



Resources and Links to Celebrate Autism Acceptance Month



Videos

Celebrating Autism in Media

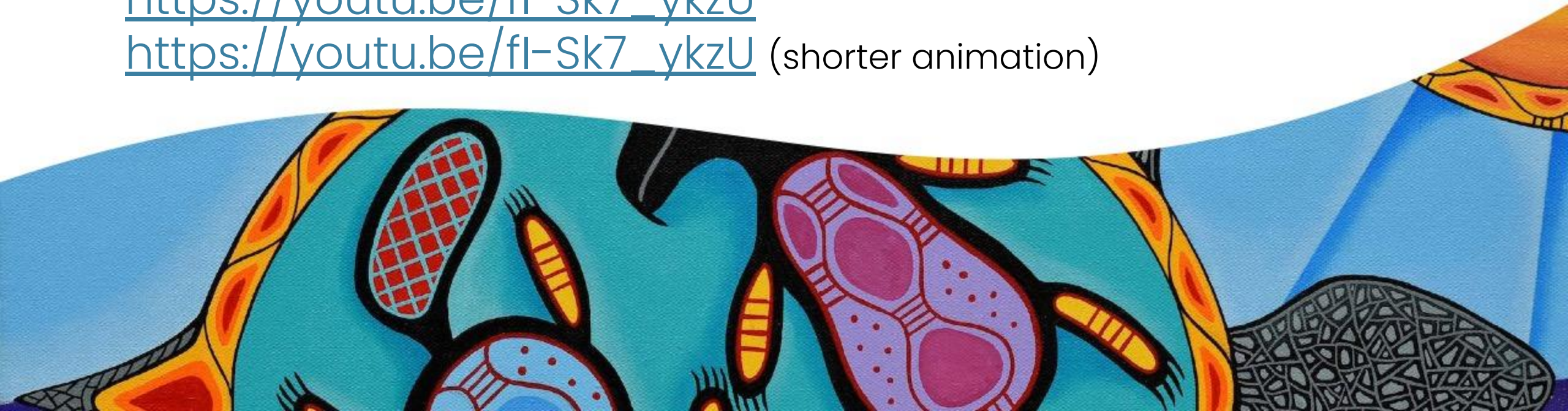
Thomas the Train: Bruno the Brake Car

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFqIH-e-sOE>

Celebrating Friendship with Julia- Sesame Street Character with Autism

https://youtu.be/fl-Sk7_ykzU

https://youtu.be/fl-Sk7_ykzU (shorter animation)



Sharing Experiences

Videos Made by George and David

Meet George

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIK2yXfrCfw&t=8s>



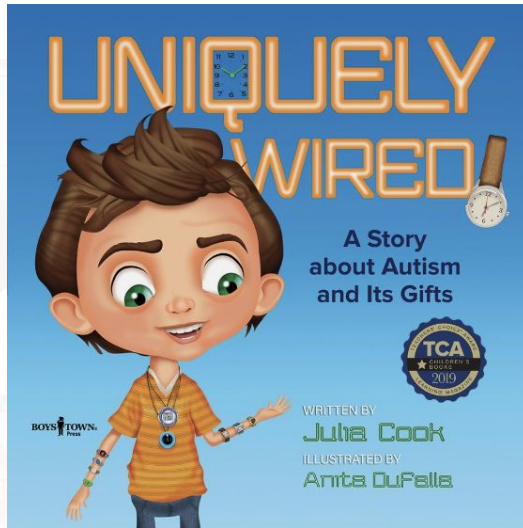
Meet David

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_O0vRTkaaY&t=4s

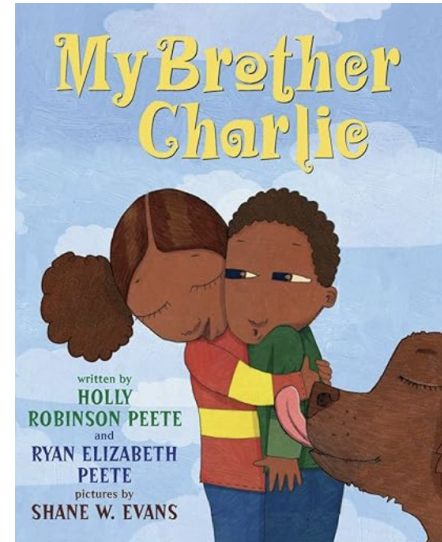


Books

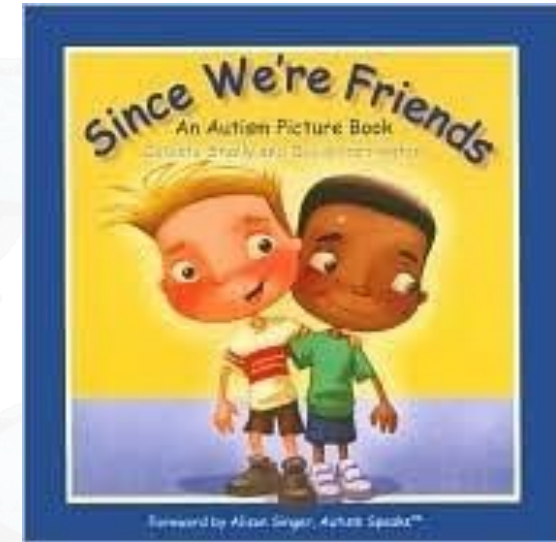
If you do not have access to the following books click on the links to hear the read aloud on Youtube



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5B37mgNlvs>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Nxjk0uIN5M&t=11s>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6Sy3FT82fg>



The following books were taken from the Website When My Brain is Messy Written By: Tania Wieclaw (AuDHD author and Mother of two Neurodivergent Children)

Books featured in the image are -

"A Day With No Words" - Fidgets and Fries

"The Rainbow Brain" & "The Brain Forest" - Onwards and Upwards Psychology

"Square Me Round World" - Connect Us Psychology

"A Kind Of Spark" - Elle McNicoll

"Workplace Neurodiversity Rising" - Neurodivergent Rebel

"From Chaos To Connection" - Stephanie Pinto

"The Explosive Child" - Dr Ross Greene

"I am the sunshine and the sunshine is me" - Neurodiverse Journeys

"Unmasking Millie" - Millie Carr Books

"Love Me Love My ADHD" - Chaos to Calm Consultancy

When My Brain Is Messy" FREE to download and read as a Kindle eBook for the next 5 days! Once you download a copy, it will be yours always.

This is the universal Amazon link to Tania Wieclaw's FREE Kindle eBook -

<https://bookgoodies.com/a/B0BZK2146S>



"The Brain Forest" - by Sandhya Menon from @onwardsandupwardspsych

"Suitable for ages 5-9

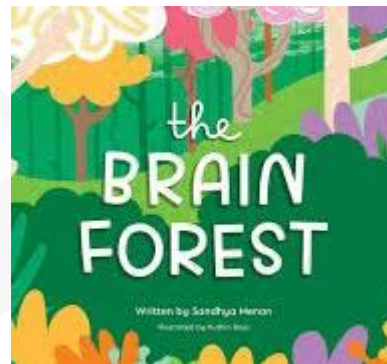
Written by a neurodivergent author, "The Brain Forest," is a celebration of neurodiversity, exploring the many different types of brains in the world using fun, easy to follow language

It introduces different neurotypes, explaining each one succinctly (as there are many), while also encouraging acceptance and inclusion.

I first read this book with my 5yo several months ago, and when it came to certain parts of the book he resonated with, he got excited to tell me that his brain "did that too!"

A great resource for schools and at home, "The Brain Forest" teaches acceptance and understanding of neurodiversity within the classroom and within your own family. "

Tania Wieclaw



Online Resources to Learn More about Autism

Autism Nova Scotia- Autism Acceptance Resources

<https://www.autismnovascotia.ca/event/autism-acceptance-month/>

First Voice- <https://vimeo.com/574059329> (may have to copy and paste link into another browser)



For Educators

Helpful Webinar Sessions from:

Understanding Autism through the Actually Autistic Lens

The following sessions are from a free webinar series presented by Penn State University in 2021.

1. This first session is called **Integrating Indigenous Knowledge with Modern Supports** presented by Jules Edwards and she is Ojibwe. She has some great insights. She is Ojibwe, but much of her content is aligned with Mi'kmaw ways of being and knowing.

<https://www.watch.psu.edu/actuallyautistic/day-one/integrating-indigenous-knowledge.html>

2. This second session is called **Autistic Communication and Masking** which actually includes 3 presenters, Maisie Soetantyo, Tifanny Joseph and Tee Unmasked, all of whom have Autism, and their insights and experiences are very educational. Two of the presenters use assistive technology to communicate and they have a lot to share.

<https://www.watch.psu.edu/actuallyautistic/day-one/autistic-communication-and-masking.html>

3. This last session is called **Forget Behavior: Understanding Autistic Cognition** presented by Oswin Latimer, who is an Autistic Consultant and has Autism himself. He presents on understanding the behaviors of those with Autism as well as the shift in the focus on the deficit model to a strengths based model and also a focus on understanding.

<https://www.watch.psu.edu/actuallyautistic/day-three/forget-behavior.html>

If you are interested in accessing additional sessions from the same series click this link

<https://www.watch.psu.edu/actuallyautistic/index.html>



Understanding Sensory Needs and Sensory Activities

- **Sight/Vision**
- **Sound/Auditory**
- **Smell/Olfactory**
- **Taste/Gustatory**

Power Senses

- **Vestibular**- Balance and space awareness (involves inner ear)
- **Proprioception** - Body position and knowing where your body is in space (involves muscles and joints)
- **Touch/Tactile** - touch (not just with hands but whole body- skin)
- **Interoception**- internal body signals (involves inner organs)



Sensory Processing

Click the play button to watch the video

WHAT IS SENSORY PROCESSING



Activities for Vision/Sight

Shape/ Letter/ Number activities

- Encourage the student to make shapes/ letters/ numbers using different materials e.g. finger paint, clay, sand, shaving foam
- Have the student trace shapes / letters / numbers using tracing paper or another medium e.g. a board and a torch
- Make shape / letter/ number rubbings



Matching Activities:

- Colours/ Shapes / letters/ numbers could be drawn on a card and cut in half. Encourage student to find and match the pieces of card to make the shape / letter / number
- 'Simon Says'
- Finding items of the same colour or words starting with same letter and grouping together
- Matching the picture with the word



Follow the leader activities

- Have students follow mazes on paper or dot to dot on paper
- Have the student with visual sensory differences follow a peer around an obstacle course
- Divide an activity into sequential steps and have students follow steps to complete activity example counting money:
 1. Take money out of purse
 2. Draw around each coin and identify what type of coin it is?
 3. Write down all the coins that came out of the purse
 4. Add up the value of all the coins and write down your answer
 5. Put the coins into the purse



Activities for Vision/Sight cont'd

Cutting activities

- Cut around shapes, lines etc.

Tracking activities

- Move an object around a course or shape and get the student to track the movement with their eyes. Some computer activities are good for this
- Dropping objects from different heights (this could be included in a lesson about gravity for example)
- Racing toy cars (this could be individualised by sticking an image of a favourite character / object on the toy car)
- Throwing and catching, rolling and passing objects

Spotting activities

- Spotting which item has been removed from a tray of items
- Finding the letters / words in a clear basin or bottle of water with coloured glitter

Measuring Activities

- Measuring water or coloured water into jugs then pouring into items
- Measuring lengths and distances between objects, areas of the school etc.

Other Visual Stimuli

- **Visual Discovery Box:** Create a box filled with objects of different colors, shapes, kaleidoscopes and textures. Encourage your student to explore the items, observe their visual characteristics, and describe what they see.
- **Color Sorting:** Provide a collection of objects or pictures with different colors. Guide your student to sort and group them based on color. This activity not only enhances visual perception but also promotes cognitive skills such as categorization and organization
- **Sensory Bottles:** Fill clear plastic bottles with colored water, glitter, or small objects. Encourage your student to shake and observe the mesmerizing visual effects created by the floating elements. These sensory bottles can provide a calming and visually stimulating experience.



Activities for Sound/Auditory Sense

Engaging with sound is an essential aspect of auditory sensory activities for children with autism. These activities involve introducing various sounds and encouraging the child to actively listen and respond. Some examples of engaging with sound include:

- **Musical Instruments:** Encourage the child to experiment with different musical instruments, such as drums, xylophones, or keyboards. This can help develop their auditory discrimination skills and promote self-expression.
- **Sound Guessing Games:** Play sound guessing games where the child listens to different sounds and tries to identify them. This can be done using recorded sounds or real-life sounds in the environment.
- **Soundscapes:** Create soundscapes by playing calming nature sounds, such as ocean waves or bird chirping. This can help create a soothing and relaxing auditory environment.

Finding Auditory Balance



Finding auditory balance is crucial for children with autism, as they may be sensitive to certain sounds or experience auditory overload. Providing activities that promote auditory balance can help create a more comfortable and regulated sensory experience. Some strategies for finding auditory balance include:

- **Noise-Canceling Headphones:** Offer noise-canceling headphones to children who are sensitive to loud or sudden sounds. These headphones can help reduce sensory overload and provide a sense of calm.
- **Creating a Quiet Space:** Designate a quiet space where the child can retreat when feeling overwhelmed by auditory stimulation. This space should be free from excessive noise and distractions.
- **Structured Listening Activities:** Engage the child in structured listening activities, such as guided listening exercises or listening to audio stories. This can help improve auditory focus and attention.



Remember that each child is unique, so it's important to observe their individual preferences and sensitivities when designing auditory activities.



Activities for Smell/Olfactory Sense



Scent-Free Classroom:

- Encourage students and staff to avoid using strong perfumes, colognes, or scented products to reduce the risk of triggering sensitivities.

Provide Scent Options:

- Offer scent options for certain activities. For example, during sensory or relaxation periods, consider providing options like essential oils or subtle, non-allergenic scents for students who may benefit from such experiences.

Offer Scent Breaks that may include Using Natural Scents:

- Offer aromatherapy breaks in a designated area for students who find it beneficial. These breaks can include calming scents like sweetgrass, sage, or other scents like lavender and eucalyptus. Participation is optional and make sure that the scents are not overpowering.



Activities Taste/Gustatory Sense

We emphasize the importance of respecting each student's individual choices when it comes to food. Just like adults, children have unique tastes and preferences. It's important to help support our students so that they do not feel forced or pressured into eating specific foods; talk with families.

- Incorporate snacks throughout the day that are crunchy or chewy. Think granola, pretzels, carrots, taffy, jerky, gum, or drinking thick liquids such as smoothies, yogurt, or applesauce through a straw.
- Regularly use a water bottle with a straw throughout the day.
- Try gum or candies with strong sweet or sour flavors. Sucking on popsicles or lollipops is a great strategy too.



Activities for Vestibular Sense

- Somersaults and cartwheels
- Log rolling
- Jumping rope
- Bike riding
- Swimming
- Gymnastics
- Dancing
- Lying on the stomach to complete activities
- Climbing across or hanging upside down from monkey bars



Activities for Proprioception Sense

- Weight bearing activities e.g. crawling, push-ups
- Resistance activities e.g. pushing/pulling
- Heavy lifting e.g. carrying books
- Heart pumping activities e.g. running, jumping on a trampoline
- Oral activities e.g. chewing, blowing bubbles
- Deep pressure e.g. tight hugs



WAYS TO PROVIDE SAFE PROPRIOCEPTION INPUT



WHEELBARROW WALKS



ANIMAL WALKS



CARRYING SHOPPING BAGS



RIDDING A BIKE



SWEEPING THE FLOOR



PUSHING A CART

Activities for Touch/Tactile Sense

Sand play

Play dough

Textured, Weighted lap pads (*Always consult with Occupational Therapist)

Water Table

Sensory Table

Beading

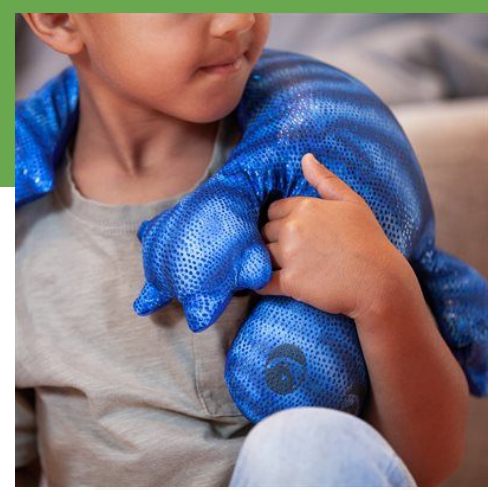
Feathers

Texture Table sandpaper, cotton, soft, hard, smooth materials

Squeezing or pinching with resistive materials or fidgeting

Bubble wrap , large exercise ball and crash mats

Deep pressure touch ; weighted items (*consult with OT)



Kelly Mahler (OT) explains Interoception and Emotions (just click in the box with Kelly)



Here is a link to a doc with some great Interoception activities to try:

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/docs/support-and-inclusion/student.-health-and-disability-support/interoception-301-activity-guide.pdf>

Autism Acceptance Month with Social Stories

Empower Your Students with Social Stories

Description: Social stories are a powerful tool for promoting understanding and acceptance in the classroom. Incorporate these strategies to foster empathy and inclusivity among your students. Here's how to create one:

Choose a Topic




Pick a situation your students might find challenging or confusing.

Describe the Situation

Use simple words to explain what's happening.



My school is _____. I am in grade _____. My mom or dad usually drops me off at school in the morning. Most times, I wait outside the door until someone lets me in. Usually, someone lets me in right away. Sometimes, I need to wait for someone to let me in and that is ok! There are things I can do while I wait to keep me calm.

I can say the names of all the Pokémon I know.	
OR I can name the colors of the rainbow.	
OR I can sing the Honor Song.	

I am happy I can do things to make me feel calm while I wait for someone to let me in my school. Waiting for someone to let me in my school is ok! It makes my mom, dad and teachers happy when I can wait calmly for someone to let me in my school in the morning. It is good to start my day when I am feeling calm. My brain can learn better when I feel calm.

Share Different Perspectives

Show how people might feel or think in that situation.

Offer Support

Talk about ways to help each other feel better, not to change behavior.

Use Pictures

Add drawings or photos to make it easier to understand.

Keep it Simple

Use short sentences and clear language everyone can understand.

Celebrate Understanding

Read the story together and celebrate how we're all learning to understand each other better.



Things to Consider for Social Stories

1. Visual Representation

Utilize visual aids to illustrate social situations and emotions. Encourage students to create their own visuals to express their experiences and perspectives.



2. Personalized Narratives

Tailor social stories to each student's unique needs and interests. Address specific challenges or misunderstandings they may encounter in daily interactions.

3. Positive Reinforcement

Highlight moments of success and progress. Celebrate small victories and encourage a growth mindset among your students.



Considerations cont'd



4. Peer Support

Foster a supportive classroom environment where students learn from each other.

Encourage peer collaboration and understanding through group activities and discussions.

5. Continuous Communication

Keep an open dialogue with students and caregivers about their experiences and concerns.

Adapt social stories based on feedback and ongoing observations.

Together, Let's Embrace Neurodiversity! : #AutismAcceptance

#InclusionMatters #EmpathyEducation



Tips for Creating and Using Visual Schedules: Empowering Our Students

Predictable Routines

Description: Visuals are powerful tools for engaging students and reinforcing learning.

-Visual schedules provide structure and predictability. Here's how to create and implement them effectively:

Choose Clear Symbols

-Select simple and easily recognizable symbols or images for each activity or task. Select visuals that directly relate to the topic or concept you're teaching.

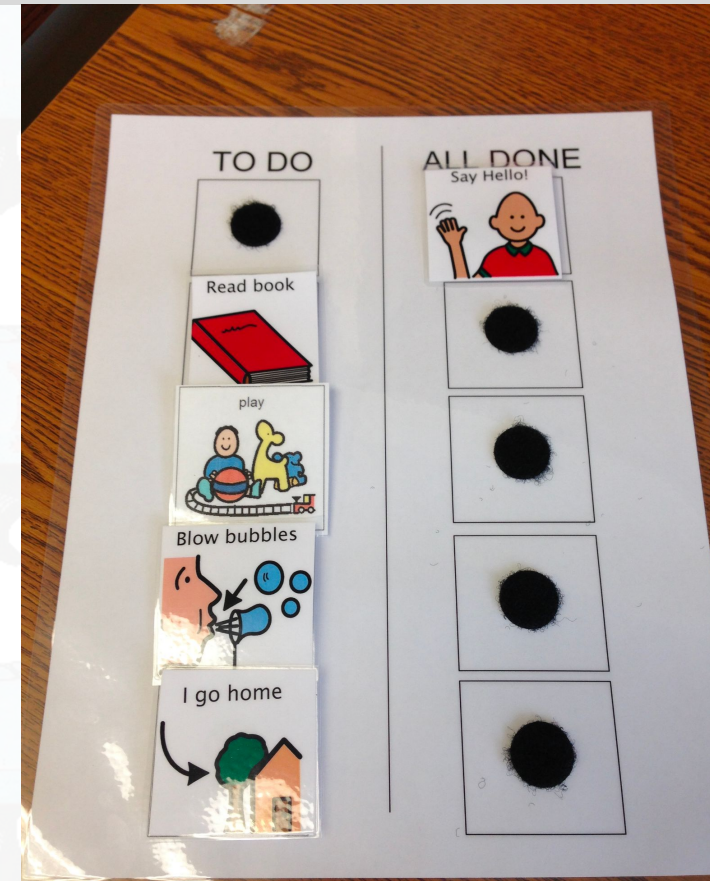
Sequence Daily Activities

-Arrange the symbols in sequential order to represent the daily routine, and /or activity.

-Use Visual Cues

-Incorporate visual cues such as arrows, numbers or letters to indicate the order of tasks and transitions.

-Schedule can be vertical or horizontal. Schedules can be pictures, picture with print or print.



Written Word & Picture



Tips for Creating and Using Visual Schedules: Empowering Our Students

Provide Flexibility

-Allow for flexibility by including options for unexpected changes or choices within the schedule.

Display Prominently

-Place the visual schedule in a central location where it is easily visible and accessible throughout the day or have the student carry their own individual schedule with them throughout the day.

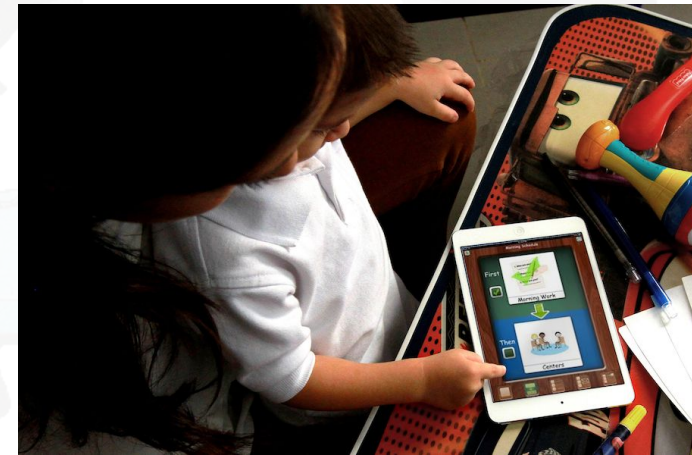
Utilize Technology

-Explore digital tools and resources for creating interactive visuals that enhance engagement.

Provide Support

-Offer additional context or explanations alongside visuals to ensure understanding for all students.

**Let's Make Learning Visual and Vibrant: #VisualLearning
#Engagement #InclusiveClassroom**



Penatmuiku's

Autism Acceptance Month

We hope that you find this resource useful. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out!

Wela'liek!

Doreen Stevens, MK Student Services Consultant

Ambrah MacNeil, Autism Teacher Specialist

