

The Southeast Scoop

ASD Scoop

January 2010
Volume 1, Issue 2



Giving Students their Paychecks

HBO Presents:

“The Temple Grandin Story”

Starring Claire Danes as

Temple Grandin.

Premiers February 6, 2010

Temple Grandin is one of the leading presenters on autism. She herself is on the spectrum and has an incredible story on how she rose above her diagnosis.

Check your local listings for times.

As adults, we all look forward to that one or two days a month when we are handed that little rectangular piece of paper - our paycheck! For some it's accompanied with the slight hum of the Hallelujah chorus while for others it's accompanied by a sense of achievement and self-worth. For most adults, their paycheck is their reward for working hard and for doing the job that they are hired for. Without that reward most of us would start looking for a different job that comes with that monetary reward we need. If we are lucky enough, we have a job that also give us internal reinforcement—that feeling that we are doing something good for someone else and

contributing to the world.

Our students, especially those with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), need paychecks just like adults. Most students on the spectrum are not driven by the internal desire to do their best or to please others when they are completing a task at school. Just as adults need some sort of reward to keep working, we need to create paychecks for our students with ASD.

Positive reinforcement is anything that will increase the future occurrence of a behavior. If you are struggling with a student being off-task or refusing to do work, then giving positive reinforcement for doing work without refusing

will help increase the desired behavior.

Here are five things to consider when developing a reinforcement system.

1. Choose the reinforcement according to the child's preferences. What is motivating for other students may not be motivating for your student with ASD.
2. Reinforcement needs to be delivered by more than one person in more than one environment.
3. Continually assess the effectiveness of the reinforcement—this may be after every task, twice a week or once a month.

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Please Welcome to the 2010 State Conference...

For the next couple of months, we will be featuring an upcoming speaker for the 2010 State ASD Conference in Kearney, NE on April 8th and 9th.

FERN SUSSMAN, BA
D.S.P.A., is Program Manager

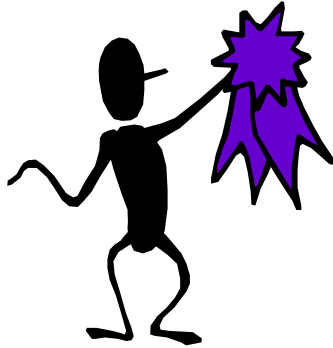
of *More Than Words*® – The Hanen Program® for Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder at The Hanen Centre. She is the author of the *More Than Words* guidebook. Fern is a National pre-

sentor providing *More than Words Training* for SLPs parents and professionals.

Fern will be presenting the keynote on April 8th and then also have two breakout sessions on April 9th.

Giving Students their Paychecks

Continued from page 1



4. Choose reinforcement that match the level of behavior you are trying to change. For instance, having a huge party to reinforce a minor behavior may not be the best approach.

5. Make sure that the access to the reinforcement is delivered by an adult or peer.

Types of Reinforcement

There are a different types of reinforcement that can be used with students. Almost all types of reinforcement can fall into four main categories.

1. Social/Attention
2. Tangible (item that you can touch)
3. Activity
4. Escape

Using a reinforcement inventory is a great way to find items or activities that are reinforcing to your student. Sample reinforcement inventories are posted on the SE ASD Network webpage and blog for your use.

Typically, adults are stingy when giving positive reinforcement and reinforcement.

Reinforcement Schedule

Another question to ask yourself when you are developing a reinforcement system for your student is how often you should give the reinforcement. Typically, adults are stingy in giving reinforcement and/or reinforcement that the students with ASD truly want. As a basic principle, the more frequently you reinforce an appropriate behavior, the quicker the results.

Adults can deliver reinforcement in two ways—immediately or delayed. As a rule, the younger the student, the quicker the reinforcement needs to be. If you are wanting to increase an appropriate behavior quickly, immediate reinforcement are the best strategy. This may mean reinforcing a student with something tangible after every single response and then systematically adding more time between the reinforcement being given.

Benefits of Using Reinforcement

Besides the obvious benefit of increasing behaviors that you want, there are other benefits of using reinforcement.

- It creates a more self-motivated atmosphere where the child wants to complete the task to get his or her reinforcement.
- It creates a cooperative environment. If adults and staff are using a reinforcement schedule, it will lessen power struggles.
- It creates a habit that often leads to increasingly greater cooperation.
- It teaches your students valuable lessons that may help him or her realize the benefits of other types of reinforcement. They might actually end up liking tasks that they are asked to do.

As a final note, positive reinforcement can make a huge difference with our students on the spectrum. Try it and you'll see!

For more information or if you have any questions, contact Melissa at mtrautman@esu6.org

I Shouldn't Have to Tell You, But...

Do you find yourself saying this over and over to your students, especially those with Autism or Asperger Syndrome? If you do, then the student needs to learn the hidden curriculum.

The hidden curriculum is the set of guidelines or rules that are not directly taught, but assumed to be known by everyone. The hidden curriculum spans across different cultures, age, gender, environments, and even differs who you are with.

Example of the hidden curriculum in

school are as follows.

- * Do not announce or discuss bathroom issues upon returning to class.
- * Do not walk up and start talking to someone who is on the telephone.
- * Even though you think that the shirt that your friend is wearing is ugly, do not tell him it's ugly. It's best to say nothing about the shirt.

There are thousands upon thousands of hidden curriculum items that our students

with ASD come across. We need to teach these items directly to our students as they do not learn these items incidentally.

Teaching an item a day is one of the easiest ways to incorporate the hidden curriculum. For a list of hidden curriculum items, check out the book from the SE ASD Library "The Hidden Curriculum" by Brenda Smith Myles, et al, or purchase the 2010 Hidden Curriculum Calendar published by the Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

Catch It Before It Starts!

Almost everyone has had an experience of a meltdown with a student on the Autism Spectrum. The best way to deal with these meltdowns is to prevent it from happening in the first place. Students on the Autism Spectrum are not manipulative; they use their behavior as a form of communication.

Start by observing what your student does when they are showing signs of frustration. Is your student tightening his hands, putting his head on her

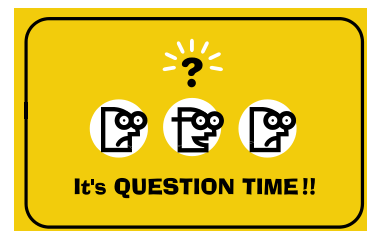
desk, rocking back and forth? Each student has specific behaviors that tell us as adults that they are getting frustrated. We call these their “rumbling behaviors”.

Here are some techniques to use when your students are starting the rumbling behaviors.

- * Stop talking. Do not engage in an argument.
- * Keep expectations low for the moment until they are calm.

- * Allow the student a break if he needs it to calm down.
- * Depending on the child, provide calming words.
- * Acknowledge the student’s difficulties.
- * Just walk and don’t talk. Take a break and move out of that environment.
- * Defuse tension with humor.

In the next issue, we’ll talk about what to do when a meltdown occurs.



Question of the Month

If I know a student of mine is capable of handwriting, but he just doesn’t like it, shouldn’t I make him write and copy notes just like everyone else?

From,

Handwriting Harry

Dear Handwriting Harry,

Students on the Autism Spectrum struggle with writing. Many stu-

dents may have beautiful handwriting, but it takes them forever to write it on paper.

Handwriting for most students is very labor intensive. If you think about the process of taking notes, there are many different skills involved. Visual perception (looking at the board and writing notes in the lines on the paper), attention (looking at the board and then back to the paper), motor behavior (handwriting) and emotion (typically frustration). This is

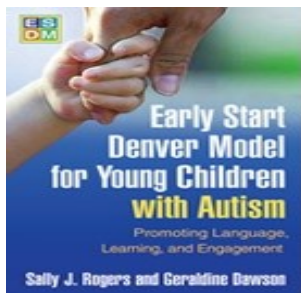
very taxing to the students on the Spectrum and most likely, they are focusing all of their attention on writing the notes.

Most students with ASD are visual learners. Providing copies of notes would allow the students to have a visual in front of them and allow them to listen to the teacher. Multi-tasking is very hard for most kids on the Spectrum.

So, my question to you is: Wouldn’t you rather have the student listening to you and what you are trying to teach them, then have them concentrating on writing everything down?

I guess that in my classroom, I would rather have a student be paying attention and learning, then worrying about writing down the notes! Copies of notes are easy to make and it benefits not only your students on the Autism Spectrum, but many others too.

Resources



Just Published!!

***The Early Start Denver Model for Young Children with Autism* by Sally J.**

Rogers and Geraldine Dawson. This research based model for working with toddlers and preschool children with Autism is finally published. Along with the book, curriculum checklists are available so you can implement this program for young children.

Contact the ESU 6 Autism Library at 402-761-3341 if you would like to take a look at this new resource.

Websites

<http://www.unl.edu/asdnetwork>—check out the new Nebraska State ASD Network webpage!

<http://www.autismspeaks.org>—This website has a wealth of video clips about Autism and Asperger Syndrome.

<http://www.autisminternetmodules.com>—A fabulous website with online trainings available. All you have to do is create a username and password and you’ll have access to various training modules.

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Check Us Out on the Web !

http://www.esu6.org/services/asd_home.htm

<http://seasdnetwork.wordpress.com>

<http://unl.edu/asdnetwork> (The NEW Updated Website!)

Register Now!

2010 Nebraska ASD Conference

Date: April 8th and 9th, 2010

Location: Holiday Inn and Convention Center,
Kearney, NE

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN! EARLY BIRD
DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE JANUARY 19TH—
MARCH 15TH.

This year's registration is online. Please go to

<http://asdconference2010.eventbrite.com>

to register. Purchase orders are accepted online.

Want to be published?

Here's Your Opportunity to be included in the 2011
Hidden Curriculum Calendar!

Melissa Trautman, SE Regional ASD Coordinator
and Annette Wragge, State Coordinator for the Ne-
braska ASD Network, are working on the 2011 Hid-
den Curriculum Calendar. If you have any great
hidden curriculum items to contribute, please
email them to mtrautman@esu6.org or awragge2@unl.edu.

The deadline for submissions is February 1, 2010.

