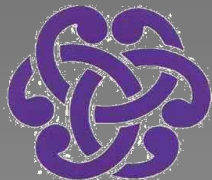


Behavioral Supports for Students with ASD

Behavior and the Environment
... making the connection



Amanda Armstrong, MEd, BCBA
Autism Coordinator
VDOE T/TAC @ James Madison University

Could you function here?



Goals of the Hour



- Participants will:
 - > Highlight characteristics of ASD
 - > Define Behavior and Environment
 - > Understand the Environment's Effect on Behavior
 - > Practice Environmental Arrangements

Characteristics of students with ASD

- ◉ Language comprehension difficulties
- ◉ Expressive language difficulties
- ◉ Social relations difficulties
- ◉ Sensory processing difficulties
- ◉ Resistance to change
- ◉ Preference for familiar routines and consistency
- ◉ Organizational difficulties
- ◉ Difficulty attending to relevant stimuli
- ◉ Distractibility

What is Behavior?

- According the *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*
 - > 1 a : the manner of conducting oneself
 - b : anything that an organism does involving action and response to **stimulation**
 - c : the **response** of an individual, group, or species to its **environment**
 - 2 : the way in which someone behaves; *also* : an instance of such behavior
 - 3 : the way in which something functions or operates

Goal of Function Based Intervention

- Make Challenging Behaviors **Irrelevant**, Inefficient, and Ineffective
 - > **Irrelevant**
 - By altering antecedents/predictors (*Environment*)
 - > Inefficient
 - By teaching appropriate replacement behaviors
 - > Ineffective
 - By eliminating consequences maintaining behavior

Goal of Function Based Intervention

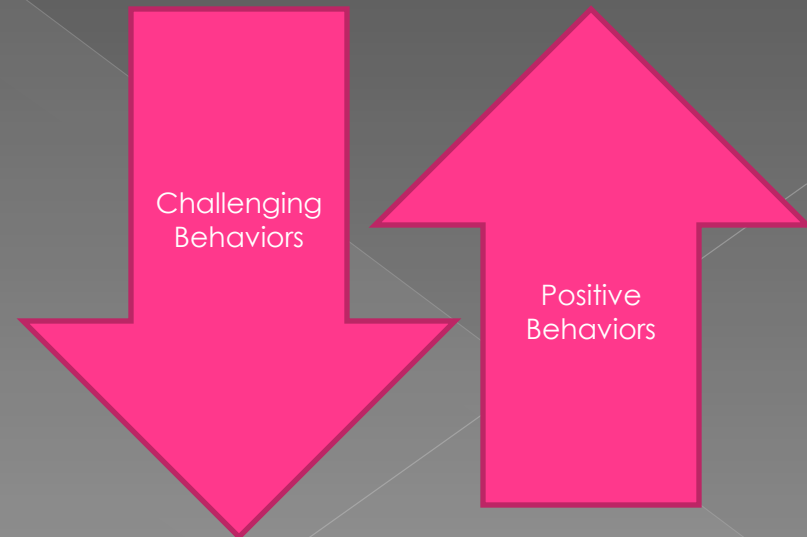
- Students' challenging behaviors and positive behaviors are difficult to change because they are functional; they serve a purpose for the child.
- These behaviors will either be reinforced or made irrelevant by the environment.

What is the Environment?

- According the *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*
 - > 1: the **circumstances, objects, or conditions** by which one is **surrounded**
 - > 2a : the complex of physical, chemical, and biotic factors (as climate, soil, and living things) that act upon an organism or an ecological community and ultimately determine its form and survival
b : the aggregate of social and cultural conditions that influence the life of an individual or community
 - > 3: the **position** or **characteristic position** of a linguistic element in a sequence

Environment to Support Students with ASD

- **Organization**
- **Minimized Visual and Auditory Distractions**
- **Clear Visual & Physical Boundaries**



Organization

- ◉ Reduces distractions
- ◉ Allows students to learn placement of objects
- ◉ Provides structure
- ◉ Provides easy access by students
- ◉ Assist with transitions between activities
- ◉ Independence

Minimized Visual and Auditory Distractions

- Creates calmer environments
- Assist students who may be experiencing sensory overload
- Allows necessary visual strategies to be the focus

Clear Visual & Physical Boundaries

- ◉ Minimizes frustrations of not knowing what happens in each area
- ◉ Decreases wondering or running between areas
- ◉ Assist with clear transitions
- ◉ Understanding of environmental segments

Environment as Curriculum

● Goals

- > Respond to students specific needs
- > Promote independence
- > Highlight students abilities
- > Challenge student's abilities
- > Promote generalization to the community

Environment as Curriculum

- By changing stimulus and reinforcement in the environment and teaching the child in their deficit skill set areas the student's behavior changes in ways that allow him/her to be included in the general education setting
- Environmental accommodations and adaptations to prevent or minimize occurrences of the problem behavior

The School wide Environment

- ◉ School Culture
- ◉ Temperature
- ◉ Lighting
- ◉ Population
- ◉ Noise
- ◉ Visuals
- ◉ Routines

The Classroom Environment

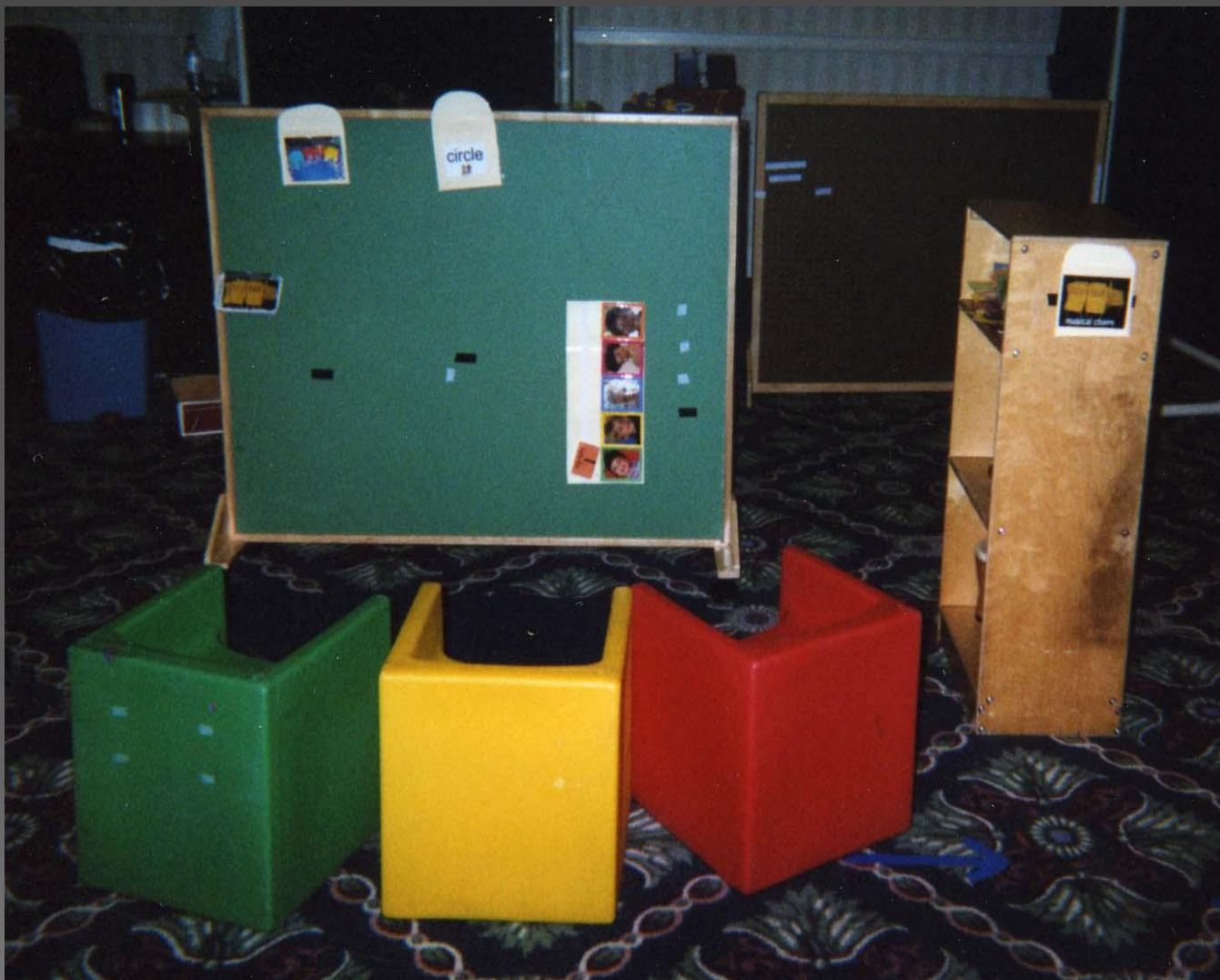
● Classroom Seating

- > Arrangement of desk (rows vs clusters) can affect student's task engagement or participation in group activities

● Barriers and Dividers

- > Designate specific purposes to each area of the classroom.

VISUAL BOUNDARIES



Autism Internet Modules

VISUAL BOUNDARIES



Autism Internet Modules

The Classroom

- ◉ Visual Schedules and Checklist Establish Clear Expectations
 - > **What** activities to complete
 - > **How many activities** to complete
 - > The individual will know **when the work is finished**
 - > **What will happen after** the work is complete (Mesibov et al., 2005)

SCHOOL & CLASSROOM SCHEDULES

	Mark	Lisa	Kate
Free Play	Supervise work systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up breakfast Get transition objects/schedules ready Put communication systems at table 	Supervise free play
Snack	Transition to wash hands	Wait at table	Get transition objects/schedules ready for bathroom
Bathroom/Free Play	Bathroom	Supervise free play	Clean up breakfast
Outside	Work on communication skills	Work on play/social skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up centers/circle time Get choice objects Transition objects/schedules
Centers	Sensory Activity	Art Activity	Manipulative Activity
Circle Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean up centers Help children participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wait at circle Run circle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition to circle set up lunch
Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> serve lunch work on communication & social skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition kids to lunch set up cots work on communication & social skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition objects/schedules ready communication systems
Bathroom	Help children get settled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition to cots Help children get settled 	Bathroom

Change may be hard...

- Remember students with ASD appreciate routines so although the routines that you currently have may not be most conducive for positive behavior outcomes it is still familiar to them.
- Altering the familiar arrangement may be unsettling to some students so try to tell your students in advance of the changes that will be made

Arrange your Classroom...

With your tablemates create a model classroom: You have a classroom of 14 children with various abilities and disabilities. The students in this classroom need to have social opportunities created for them with the exception of two of them who can not seem to stay quite. Be sure to include the use of technology, an area for students to take “space”, centers and seating to create social opportunities. You do not have to use all of your furniture.

Materials:

Bag of Classroom Furniture

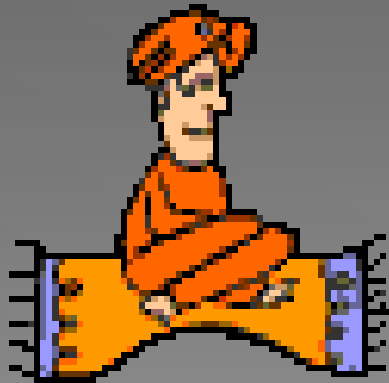
Dry Erase Marker

White Board



Every student with ASD is as unique as every student who does not have ASD

There's no "Magic Formula"



References

- Behavior. (2010). In *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. Retrieved June 15, 2010, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/behavior>
- Environment. (2010). In *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. Retrieved June 15, 2010, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/behavior>
- Davis, C., Fox,. Evaluating Environmental Arrangement as Setting Events: Review and Implications for Measurement .*Journal of Behavioral Education* Y1 - 1999-06-01 .Springer Netherlands
- Matheny, A. P., Wachs, T. D., Ludwig, J. L., & Phillips, K. (1995). Bringing order out of chaos: Psychometric characteristics of the confusion, hubbub, and order scale. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 16, 429-444.
- <http://www.autisminternetmodules.org/index.php>
- <http://classroom.4teachers.org/>