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Autism Agenda



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How Technology Can Help: Transition Tool Kit

In today's day and age, it seems our whole world revolves around smart phones, tablets and the internet. "Google It!" or "I'll 'friend' you later!" or "Did you see that Tweet?" are just a few of the popular phrases associated with the internet and online social networking that can be heard almost everywhere we turn.

The goals and uses of technology are very different for adolescents and young adults. These tools can be very empowering for adolescents transitioning into young adulthood, especially for individuals with autism. Technology can help your child become more independent, work on his or her challenges and improve upon his or her strengths.

How Technology Can Help

Below is a list of just some of the ways technology can help your child:

Communication

Likely the most common use of technology to help children and adults with autism is to improve communication skills. There are hundreds of apps and many built-in features of these devices that can help support individuals with autism at all levels and abilities. One app for example could be geared toward a nonverbal child or adult, while another can help with social cues for an individual with strong verbal communication skills.



Continued on page 2.

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HOW TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP CONTINUED....

Visual schedules

Visual schedules on tablets can be a great tool to help your child complete tasks and work on skills like self-care and daily living. For example, a visual schedule for an evening routine can help him or her learn to manage time and gradually master a routine on his or her own – from an after school snack, to homework, to teeth brushing and everything in between. These visual schedules can be very helpful in helping your child learn independent living skills, among others.

Decision-making

Individuals with autism who have more difficulty communicating can use technology to make their “voices” heard regarding decisions, which helps foster the self-advocacy skills that are so important as they age into adulthood. You can start small, like instead of ordering for your child at a restaurant, he or she can use a smartphone or tablet to point to the item he or she wants.

Motivating tool

Technological devices like smartphone and tablets can also serve as motivation for your child. The use of an iPad or a favorite game app can serve as a reward for positive behavior like the completion of a chore or a homework assignment.

Video modeling

Video modeling is a method that involves teaching skills in a visual way. The video could be of the individual him or herself completing a task or assignment, or of a teacher, educator or parent teaching the skills and steps required. Your child can watch these videos as often as he or she likes/needs to help learn important skills. Because the videos involve using a tablet or smartphone, he or she is most likely more interested in learning the skills this way. Video modeling can help with a wide array of skills including hygiene, job tasks and more.



Social networking

It can sometimes be easier for an individual with autism to socialize via social networking than through the more traditional methods. Making friends or communicating with others online can help him or her work on the skills that might translate at school, work or out in the community.

Vocational assistance

Technology can be very helpful to some young adults and adults with autism in the workplace. For example, step-by-step checklists can help your child stay on top of tasks and complete them in an orderly and successful manner. Reminders and notes about each task in case he or she forget something, rather than continuously asking an employer or coworker, can also help your child become more independent in the workplace.

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit-excerpt/how-technology-can-help>

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THE PROS AND CONS OF SCREEN TIME

The Pros and Cons of Screen Time for Kids with ASD

By Kenly Kiezer

Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) often face difficulty in understanding and navigating the world around them. A slight trigger can cause children who have ASD to become hyperactive.

Furthermore, autistic children are prone to repeating specific patterns of behavior, which makes it difficult to interact with others. This is why digital devices provide an escape to autistic children, where predictable outcomes allow them to perform according to their own pace.

[Research](#) says that autistic children spend more time on screen than children who do not have autism. About 64.2 percent of young adults with ASD spend their free time on TV, and video games and 13.2 percent of young adults with ASD spend time on social media sites, emails, and chatting.

The use of social media can provide [children with autism](#) with a buffer so that they can easily process information in the real world. Despite the apparent advantage of autistic children using digital devices, there are disadvantages of too much screen time as well. Prolonged use of digital devices is unhealthy for children, but its effects are more pronounced in autistic children.

As a parent of an ASD child, you would want to help your child live as healthy a life as possible. This is why you need to be aware of the effects of technology on your child's upbringing. In this article, we discuss the pros and cons of screen time for autistic children.

Pros of screen time

In [an article by Huffington Post](#), parents say that digital devices are "an important tool that helps their kids communicate, develop [social skills](#), enhance their ability to learn and even alleviate anxiety."

Some parents argue that screen time can be treated as a reward for their child to help them understand if a particular behavior is appreciated or not. In the case of kids with autism, this method to incentivize behavior works. This method also works to help autistic kids learn other activities. Moreover, it can help in calming down a child in times they get distressed.



According to [researcher Dr. Paul Shattuck](#), there are many benefits associated with using digital devices. Video games, for instance, provide repetition of a particular scenario. The same goes for videos found online on YouTube. Games and videos are predictable and can also induce calming effects for children with autism. According to researchers, smartphones and tablets can serve as a mode of therapy for kids. This is where the power of technology can be leveraged to provide treatment to kids with autism.

The digital medium provides audio and visual stimuli that are not present in the real world. The anxiety brought by face-to-face interactions can be overwhelming for kids with ASD. So digital device provides autistic kids with a setting where they can control their interactions and have time to process. This can aid autistic children in social interactions in real life. *Continued on page 4.*

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THE PROS AND CONS OF SCREEN TIME CONTINUED...



The use of digital devices helps children on the autism spectrum learn on their own. Often children with autism are unable to perform well in a regular classroom alongside students who have different learning abilities. The distractions in a classroom can make kids anxious and stressed. In this case, digital devices serve as an alternative to help them learn in an environment that they consider safe. Hence these devices can supplement their learning and put them on the same scale as other students in the class.

However, screen time should be regulated by parents since too much of it can have negative consequences.

Cons of screen time

Many children with autism are sensitive to stimulus. Digital devices provide a multitude of stimuli. This can make them irritated and worsen their behavior.

In an article on [Psychology Today](#), the author, Victoria L. Dunckley, states that “children with autism are extra vulnerable to screen time effect.” Since children with autism are prone to sleep disturbances, screen time affects their sleeping patterns even more. Furthermore, autism causes inflammation of the nervous system. Too much screen time causes the same effect on children by releasing stress hormones.

The same article says that electromagnetic fields (EMF) emitted from communication devices are harmful to autistic children since these children are more sensitive to EMF.

It is known that children with autism have difficulty in social interactions and expressing themselves with the aid of facial expressions and body language. According to [Victoria L. Dunckley](#), screen time hinders the development of skills necessary for social interactions. According to her, screen viewing and TV cause delay in learning languages in children.

Moreover, when a child has “tics,” which are related to sensory and motor integration issues. Screen time can worsen sensory behavior. Also, screen time is known to exacerbate obsessive-compulsive disorders. Since autistic children are more prone to obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and social anxiety, the effects of screen time amplify OCD in autistic children.

Too much screen time can also cause a lower attention span. In addition to this, depression is linked to screen time causing health-related issues as well. There is a variety of content available online. Autistic children may be exposed to inappropriate and unsafe content through the use of digital devices.

[A study was published](#) which states, “The social and behavioral impairments experienced by children with autism disorder (ASD) appear to make participation in structured and unstructured forms of physical activity more difficult.” Motor skills are one factor that hinders the physical activity of autistic children. However, the study confirms that screen time decreases the level of physical activity in autistic children. Lack of physical Screen Time Recommendations activity can lead to obesity.

Keeping the pros and cons of screen time in mind, parents should regulate the time their kids spend on digital devices. It is important to set out rules for screen time. For kids and young people with ASD, the following points regarding screen time should be considered. *Continued on page 5.*

PROS AND CONS OF SCREEN TIME CONTINUED...

Allocate a certain amount of screen time and stick to it. Three hours a day is the maximum time limit for using digital devices.

Set a time of the day when your child has access to a digital device, preferably in the evening or before dinner. Make sure that your child does not use a screen at least 30 minutes before bedtime. Use screen time as a reward for activities that your child may not enjoy, such as cleaning up, homework, or other chores.

Since the digital world is filled with frauds and scams, it is easy for children to be lured by them. This is why parents should monitor the online activity of their child. Cell phone monitoring applications such as [Xnspey](#) monitor your child's smartphone. You can also determine application usage.

Know the password to accounts that your child may be using.

Give a 10-minute and five-minute warning before the screen time ends. Use a timer to clock the time spent on a digital device so that your child is aware of the time spent and the time left for screen time.

Age is a factor in determining how much time a child should spend using a digital device. The following table lists down the [recommended time](#) for each age bracket.

Age(years)	Recommended Screen Time(hours/day)
3-5	0.5-1
5-7	1-1.5
7-12	1-1.5
12-15	1.5-2
16+	2

Digital devices, including smartphones and tablets, help kids with autism learn and interact with the world. Digital devices provide comfort and a familiar environment, which makes it easy for kids on the autistic spectrum to perform. It makes them independent learners and remove distractions that may cause [anxiety and trigger stress](#). There is then no doubt that digital devices are essential to help autistic children in their day-to-day lives.

The negative effects of digital devices are well-documented. The health-related issues caused due to increased levels of screen time is a cause for concern. Therefore, too much screen time is not good either.

<https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/screen-time-kids-with-asd/>

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USING VIDEO GAMES TO TEACH KIDS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

Using Video Games to Teach Kids on the Autism Spectrum

By: Dr. Randy Kulman

Kids affected by high functioning, or Level 1, autism have some difficulty with "[soft skills](#)," including social skills, communication, and adaptive behaviors. They may also have problems with sustained attention and effort, connecting classroom learning to the real world, and executive-functioning skills (things like organization, planning, metacognition, social thinking, and flexibility). Traditional classroom methods for teaching children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) may be ineffective because these social, communication, attention, and executive-functioning issues interfere with children's ability to maximize their cognitive skills in the classroom.



One of the most effective ways to improve these soft skills is through the use of digital media such as video games and apps. Characteristics of digital media such as multimodal feedback and the ability to adapt a challenge to individual mastery levels lead to engagement and practice.

Teachers routinely notice the contrast between the enthusiasm and persistence for learning with digital tools as opposed to with traditional educational strategies in kids affected by autism. Educators are also recognizing that success for children affected by autism often requires practicing problem solving, communication, and executive functions as a prerequisite for teaching academic skills. Teaching children affected by autism with video games is one way to accomplish this.

The use of video games designed specifically for kids affected by autism in the classroom is becoming an increasingly accepted approach for improving communication and social skills. Games and apps such as Go-Go games, ChoiceWorks, and Proloquo2go were designed to help with tasks such as communication, scheduling, and learning visual-differential skills and are often best suited for kids with Level 2 autism, who require "substantial support."

Level 1 kids can benefit from playing popular games that they will be able to play with their typically developing peers. Games such as [Minecraft](#), [Draw Something 2](#), and [Portal 2](#) practice many of the social and communication skills that can help kids with autism. While these games are often difficult to integrate into the classroom, homework assignments in which children with autism play these games with classmates can be helpful. Apps such as [Calm](#) and [Cove Music Journal](#), which can help with self-control, can easily be used in the classroom.

However, educators need to be aware that games are *NOT* enough to teach soft skills to children affected by autism and to view games and other digital media as tools for practicing these skills. It is the role of educators and parents to help kids affected by autism transfer (generalize) these skills from the game to the real world.

There are several important things to keep in mind when using digital games as teaching tools for children with autism. The games are exciting and motivating for students but have the ability to overshadow the "bigger picture." Game play needs to be positioned as a fun way to learn and can be helpful as an opportunity to practice and apply skills elsewhere for students who are invested in improving a specific skill. Games should not be used as a reward for work completion. Modeling and think-aloud strategies about the skills used in a game need to be encouraged (see our Learning-Works for Kids [game and apps guides](#)). The use of video games for many kids affected by autism is a way to "catch them where they are" that can improve attention, motivation, and executive functions.

Continued on page 7.

USING VIDEO GAMES TO TEACH KIDS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM CONTINUED...

There is increasing interest in the use of popular, commercial, off-the-shelf video games for the treatment of autism, as well. Some schools have begun using the Xbox Kinect for improving social and gross-motor skills. Because many video games require the use of and practice skills such as flexibility, self-awareness, and self control, they may also be very powerful teaching tools for the development of these skills in children affected by ASD. [Specific classroom strategies for using popular games to improve these skills](#) can be found right here on our website. Children's motivation, level of sustained interest, and willingness to overcome frustration in order to beat the games may make these effective tools in improving the lives of children affected by autism.

TeachTown is a computer-assisted instructional intervention that utilizes applied behavioral analysis to improve social/emotional, academic, and adaptive skills in children with ASD. The program is designed for students with ASD who are between the ages of 2 to 7 years developmentally. TeachTown helps develop adaptive skills such as understanding household vocabulary and money identification, along with social and emotional skills such as understanding emotion synonyms, gesturing, and emotion causes.

TeachTown uses applied behavioral analysis (ABA) techniques for the development of social and language skills. The program uses computer-assisted instruction with computer-based rewards of playing with animated pictures in between trials. It employs a discrete trial model where students respond by selecting an image in response to an instructional cue. The correct response elicits a positive statement such as, "You did it," while an incorrect response is followed by presentation of the correct response.



Some of the more powerful features of TeachTown are strategies for generalization of skills. Multiple exemplars are used within the program, with each skill or specific piece of content-based knowledge that is presented replicated with an array of images and words to describe it. For example, if children are learning to recognize an airplane, they see a variety of images portraying pictures of airplanes to help them generalize the content or feeling.

Perhaps even more important are the non-technology based activities to improve generalization of skills. TeachTown provides teachers with motivating activities that practice the skills being taught in the computer-assisted instruction with classroom or home-based activities.

Research conducted with TeachTown suggested that TeachTown enhanced social-communication skills and decreased inappropriate behavior. A later study that included 90 students in a special education classroom found that children who averaged 23 hours using the TeachTown software made a variety of social and emotional gains. The results suggested that students in the treatment condition made significantly greater gains than the control group on 7 out of 10 learning domains on the Brigance Inventory of Early Development II. Furthermore, the more time they spent on TeachTown basics, the higher the score was on this measure.

Overall, the TeachTown research describes the promise of the use of computer-assisted instruction in improving social/emotional and learning skills in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The data suggest that this type of program can reduce the need for one-on-one teaching with these children and be suitable for a variety of special needs students rather than just those with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

<https://learningworksforkids.com/2018/06/using-video-games-to-teach-kis-on-the-autism-spectrum/>

BEST ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR AUTISM

Best Assistive Technology for Autism

By Ken Nail

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) describes a broad range of conditions most commonly identified as challenges with speech, nonverbal communication, social skills, plus other issues, such as repetitive behavior. The challenges to the development of the child with ASD can vary widely depending upon the individual. Assistive technology for autism can help.

Assistive technology can provide useful tools to help the individual with ASD. These tools run the gamut from simple hands-on objects to more complex technology, but all perform a vital role in helping to address the many issues related to communication, social skills, behavior, and self-care that are part of the condition.

COMMUNICATION IS A FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE WITH ASD. HOW CAN ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR AUTISM HELP?

The range of communication issues that may present with ASD are many and can present major difficulties in the development of the child. Children with ASD will typically have difficulties with expressing themselves through spoken and written language — in severe cases not speaking at all — and failing to understand spoken language, even if there are no underlying hearing problems. This can be compounded by motor control issues that make the physical act of speaking difficult.

Despite these problems, it's incorrect to assume nonspeaking children with ASD cannot communicate or speak. An array of approaches has emerged to facilitate communication and aid the autistic child in developing communication skills. Let's explore these approaches and the assistive technology devices that support them.

ALTERNATIVE AND AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION (AAC) SYSTEMS

Experts agree that the sooner children with ASD are exposed to effective communication systems the more positive the effect will be on their future development and learning. The early years are vital to a child's development, and the sooner assistive technology in the form of AAC systems are introduced the more chance there is for a positive outcome.

https://youtu.be/r3m8_YmTDDM



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BEST ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR AUTISM CONTINUED...

An array of approaches can be categorized under the umbrella of AAC systems. The two primary types of assistive technology employed for AAC can be broken down into two categories:

- **Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS):** PECS utilizes collections of image cards representing different activities, things, feelings, and more. PECS is a commonly used intervention method for developing communication skills for those with ASD.
- **Speech Generating Devices (SPG):** SPGs cover a variety of devices and software that create speech from either written inputs or icons. Speech can either be created from recorded human samples or purely synthesized. Depending on the complexity of the device, they can store short simple messages or lengthy communications. Through the use of these devices, those with speech and communication limitations can learn to communicate effectively with those around them without the frustrations of mastering speech. Past attitudes that using these devices early in childhood development would inhibit speech development have been largely discarded, and their use is becoming more widespread because of advances in technology and decreasing costs.



Resources for developing communication skills with PECS

<https://youtu.be/Hs-4l2lhXb0>

PECS was developed in the 1980s to assist in developing independent communication with pre-school students diagnosed with autism. Based upon teaching protocols put forth by B. F. Skinner, PECS is a low-tech system that utilizes pictures, cards, and charts to develop and promote communication skills in a systematic fashion. You can learn more about the theory and application of PECS with this [guide](#).

Here are some useful PECS kits, each one designed around a single teaching and communication focus:

- **Picture Communication Starter Kit:** This 400-card communication set is a useful starter for beginning a PECS practice. A variety of communication topics are covered, including people, action words, food, clothes, common needs, and much more. Vinyl pocket pages allow cards to be organized to create and customize communication systems.
- **Let's Talk About Emotions:** Building emotional awareness and regulation skills can be a challenge for the child with ASD. This kit concentrates on helping the autistic child identify and express emotions with the use of emotion icon cards and a chart representing the degree of emotion.
- **I Can Do It! My Daily Checklist:** Building routines and keeping track of responsibilities is an important part of teaching the autistic child how to develop independence. This kit employs a laminated chart and a number of plastic activity squares so that a variety of daily activities can be presented and reinforced to the child with ASD.
- **Visual Essentials Software:** This software package provides the user with an opportunity to expand the range of cards and tools available to them. It contains over 3500 different photos, plus a variety of charts and boards that can be adapted to different situations.

SPEECH GENERATING DEVICES (SGDS) AND ASD

[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/CBYUU6YAVGG](https://youtu.be/CBYUU6YAVGG)

SGDs can provide an important tool in allowing the person with ASD to more effectively communicate. They utilize synthesized or digitized human voices, relying upon input from keyboards or touchscreens. SGDs are not as widespread in their adoption as PECS as AAC options, but the advent of inexpensive and capable devices and **apps** are rapidly changing the landscape of assistive technology for autism.

Continued on page 10.

BEST ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR AUTISM CONTINUED...

- **Quick Talker 23:** QuickTalker 23 is a portable, purpose-built SGD that lets a child with ASD create sentences by touching icons to string together words. Over 20 sentences with a total time of 20 minutes can be created. There are five different levels, based on differing skill and comprehension levels.
- **CoreVoice:** CoreVoice can make any phone or tablet an SGD. It was designed by a speech pathologist to assist a variety of speech needs and the screen-based format allows an impressive amount of flexibility in set up and adaptation for individuals across the ASD spectrum. There are nine pre-made boards built into the app, plus one that can be customized for your particular needs.
- **Tobii Dynavox Indi with Snap + Core First:** Indi is another purpose-built portable SGD that utilizes symbol-based software, Snap + Core First. Indi won an Innovation award at CES2018, and it features several different voices, plus extra features like access to social media and email. A range of compatible inputs supports devices like add-on switches, head-mouse, and more.
- **Tobii Dynavox I-110:** I-110 is a rugged, keyboard-based SGD. It's IP54-rated for water and dust protection so it's suitable for use in a variety of environmental conditions.



OTHER ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT CHILDREN WITH ASD

[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/NUO0BIYMJMW](https://youtu.be/NUO0BIYMJMW)

There is no single approach to working with a child with ASD. A collaborative approach among all those responsible for the child's learning and formal education is the best way to proceed. Likewise, there's no single approach to assistive technology or one particular set of devices that is right for each person.

In addition to the main categories of assistive tech we've concentrated on, there are numerous other assistive tools available.

- **Portable Word Processors:** These feature full-size keyboards with small LCD or LED screens. They're small and lightweight and useful for children with ASD whose lack of fine motor control makes writing by hand difficult. [Alphasmart Neo](#) is a popular choice in this category.
- **Talking Word Processors:** These software programs provide speech feedback, allowing the child with ASD to hear what they've written. This provides a vital feedback loop to improve comprehension and organization skills. The [Talking Word Processor](#) from EnableMart is an excellent example of this tool.
- **Assistive Listening Systems (ALD):** Autism impacts how a child processes sound, creating obstacles to learning and socialization. Assistive listening devices can help children with ASD hear more clearly. This [guide](#) presents many different options to consider when beginning the search for an ALD.
- **Visual Supports and Organizers:** Visual supports use pictures or graphics to communicate with ASD affected children who have trouble communicating through writing. They're an invaluable way for parents to communicate better with their child, and for the child to learn to communicate better with others. This [guide](#) provides an excellent starting point for creating and implementing visual organizers.

As we've seen, the majority of assistive technology for autism — whether simple or more advanced — is tied to developing effective means of communication with those who have ASD. Within each category of items, there are many options to choose from, and those who work in the field will attest to the fact that there are no easy answers or one-size-fits-all solutions. As we've seen with the increase of the use of speech-generating devices, it's certain that the technology underlying assistive technology for autism will continue to evolve and improve.

<https://lifezest.co/best-assistive-technology-for-autism/>

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SOCIAL SKILLS RESOURCES FOR ONLINE LEARNING

Social Skills Resources for Online Learning



Collected by Melissa Dubie, M.S.,
and Betty Lou Rowe, M.Ed.
Indiana Resource Center for Autism
Indiana School Mental Health Initiative



Elementary

- **Autism Teaching Strategies** (by Joel Shaul)- <http://autismteachingstrategies.com/free-social-skills-downloads-2/>
Search free social skills downloads. Lessons include posters, games and videos free to download. Some of the topics include: Communication/relationships, emotions, communication/relationships/emotions. Most of the content will need you as a teacher to print the material and then send to parents or students to use.
- **Everyday Speech** <https://everydayspeech.com/social-skills-games/>
Share materials for free through the COVID-19 shutdown. Interactive social skill games. Some of the topics include self-esteem, perspective taking, hygiene, conversations, initiating a conversation and more. Also, free videos online.
- **Handy Handouts for Parents** <https://www.handyhandouts.com/search.aspx?searchstr=Social+Skills>
Free educational handouts for teachers and parents to use to teach social skills. Some of the topics include sharing, good manners, personal space, giving a compliment, social distancing, and internet safety. All resources are in English and some are in Spanish.
- **Jill Kuzma's SLP Social and Emotional Skills Sharing** <https://jillkuzma.wordpress.com/>
Each lesson has a PDF file free to download. Topics include perspective taking, conversation, emotions, friendships, executive function, and receptive and expressive language.
- **Pathway 2 Success** <https://www.thepathway2success.com/free-social-emotional-learning-resources/>
100 plus free social emotional learning resources. Some of the topics include self-awareness, positive affirmation, gratitude, calming posters, kindness activities, perspective taking, decision making and more.
- **PBIS World** <https://www.pbisworld.com/tier-1/teach-social-skills/>
List of social skills plus resources to teach for elementary and middle school.
- **Scholastic for Parents: Social Skills Grade by Grade** <https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/social-skills-grade-grade.html>
For each grade, there are topics that are defined and suggestions provided on how to teach. Parents can look at grades before and after their own child's grade to focus.
- **Silas: Improve Life Outcomes** https://curriculum.silassolutions.com/elearning_resources/
The team at Silas has put together some free social animations, SEL lessons, and parent sheets to use for home instructions. The current topics are why can't I have my party, coping skills, social distancing, distance learning, and I am so bored. In addition, the website has five-day lessons on what makes me angry and on integrity. Check back often to see more lessons as the team develops more.

Indiana Resource Center for Autism ♦ Indiana Institute on Disability and Community ♦ Indiana University, Bloomington
2810 E Discovery Parkway ♦ Bloomington, IN 47408-9801 ♦ 812-855-6508 ♦ Fax 812-855-9630
IRCA Website - <https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/irca>

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SOCIAL SKILLS RESOURCES FOR ONLINE LEARNING CONTINUED...

- **Social Skills Video Modeling Series** <https://www.tdsocialskills.com/>
Some of the videos are free on YouTube and some are at cost. There are File Factor Lessons in Word for free downloads.
- **TeachTown Social Skills** <http://web.teachtown.com/clinicians/teachtown-social-skills/>
TeachTown uses video modeling curriculum for students to learn social skills. Skills include following rules, interpersonal skills, self-regulation and coping, good communication, and friendship. Free for 30 days.
- **The Character Tree** <https://character-tree.com>
Video to teach perseverance, curiosity, and kindness with supplemental resources to print for free.
- **Zoo U: An Evidence Based, Online Social Skills Game** free until 06/30/2020.
<https://www.centervention.com/social-skills-game/>
Social and emotional skills taught include communication, cooperation, emotion regulation, empathy, impulse control, and social initiation.

Apps for Elementary (Under \$10)

- **Avokiddo Emotions** (Grades PreK-K) For Google Play and Apple products
Hilarious animals help kids identify emotions. Cost: \$2.99
- **Daniel Tiger's Grr-ific Feelings** (Grades PreK-K) for Android and iPad, Kindle Fire
Songs and activities help kids express, recognize, and understand emotions. Cost: \$2.99
- **KLOOG Social Skills Series** (multi-age) <http://kloogsocialskills.com/>
Uses a cartoon-based platform but is not overly "childish" for older users. Cost Free at the App Store & Google Play.
 - **Mission Rescue KLOOG** (search Social Skills for Autism)
 - **KLOOG2: Return to Zugopolis**
 - **KLOOG3: Cosmic Classroom**
- **Hall of Heroes** (Grades 5-8)
In game format to teach students preparing for the transition to middle school how to cooperate and develop friendships. Cost: Free
- **Model Me Going Places 2** <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/model-me-going-places-2/id375669988?ign-mpt=uo%3D8>
Free currently. Great visual teaching tool for helping children learn how to go to the hairdresser, mall, doctor, playground, grocery store, and restaurant. Only for iPhone or iPad.
- **Social Adventures** (Grades K-3) iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch
Daily activities and short lessons to explore social situations to solve. Cost: \$7.99
- **Stop, Breathe & Think** (Grades 3-12)
Guides students in meditation and promotes compassion. Cost: Free

SUSOCIAL SKILLS RESOURCES FOR ONLINE LEARNING CONTINUED...

Secondary

- **4 Social/Emotional Skills You Can Easily Practice with Teens** <https://nobelcoaching.com/emotional-skills/>
This particular article focuses on the following topics: Social communication skill (Listening), Social communication skill (Assertiveness), Emotional skill (Emotional self-awareness), and Social/emotional skills (Understanding nonverbal communication).
- **5 Great Activities to Do with Your Social Skills Group (Adolescents/Teens)** <https://educationandbehavior.com/social-skills-activities-for-teens/>
Review and make recommendations based on the home environment. This site also offers other links and information that you may find helpful.
- **12 Ways to Improve Social Skills and Make You Sociable Anytime** <https://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/12-ways-improve-social-skills-and-make-you-sociable-anytime.html>
This article provides tips for anyone who feels “awkward” when it comes to social interactions. The tips can be redrafted to address students across environments.
- **17 Social Skills Activities for Kids (multi-age)** <https://veryspecialtales.com/social-skills-activities-for-kids/>
Topics include verbal communication, nonverbal communication skills, nonverbal communication & emotions/feelings, listening, emotions, participating, and caring.
- **101 Ways to Teach Children Social Skills** <http://www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/101-ways-teach-children-social-skills-ready-use-reproducible-activity-book/> by Lawrence E. Shapiro, Ph.D.
You can download as a PDF. Topics include Communication, Nonverbal communication, Being part of a group, Expressing your feelings, Caring about yourself & others, Problem solving, Listening: A two-way street, Standing up for yourself, and Managing conflict.
- **ADDITUDE (Inside the ADHD mind)** <https://www.additudemag.com/slideshows/educational-apps-for-kids-with-adhd-social-skills/>
This resource has great information on ADHD, as well as free downloads, webinars and tools.
- **Do2:Learn** <https://do2learn.com/SocialSkills/overview.htm>
Includes strategies/activities/etc. around 5 main topics: *Communication Skills, Social Behavior, Social Skills Toolbox, Emotions Color Wheel and Social Emotional Skills.*
- **Emotional Intelligence Activities for Teens Ages 13 – 18** <https://positivepsychology.com/emotional-intelligence-exercises/>
This is a user-friendly article that contains tips, activities, worksheets in PDF form, PowerPoints and more. Some of the materials may be more usable than others, but a good resource.
- **Grades 6 – 8: Social – Emotional Skills** <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/grades-6-8-social-emotional-skills/>
This article provides resources on the topics *Attitude Latitudes, Brain Freezers, Setting Boundaries, What Sets You Off?, and Resolving Conflicts.*
– Also provides other SEL sources...staff should check out the *Edutopia* link provided.
- **Model Me Kids** <https://www.modelmekids.com/index.html>
The site contains video clips of peers modeling social skills and is broken down into age ranges.

SOCIAL SKILLS RESOURCES FOR ONLINE LEARNING CONTINUED...

- **PBIS World** <https://www.pbisworld.com/tier-1/teach-social-skills/>
List of social skills plus resources to teach for elementary and middle school.
- **PEERS®** <https://www.semel.ucla.edu/peers>
The Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS®), developed by Dr. Elizabeth Laugeson Director of the UCLA PEERS® Clinic. You will find role play videos under the resources tab. The site also provides other information in which you may be interested.
- **The Social Express** <https://socialexpress.com/#http://thesocialexpress.com/>
Animated and interactive lessons based in 3 programs...*The Social Express*, *Cool School*, and *Teen Career Path*.
Cost: FREE until June 1st, 2020.
- **Social Work Tools and Resources** <http://www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/>
This site has free tools and resources that cover a variety of topics. View first to decide what may work for staff and students.
- **TEACHTown Middle School Social Skills** <http://web.teachtown.com/products/middle-school-social-skills/> free for 30 days.
TeachTown uses video modeling curriculum for students to learn social skills. Skills include the following: interpreting body language, personal boundaries, social media and internet safety, and many more.
- **Teaching Social Skills to Today's Teenagers** <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/grades-6-8-social-emotional-skills/>
This site offers podcasts, webinars and a blog by Roy Petitfils around working with teenagers in general, not specific to those with varying abilities.
- **ThoughtCo.** <https://www.thoughtco.com/social-skill-resources-for-special-education-3110734>
Focus topics: Teaching social skills; Proxemics: understanding personal space, teaching personal space to children with disabilities; *The Sandlot*: making friends, a social skills lesson, games to support social goals, and building social relationships. ThoughtCo. contains other links that you may also find helpful.
- **ThoughtCo.** <https://www.thoughtco.com/social-skills-worksheets-3111032>
This link provides *Practice Social Skills with Worksheets for Kids*. Includes Recipe for Making Friends, Pyramid of Friends, Responsibility Poem, Help Wanted: A Friend, My Qualities, Trust Me, Kinder and Friendlier, Nice Words Brainstorm, and Nice Words Word search.
- **Top 25 Social Skills Activities for Teens and Young Children** https://www.momjunction.com/articles/social-skills-activities-for-teens_00352014/#Socialskills1
This site includes some great ways to practice social skill development. Because of the current restrictions, view the activities and develop alternatives before sharing.
- **YouTube...**type in the search box 'Social Skills Channel' to find a list of many videos to teach social skills. Here is one to get you started about taking turns speaking - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RjRZ9jMfs0>
- **UCLA Tarjan Center Lecture Series** <https://www.semel.ucla.edu/tarjan/2019-2020-presentations>



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SOCIAL SKILLS RESOURCES FOR ONLINE LEARNING CONTINUED...

Apps for Secondary (Under \$10)

- **How Would You Feel If...Fun Deck**
A colorful, educational social skills app that tracks responses and provides feedback for iPhone & iPad. Cost: \$2.99
- **KLOOG Social Skills Series** (multi-age) <http://kloogsocialskills.com/>
Uses a cartoon-based platform, but is not overly “childish” for older users. Free at the App Store & Google Play.
 - **Mission Rescue KLOOG** (search Social Skills for Autism)
 - **KLOOG2: Return to Zugopolis**
 - **KLOOG3: Cosmic Classroom**
- **Middle School Confidential**
A collection of digitally rendered graphic novels designed for children aged 8-14. It aims to help tweens and teenagers tackle their lack of self-confidence with an easy-to-navigate story. Cost: \$6.99.
- **Social Comprehension**
This will help with their understanding of various social situations, teaching them how to interact and study with their peers. Social Comprehension also helps with reading comprehension, as they answer a series of questions following social stories. Can be purchased in the App Store for iPhone & iPad. Cost: \$3.99
- **SuperBetter**
Mobile app that turns everyday actions into video game objectives. It encourages its players to set reasonable goals for themselves and to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Teachers can suggest that their students use this app to help them plan homework, study, practice for an oral presentation to overcome anxiety, have healthy sleeping habits, maintain a positive attitude in class, or any other areas where they’re struggling or would like to develop better skills. Cost: FREE at the App Store & Google Play.

Social Emotional Learning

- **CASEL** <https://casel.org/>
 - **Coping with Stress and Anxiety** https://casel.org/sp_faq/coping-with-stress-and-anxiety/
 - **Guidelines for Coping** https://casel.org/sp_faq/guidelines-for-coping/
 - **Guidelines for Parents and Caregivers** https://casel.org/sp_faq/guidelines-for-parents-and-caregivers/
 - **Planning Activities at Home** https://casel.org/sp_faq/planning-activities-at-home/
 - **SEL-Related Approach** <https://casel.org/sel-related-approach/>
 - **Social Emotional Learning** (sample of teaching activities to support core)
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1z5YDbDsK8fxv_qvVm0fYyubiiuEINt87/view
 - **Videos** <https://casel.org/resources-videos/>
 - *Blue words within the links are hyperlinks to more resources (activities/videos/etc.)
- **15 Activities for Teaching CASEL Core Competencies** <https://www.waterford.org/education/15-activities-for-teaching-casel-core-competencies/>
- **Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation: SEL Virtual Learning at Home**
<https://www.evscschools.com/SELVirtual>
Click on the blue word ‘click here’. There are activities for grades K-12 with additional resource links for mindful breathing, movement, and creating a quiet space idea. There are also other links for free or low-cost apps for anxiety. Great resource.

SOCIAL SKILLS RESOURCES FOR ONLINE LEARNING CONTINUED...

- **Hamilton Southeastern School Corporation** <https://www.hseschools.org/counseling/social-emotional>
Provides information for breathing strategies, calming down steps, and letting go of your worries.
- **Indiana Department of Education (IDOE)**
 - Pre-K – 12 Social-Emotional Learning Competencies <https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/sebw/sel-competencies-final.pdf>
 - Social-Emotional Learning Toolkit <https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/sebw/sel-toolkit-final-updated-cover.pdf>
 - Social-Emotional Learning Competencies PK – 12 Lesson Plans <https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/sebw/sel-lesson-plans-pk-12-final-attachments.pdf>
- **Social Skill Curriculum for Individuals on the Autism Spectrum**
<https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/irca/articles/assets/socialskillscurriculum2018acc.pdf>
List of social skill curriculums available for grades K-12 and what they include. Many of the companies are providing free access online during the COVID-19 E-learning days.

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<https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/doc/resources/social-skills-resources-for-online-learning.pdf>

EMERGENCY SENSORY BAGS

“Sensory Bags” Available from Albany Fire Department:

Albany Fire Department will be introducing new “Frazier” bags, in hopes to assist us on emergency calls when treating and interacting with children who have sensory diagnosis. In short, the vehicles will have 'sensory bags' with things that a person (child or adult) who struggles with sensory needs might benefit from during an emergency visit. Please note that when the emergency team arrives on a scene they are focused on the urgent medical or fire needs and may forget to offer the supports, but if families know to ask that will increase the use of the program and benefit more students and families.



The original “Sensory Bags” started in California. This video below shares some information on how the “Frazier Sensory Bags” started and what could be in them. Any questions please contact the Albany Fire Department.

[Frazier Bags Training Video - YouTube](#)

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EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION BOARD

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YES		I DON'T KNOW		NO					
What are you doing?	call someone	need more information		in pain / hurt	sick	I feel / I am			
scared	sad / depressed	worried		cold	hot	dizzy			
homeless	too bright	too loud		constipated	vomit	diarrhoea			
thirsty	hungry	that hurts		bleeding	burnt	headache			
				allergic	seizure / fit	broken			
excruciating	extreme pain	extreme pain	moderate pain	moderate pain	mild pain	slight pain	no pain		
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1



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EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION BOARD CONTINUED...

WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

The paramedics will ask some questions and see where you are sick or hurt. You may need to go in the ambulance to hospital. When you get to hospital some doctors and nurses will help you. People can come and visit.

Icons include: paramedics, ambulance, hospital, doctors, nurses, people, and various medical procedures like taking pulse, blood pressure, oxygen, medicine, bandage, sling, splint, drip, and needle.

please wait



please be still



please calm down



This communication board has been developed as a tool to enhance communication between Paramedics and patients. The development of this resource is a joint initiative between the **Department of Communities (Disability and Community Care Services)** and the **Department of Community Safety (Queensland Ambulance Service)**.



PARAMEDICS MIGHT ...

inhaler	blood pressure	take pulse
take temperature	oxygen	stethoscope
bandage	medicine	splint
sling	needle	drip

INTERACTION TIPS

1. ESTABLISH YES/NO
2. USE CALM VOICE
3. USE GESTURE & POINTING
4. REFER TO OBJECTS
5. USE FIRM TOUCH
6. SAY WHAT YOU'RE DOING
7. USE SHORT SENTENCES
8. SHOW ON YOURSELF OR SOMEONE ELSE FIRST

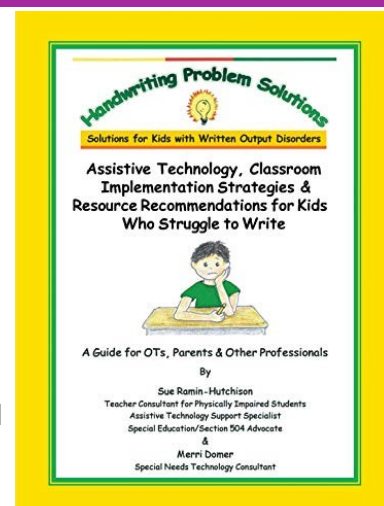
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BOOK SUGGESTIONS

Assistive Technology, Classroom Implementation Strategies & Resource Recommendations for Kids Who Struggle to Write by Sue Ramin-Hutchinson and others

This book is a resource guide designed for OTs, parents and other professionals working with students with educationally significant handwriting challenges. It is appropriate for students with low average to above-average intelligence who have conditions that make it difficult/impossible for them to complete written school work using paper and pencil. This resource guide includes:

- A full continuum of best-practice assistive technology for kids, K-12, that allow them to complete all types of written school work – even math, worksheets and advanced math and science! This assistive technology ranges from “Low-Tech” products to help kids improve their handwriting skills to the introduction of “High-Tech” devices, software/apps/extensions, or other products and supports to be used when Low-Tech solutions are not enough.
- The best classroom assistive technology implementation strategies (including the authors’ Assistive Technology Implementation Plan).
- Access code for the authors’ internet “Guide Updates Page”



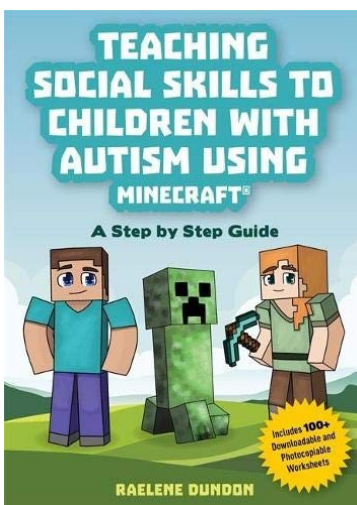
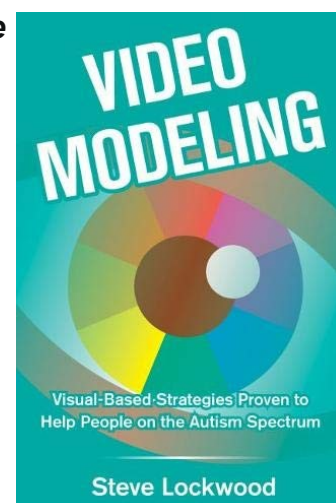
Video Modeling: Visual-Based Strategies Proven to Help People on the Autism Spectrum by Steve Lockwood

Help your child or student learn new skills and overcome existing barriers quickly and independently, regardless of age or ability. Video modeling is an effective method of teaching that uses recorded videos and technology. With repetitive and consistent exposure to video models, success stories include:

- A child who would not brush his teeth
- A teenager being acclimated to a new work environment
- A four-year-old who has not developed proper play-skills
- A child who would not engage with her teachers in class

And so much more!

Learn how, using only your smartphone, to create educational and beneficial material to help learners with autism increase independence, facilitate learning, and improve quality of life.



Teaching Social Skills to Children with Autism Using Minecraft: A Step by Step Guide by Raelene Dundon

This comprehensive and accessible guide allows one to set up and run a Minecraft® Social Group for children with autism spectrum disorders. Minecraft®, often described as “digital Lego,” provides an ideal forum to help children with autism and related conditions develop social and communication skills. This book offers guidance on how to use the game to support the learning of social and emotional concepts such as having a conversation, showing interest in others and understanding another person's point of view.

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VISUALS



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Board Game Communication Board



New Technology Available:

SpeechWatch (Model B) - Wearable AAC device with TalkTablet PRO Speech app (Pre-Installed!)

SpeechWatch - World's ONLY wearable AAC device and smartphone for Autism, Aphasia, Stroke, Parkinson's and more...

Developed and sold EXCLUSIVELY by Gus Communication Devices, the SpeechWatch PRO® is the world's first stand alone AAC/speech "device" that is worn on the wrist and is ideal for children and adults with autism, aphasia (stroke), Parkinson's, or any condition that affects their ability to communicate with friends and family.

Each SpeechWatch PRO® is individually prepared and configured by one of our technicians prior to shipping. We install, modify and test the TalkTablet AAC Speech app so it is ready to use for communication the moment you take it out of its gift box.

https://usaspeechtablets.com/products/swb?utm_source=googleads&vt_keyword=&gclid=Cj0KCQjwJN-SBhCkARIsACsrBz6rWX8qSONx3BqwbPGXtTmhDfozfuAJwNiHpl7W0r-d41369M7auKMaGf3EALw_wcB



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