
- difficulty taking in sensory input in an ordinary way. For example, a vacuum cleaner may sound overly loud, a smell may be extra strong, or the feel of something may be extra itchy.
- a need for a particular routine so they know what to expect as they can become frustrated when things don't go the way they had expected.
- trouble recognizing another person's opinion or understanding another person's feelings.
- difficulty working on or participating in activities with no clear ending (e.g., an open ended writing activity, a class lecture)
- difficulty switching from one activity to another, especially if they have to switch from something enjoyable to something not enjoyable (I think everyone can relate to that).
- difficulty organizing themselves in productive play when not directed or given specific instructions.



Sometimes these characteristics lead to problem behaviors at home, in the classroom, or in the community which can be frustrating for the child and the adults caring for him.

Here are some strategies which can prevent problematic behaviors or promote positive behavioral changes (since every child is different, you may have to try different strategies to see which ones work best with your child/student):

15 BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES TO HELP KIDS WITH AUTISM

1 – Let the child know what will happen next.

For example, "After you finish the puzzle, it is time to brush your teeth", or "In five minutes it is time to turn off the computer and start your writing assignment." For some children it is helpful to set a timer so the child can keep track of how much time is left. So in the example above "In five minutes it is time to turn off the computer and start your writing assignment" you would set the timer for five minutes. Some children need reminders as the time is winding down to 2 minutes, 1 minute, etc.

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15 BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN CONTINUED....

2-Set Expectations, be Consistent, and Follow Through

For example, if you tell your child that you will play a game with him if he plays quietly while you talk on the phone for five minutes, make sure that you keep your end of the bargain (barring unforeseen circumstances). *You may need to give him a choice of what activity to do during that time that you are on the phone.* If your child can't tell time, set a timer that your child can see, get off the phone in exactly 5 minutes (barring unforeseen consequences), and play the game. If you do this consistently, your child will come to know what is expected and will believe in what you say. As he improves, you can increase the time. Once he learns how to play independently while you talk on the phone, you may be able to fade back on such a rigid set-up, but it is a good starting point to teach him how to act while you talk on the phone. This is one example but can be applied to many scenarios.

If you don't implement expectations with consistency and follow through on your words, your child will not know what to expect. This can lead to anxiety and challenging behavior (e.g., talking to you while you are on the phone, repeatedly asking when you will be off the phone, etc.). Children with autism or other challenging behaviors thrive on predictability, so do your best to make their world predictable. Another example of predictability would be having a set routine each night (e.g. first homework...then TV or first put pajamas on...then read a story). Keep in mind that difficult behaviors are more likely to come out when things aren't predictable, and we know we can't make everything predictable all the time. Just know that if you are doing your best, it is not yours or your child's fault when things don't go according to plan. Just get back in the swing of a predictable routine as soon as possible.

3 – Acknowledge your child or students for complying with your requests

For instance, if your child is using a loud voice in the movie theater and you say, "whisper in the theater," praise the child with a comment such as "nice job whispering", or "thank you for being respectful in the theater." For children who understand language well, situations like this are a good time to teach about other people's perspectives (e.g., "Thank you for whispering. This let's other people hear the movie.").



4 – Tell the child specifically what you expect and allow him to earn privileges for complying with your expectations

For instance, if your child often has a tantrum in a store when he can't go to the toy aisle, tell him exactly what you expect of him before you go to the store and reward him with a privilege for following that expectation. For instance, you can say something like "We are going to Target. We are going to the school supply aisle to buy paper and pens, and then we will pay and go home." Once in the store you can give reminders (e.g., now we are going to get the paper and pens, now we will go pay, you're doing a nice job following the rules, now we are going home, etc.).

Let the child know that he can earn a privilege for following the rules. Privilege ideas include getting a sticker of a favorite character, playing a favorite game once at home, watching a favorite show, going on the computer, staying up ten minutes past bed time, etc. Try to think of a privilege that your child might like or ask him what he would like to work towards.

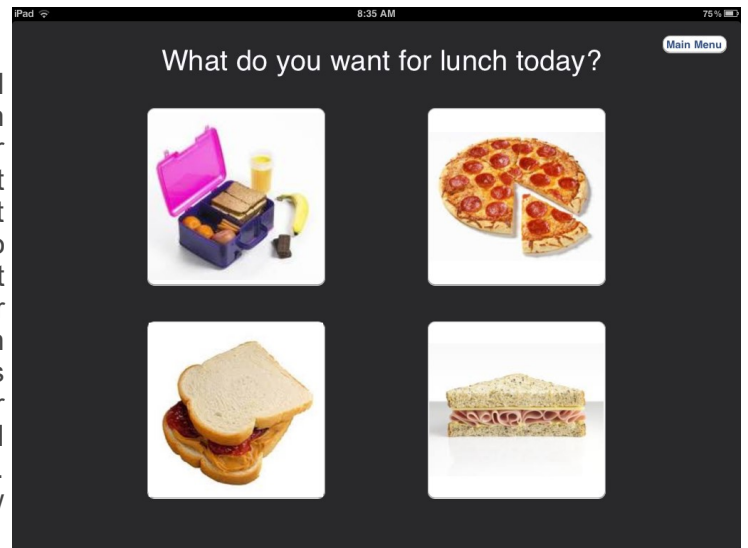
When the child earns the privilege, praise him with specific language. In the example above you could say, "You followed the rules at the Target. We got the paper and pens, paid, and came home. Nice work! Now you can enjoy some computer time." Make sure the privilege is something the child wants. You can let the child choose what he would like to work for ahead of time. Children also benefit from nonverbal praise such as high fives, smiles, thumbs up, etc.

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15 BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN CONTINUED....

5 – Give Choices

All children, including those with autism, like to feel a sense of control over their world. Many children benefit from having the choices limited to two to four options (depending on the child), as they get overwhelmed with too many choices and cannot decide. Examples of choices are: “Do you want to play a board game or watch TV,” “Do you want butter or jelly on your bagel,” “Do you want to wear the green or red shirt?” Again, children with language difficulties often have more success making choices when you show them the options or pictures of the options (e.g., hold up the red and green shirt and let them point to the one they want). A free IPAD App for generating pictures to show kids choices is ChoiceBoard-Creator. See example:



6 – For some children with language difficulties, showing the child the activity or toy that he will be utilizing next is helpful to encourage him to move from one activity to another

For example, if the child is on the computer and you want him to come work on a puzzle, show him the puzzle so he knows what it is you want him to come do.

7 – If possible, use a schedule to let the child know how his day will go

For children who have trouble reading or understanding language, a visual schedule would be best. A schedule for after school could include “eating a snack”, “doing homework”, “watching TV”, “playing a game with the family”, “reading a book”, “taking a bath” and “going to bed.” A visual schedule at school could include “math”, “reading”, “gym”, “lunch”, “recess”, “art”, “science”, “packing up”, and “getting on the bus.” See website document for example.

8 – Allow the child to bring a transitional object from one activity to the next.

For instance, if the child has to leave the classroom to go with a new staff member such as a speech therapist, let him bring a favorite object from the classroom such as a stress ball or toy car. This can assist with helping him feel more comfortable in the unfamiliar surroundings.

9 – Distract and redirect problematic behavior instead of saying “stop” or “no.”

For example, if the child is running in the store, remind him or show him how to walk nicely. If necessary, find something interesting to show him and call his attention to it, rather than focusing on the problematic behavior. If he is running in the hall at school, redirect him back to the line, with a short directive such as, “Come back to your spot in line” or remind him to “walk in the hallway.” For children with trouble understanding language, try demonstrating what is expected or use a gesture, rather than just giving the verbal direction.

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15 BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN CONTINUED....

10 – If the child seems over stimulated from sensory input, such as in a large crowd, bring him to a quieter place to de-stress.

Be mindful of situations where your child might feel overwhelmed before you take him there (e.g., a fireworks show, a crowded festival, etc.).

11 – Make directions clear, short, and concrete.

For example, if your child is throwing food at the table say, “eat your food” rather than “Be good at the table,” “Don’t throw your food” or “Would you stop with that! You are always throwing your food.” For children with difficulty understanding language, showing them a picture or a visual demonstration of the behavior you want to see, can be helpful.

12 – Take advantage of teachable moments.

For example, If the child snatches a toy from another child, teach him how to use his words to ask for the toy (if he has the language capabilities to do so) rather than reprimanding him for snatching the toy.

13 – When giving tasks, assignments, chores, etc. many children do better if they know when the task will end.

Some examples of activities with a clear ending include puzzles, a specific number of math problems, a specific number of pages to read, a timed event (e.g., the lesson will last ten minutes – set a timer), a specified way to complete a chore such as “Put ten toys in the bin.” or “Spray the window three times and use the paper towel to wipe the spots off,” a specific number of lines to write on the page for a writing assignment, etc. (visually defining the task is helpful as well; for example numbering the paper for a math assignment, using a visual timer or **graphic organizer** for a lecture, numbering the lines for a writing assignment, etc.). See an example of an activity on the website.

14 – Some children thrive when given structured hands-on or visual activities:

Many children I have worked with or have observed, did very well (sat nicely, worked diligently, etc.) when given a hands-on/visual activity. Examples include playing a computer game, sorting objects by color or object type (for example, putting the silverware away from the dishwasher, sorting laundry by light and dark, putting materials away in the correct boxes, etc.) completing a puzzle, constructing a model car, tracing or coloring in a picture, etc. As another example, some teachers of children with autism teach academic skills through sorting tasks. For instance, an activity about learning colors would require the child to put all the yellow chips in a yellow cup, all the blue chips in a blue cup, etc. Keeping a child focused with an activity they do well at is a great way to encourage calm behavior. However, if the child is feeling overwhelmed or frustrated from the activity, allow a break or a change in the task.

15 – Stay calm when interacting with the child (I know it can be hard at times but make every effort to be as calm as possible).

If you are regularly having trouble staying calm, you may benefit from talking to a friend, family member, or therapist for support. Do not take it out on your child. Yelling and threatening will not make behavior better. It may stop the behavior in the short-term, but the behaviors will occur again. You may actually make the behaviors worse because the child may start to feel anxious, scared, angry, embarrassed, or sad. Children with autism are not choosing to act in a way that is frustrating to you or anyone else. They legitimately need positive support from you to help them meet their emotional/behavioral needs.

Finally, it is important to recognize that some children on the autism spectrum have trouble generalizing expectations across situations, so the same strategies may need to be used in situations that are similar to one another.

You can find the article in its entirety at <https://ibcces.org/blog/2016/07/15/behavior-strategies/>

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CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Challenging Behaviour: Autistic Children and Teenagers

Key points

- It's common for autistic children to behave in challenging ways.
- If you understand why autistic children behave in certain ways, you can work out how to change the behaviour and help children manage it.
- When autistic children can manage their own challenging behaviour, they can learn and get along better with others.

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR IN AUTISTIC CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

It's common for autistic children to behave in challenging ways or ways that are difficult to manage.

For example, autistic children and teenagers might:

- refuse or ignore requests
- behave in socially inappropriate ways, like taking their clothes off in public
- behave aggressively
- hurt themselves or other children – for example, by head-banging or biting.



WHY AUTISTIC CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS BEHAVE IN CHALLENGING WAYS

Autistic children and teenagers might behave in challenging ways because they:

- have trouble understanding what's happening around them – for example, what other people are saying or communicating non-verbally
- have difficulty communicating their own wants and needs, which can lead to frustration
- are highly anxious and stressed
- feel overwhelmed by what's going on around them.

Your child's difficult behaviour might also have specific triggers, like the following.

Routines and rituals

Autistic children often like predictable environments, and they can get very upset if they can't follow familiar routines. For example, your child might be upset if you change the route you usually take home from school.

Transitions

Your child might not understand it's time to move on from one activity to another. Or like typically developing children, your child just might not want to.

Sensory sensitivities

Autistic children often have sensory sensitivities – for example, they might like feeling or touching particular surfaces or objects. Your child might get upset if they aren't allowed to touch.

Sensory overload

Your child might get upset if too much is happening around them, if they find a particular noise **Tiredness** Autistic children can have sleep problems. If your child isn't getting enough good-quality sleep or is tired from an activity or situation, this can cause challenging behaviour.

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CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR CONTINUED....

Unrealistic expectations

Autistic children can get frustrated if they're expected to do something they don't have the skills for, like getting dressed independently.

Tiredness

Autistic children can have sleep problems. If your child isn't getting enough good-quality sleep or is tired from an activity or situation, this can cause challenging behaviour.

Discomfort, pain or illness

This could include things like the feeling of clothes against skin, a prickly label, wet pants, a bump or pain. Check with your GP if you suspect there could be a medical condition causing your child's behaviour.

Other conditions

Your child might have other conditions as well as autism, like epilepsy, mood disorder or ADHD. These can all cause difficult behaviour. A medical assessment will help you to identify and manage these conditions.

CHANGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR IN AUTISTIC CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

To change your child's behaviour, you need to understand what's triggering or causing it and what your child is getting out of it.

You can use the following steps to work on your child's difficult or challenging behaviour.

Step 1: Choose a behaviour

Choose one behaviour to focus on. For example, maybe your child yells at others when they're upset.

Step 2: Identify what triggers the behaviour and how it meets your child's needs

Keep a diary of the difficult behaviour for 1-2 weeks. It's a good idea to include two weekends in the diary. Family routines and behaviour can be different on weekends and weekdays.

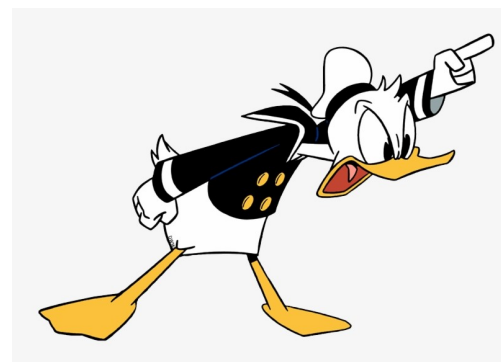
Here's an **example**:

- Difficult behaviour: got upset and yelled at brother
- When: 4 pm, Monday 7 June
- Where: in the car on the way home from school
- What happened before behaviour: stopped at shop, intended to buy milk
- What happened after: briefly tried to soothe child, then went home without buying milk

In this example, the trigger seems to be the change to the child's usual after-school routine. Note that sometimes there might be more than one trigger for a behaviour. And the behaviour met the child's needs because they got their routine back when the family left the shop.

Step 3: Make changes

Once you know what's triggering the behaviour and how it meets your child's needs, you can use the information to make changes.



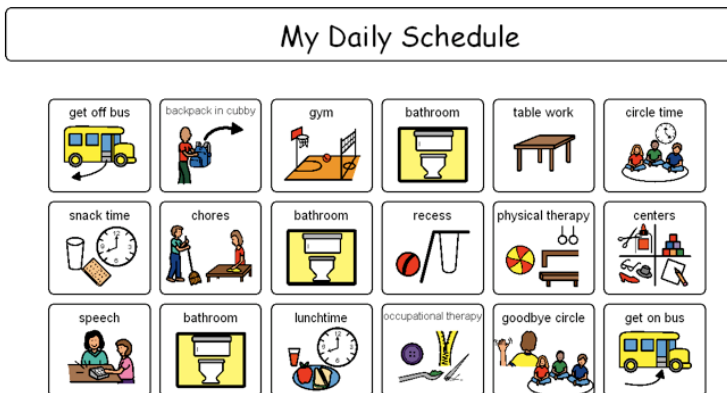
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CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR CONTINUED....

Here are some ideas:

- Organize predictable routines, perhaps using picture timetables.

Prepare your child for changing routines – for example, by giving your child a five-minute warning (this could be a visual warning like a clock). Using pictures can also help. In the example above, it could be a picture of a shop or milk. Social stories can be useful too – for example, a picture of school, then the shop, then home with a story like 'First mum picks you up from school, then you go to the shop, then you go home'.



- Set up gradual introductions to environments that might be overstimulating. For example, start with short shopping trips during which your child gets something they like, or go when it's less busy.
- Communicate clearly with your child. For example, make sure your child is paying attention when you explain what's going to happen. Use only one request or instruction at a time. Use language, symbols or pictures your child understands.
- Teach your child how to ask for things they want or need. For example, your child could say 'help' or use a 'help' sign when doing a difficult task.
- Plan for situations you know might be difficult. For example, don't do new things when your child is tired, or let your child take a favourite toy when you go somewhere that makes your child uncomfortable.
- Calmly ignore your child's protests. But when your child is doing the right thing, give plenty of praise.

THERAPIES AND SUPPORTS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL SKILLS

Improved communication and social understanding can lead to lower anxiety and less challenging behaviour in autistic children and teenagers. There are many therapies and supports that might increase your child's skills in these areas, and help you manage your child's behaviour.

A good first step is talking with your child's GP, pediatrician or psychologist, or another health professional who works with your child. They can help you find appropriate therapies and supports for your child. Psychologists, speech pathologists and experienced Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) practitioners can help you with behaviour management if the behaviour continues to be a problem or you need support to deal with it.

For more information or access to the video noted in the article please go to:

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism/behaviour/understanding-behaviour/challenging-behaviour-asd>

BEHAVIOR MAPPING

Behavior Mapping: A Visual Way for Students to Understand Expectations and Consequences

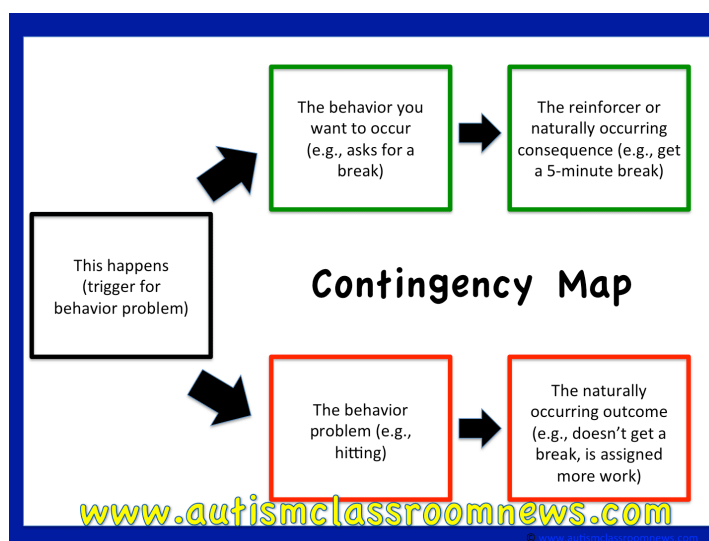
Adapted from <https://theautismhelper.com/behavior-contingency-maps-2/>

What are behavior contingency maps? Contingency behavior maps show a visual representation of engaging in appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and the consequences the behaviors result in. These maps are an ABA based intervention and follow the ABC pattern of behavior (antecedent, behavior, consequence). First the antecedent (or environmental trigger) is depicted, then the appropriate and inappropriate behavior options, and finally the consequence for each response. The two paths depict the choices the individual can make regard his/her behavior.

Why are they effective? Using visuals is essential so students can understand the behavior map. The visual maps are especially useful for early childhood students and students with special needs who have low receptive language. However, they can also work for older students on the spectrum and/or students who have higher language skills, as even this population can struggle with understanding cause/effect (no need for pictures if they can read with comprehension; also see Michelle Garcia Winner's ***Social Behavior Mapping*** for these students). *Contingency maps are effective because they illustrate in a concrete way the results of both the desired and undesired behavior.*

How do you use behavior maps? Contingency maps can be used in a few different ways. It is important to teach the strategy. Review the behavior map and discuss the consequence for each series of behaviors. Practice the strategy. Go through each path and model the responses and consequences. Utilize the behavior map in the situation the behaviors commonly occur. If the behavior typically occurs during circle time, anticipate and prevent the behavior. Pull out the behavior map at the start of circle time and review the behavior paths and consequences. Keep the behavior contingency map present and visible throughout the day to provide an extra reminder for students.





For free downloadable behavior maps, including a blank template, as well as other mapping resources and different types of behavior maps: https://www.ocali.org/project/resource_gallery_of_interventions/page/behavior-contingency-maps



The LBL ESD Autism Agenda Newsletter is a compilation of national and regional resources designed to support families and school teams. Every effort is made to provide accurate and complete information in the LBL ESD Autism Agenda Newsletter; however, LBL ESD cannot guarantee that there will be no errors. For example, some of the content within curated resources from across the nation may not apply to Oregon. LBL ESD does not assume any legal liability for any direct, indirect or any other loss or damage of any kind for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, product, or process disclosed herein, and do not represent that use of such information, product, or process would not infringe on privately owned rights.

BEHAVIOR MAPPING CONTINUED....

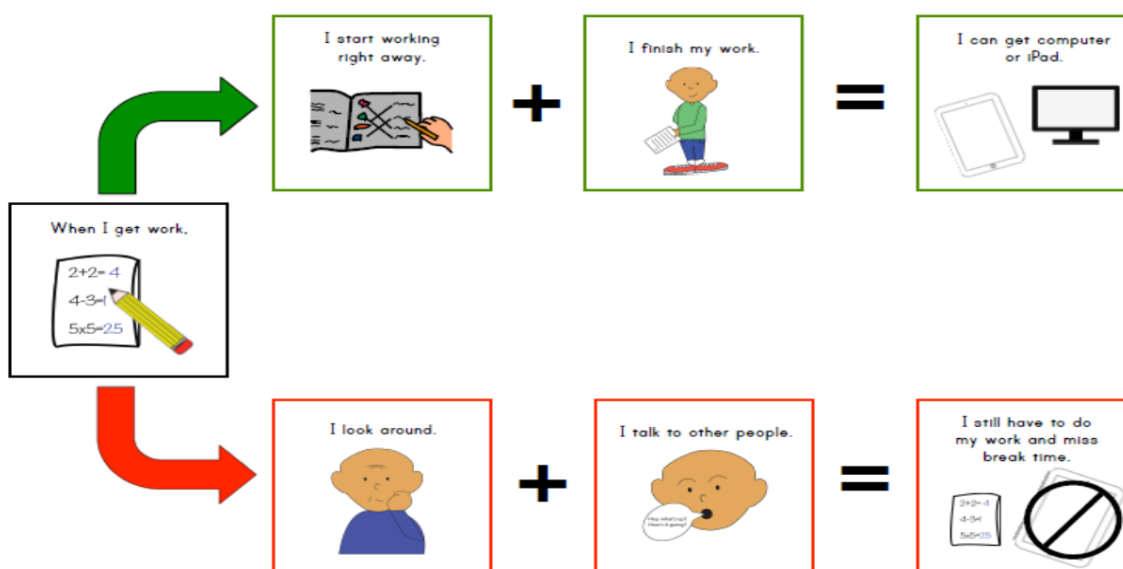
The Social Situation: _____

Expected Behaviors	How they make other's feel	Positive outcomes consequences for you	How you feel about yourself
			

→ → →

Based on *Social Behavior Mapping* by Michelle Garcia Winner

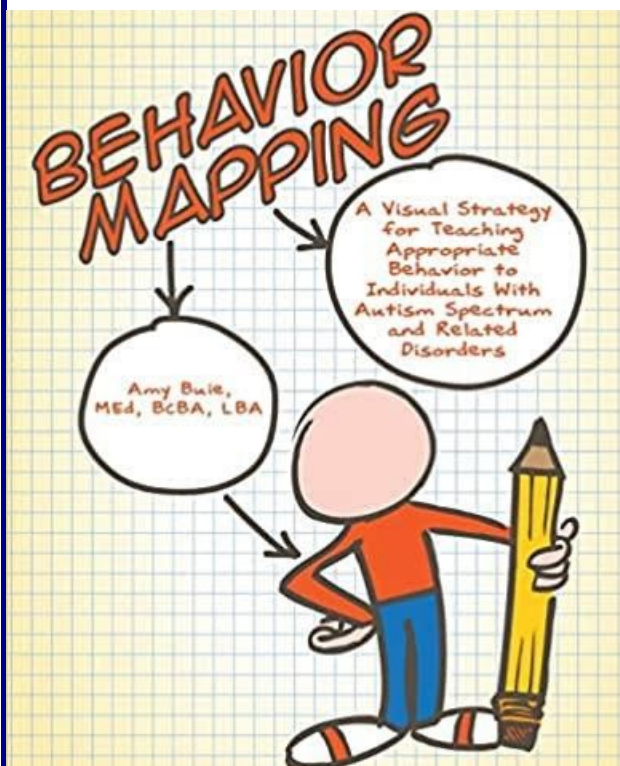
Make a Choice: Start Working



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BOOK SUGGESTIONS



Behavior Mapping by Amy Buie

Grounded in evidence-based practice, Amy Buie's **Behavior Mapping** is a groundbreaking way of motivating children to make good choices and learn new skills. Better yet, due to its visual nature, this simple-to-implement strategy is effective for a range of students, regardless of age and ability level. Supported by examples and real-life vignettes, four major categories of maps are presented: Consequence Maps, Complex Behavior Maps, Language Maps, and Problem-Solving Maps covering major classroom challenges. For ease of use, owners of the book may download Behavior Map templates. For another format of behavior map, see Michelle Garcia Winner's **Social Behavior Mapping: Connecting Behavior, Emotion and Consequences Across the Day**.

How to Train Your Angry Dragon by Steve Herman

Fun, cute and entertaining with beautiful illustrations, this playful book will teach kids strategies to try and how to react when things don't go their way. See other titles in the My Dragon series such as *Teach Your Dragon to Understand Consequences*, *Train Your Dragon to Accept No*, *Train Your Dragon to Learn from Mistakes*, *Teach Your Dragon to Follow Rules*, *Help Your Dragon Deal with Anxiety*, and more.



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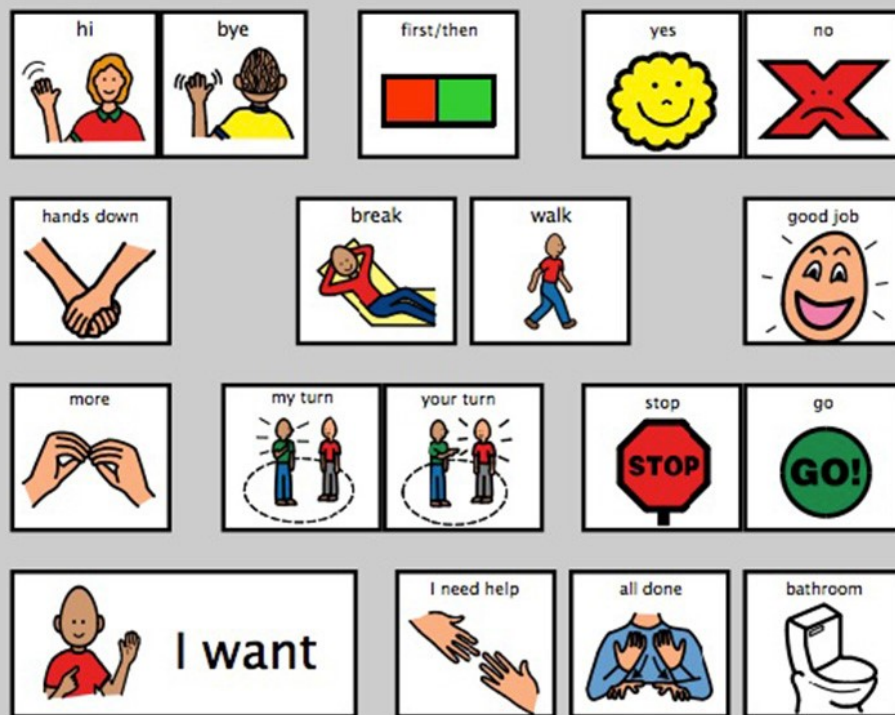
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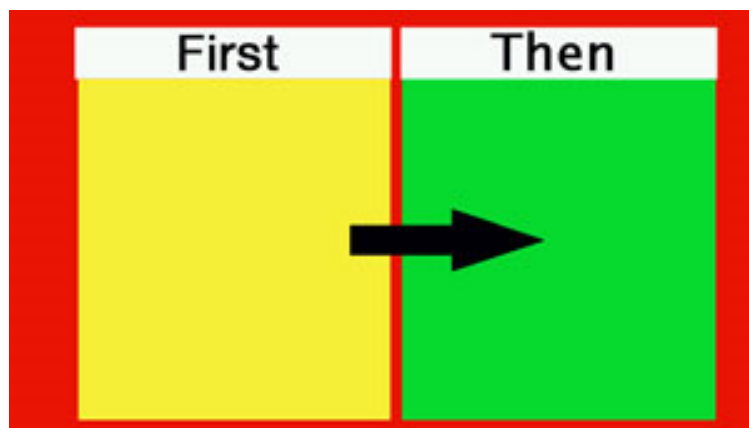
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VISUALS



BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS AND SOLUTIONS

ESPECIALLY EDUCATION



AuTalkz

Meltdowns



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