



N E B R A S K A
autism spectrum disorders
N E T W O R K

The Southeast ASD Scoop

January 2011
Volume 2, Issue 4

Just the Tip of the Iceberg

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Are you getting tired of your student exhibiting the same behavior or meltdown on a consistent basis? Have you tried various consequences and nothing has worked?

If so, then we need to take a moment to reframe our thinking from implementing consequences to problem-solving the real reasons behind the behavior.

Eric Schopler, the creator of the TEACCH method at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, introduced the Iceberg Analogy in 1994 to help understand the relationship between behavior and the characteristics of an individual with ASD.

The Iceberg Analogy is a way to reframe your thinking when it comes to dealing with behaviors. We often times just look at the surface behaviors, or what would be the top of the iceberg. We do not take the time to look under-

neath the surface, or under the water to see how deep the iceberg goes. The behavior on the surface is what we deal with on a daily basis, but the underlying causes underneath the surface is what we often forget to address and teach.

To show you how an Iceberg Analogy works, here is an example of looking at a meltdown from the book, *The Ziggurat Model*, by Ruth Aspy and Barry Grossman.

Top of the Iceberg

Behavior: Meltdown; which was exhibited by hitting the teacher, crying, yelling, putting head on desk.

Underneath the Surface

Underlying characteristics or reasons: The student had a low frustration tolerance, low self-esteem, difficulty managing stress, difficulty with abstract reasoning, poor problem-solving skills, and

difficulty asking for help.

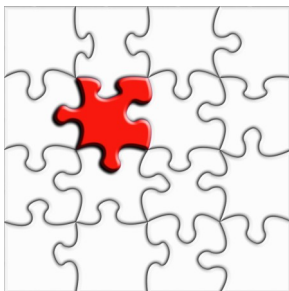
These underlying characteristics or reasons for the behavior are the skills that we need to evaluate and teach to the student to address the behavior. If the team was implementing consequences for the behavior and not seeing a difference, it was due to the lack of teaching the skills necessary for the student to stop having a meltdown.

To try the Iceberg Analogy with a student, here are the steps to follow:

STEP 1: Describe the behavior that you would like to change or modify. Be specific when describing the behavior. Instead of saying that the student is non-compliant, list the behaviors that show you he or she is being non-compliant, e.g. walking away from the teacher, putting head on desk, getting book out to read, sitting at their desk without starting, refusing to get their notebook out.

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Nebraska State ASD Conference Welcomes...



On Friday, April 8th we will start the day of with a Keynote address by the "Behavior Doctor", Dr. Laura A. Riffel

Laura A. Riffel, Ph.D. is a behaviorist who specializes in assisting adults to make proactive changes so that targeted behaviors of children disappear like magic. She has trained thousands of teachers,

parents, counselors, psychologists, administrators, and bus drivers on how to make data based decisions as a way to change behavior. Her trainings are filled with humor and make data collection easy to understand and use in any setting.

Dr. Riffel has a website full of resources for various disabilities - Autism, Asperger syndrome,

ADHD, ODD and Sensory Issues. She also has a section of printable forms and tools that relate to behavior, along with printable resources underneath each disability for teachers and parents.

Her website address is <http://www.behaviordoctor.org>. Make sure to check out this great resource!

Just the Tip of the Iceberg



Continued from page 1

Make sure that all members of the team agree with the behavior and how it is described.

STEP 2: Consider what the underlying causes of the behavior may be. At this step, it is important to know and understand the characteristics of Autism and Asperger Syndrome. It is also important to know your student and how he or she exhibits the characteristics of an individual with ASD.

The crucial part of this step is to make sure that your thinking is reframed when it comes to the student and the behavior. You should not be thinking that the student is just naughty, spoiled, or just doesn't want to listen to anyone which is causing the meltdowns every day. Everyone on the team should be thinking about what skills the student may be

missing and the characteristics of an ASD that may be causing the behavior to happen. If you are not sure if the student has a skill or not, then write it down and it will be addressed in the next step.

STEP 3: Look at the data that has been taken on the behavior listed and see if there are any specific antecedents that are causing the behavior to occur. Antecedents are the events that occur immediately before the behavior happens. Make a list of the antecedents that the team has noticed occur before the behavior.

STEP 4: As a team, decide how to change the antecedent or the environment so that the behavior is less likely to occur. If you change the antecedent to a behavior, you will change the behavior. Evaluate each environment that the student is in and decide how the team is going to change the antecedent.

This step is the biggest challenge and will take the most time. Adding positive behavior interventions and supports to the student's day is a way of changing the antecedent. For example, if a child has a meltdown every time you ask them to take off their coat in the morning, you would change the antecedent by adding a visual schedule or visual support and by

reducing the amount of verbal instruction you are giving the student. The visual is a positive behavior support that we have put into place.

STEP 5: The last step is the most important step when it comes to the student. This is the time where we observe and evaluate the student to identify what skills are missing and what skills need re-teaching. We also start teaching new strategies to the students that will allow them to respond more appropriately in a stressful situation. It is important that this step is not skipped and to realize that we may spend a long time teaching a specific skill.

It will take time for everyone on the student's team to start reframing their thinking to more of a problem-solving model instead of a consequence model.

You will notice though, once everyone is on board, the student's behavior will decrease. The student's attitude towards the staff and the school will also improve due to the change in environment and the change in the reaction to his or her behavior.

To read more about the Iceberg Analogy, check out "*The Ziggurat Model*" by Ruth Aspy and Barry Grossman from the ASD library.

Sensory Suggestions, Part 3

Sensory needs are very common in students on the autism spectrum. If sensory needs are not addressed, students are not able to regulate their bodies, thus increasing the likelihood of behaviors. The past two issues have highlighted the Vestibular system and the Proprioceptive system. Activities to address those systems were included. This month we are highlighting the Tactile system. Please consult with your Occupational Therapist before implementing any sensory activities with your student.

Sensory System: Tactile

Location of this system: Skin, including

mouth and hands

Function: The tactile system provides feedback about the environment that we are in and the qualities of the objects we touch. These qualities include touch, pressure, texture, hard, soft, sharp, dull, heat, cold and pain.

Activities to address this system:

- Weighted blankets or vest—these should be about 5% of the student's body weight
- Different types of textures, such as fidgets, vibrating toys and pens
- Shaving cream, hair gel, lotions

- Hide different textures in dry beans or rice
- Try different types of clothing if students complain about any scratching or sensitivity related to their clothing
- Wear Lycra or spandex clothing underneath regular clothing if the student wants pressure on their skin

Suggestions taken from: "Practical Solutions for Stabilizing Students with Classic Autism to Be Reading to Learn: Getting to Go!" by Judy Endow, MSW. (2010) Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

Ready to be Toilet Trained?

Students with ASD often struggle with toilet training. Parents and teachers are often frustrated due to their inability to train their child or student to use the toilet.

Typically, the child's stage of readiness depends upon the skills that are needed to perform toileting and also developmental abilities, like muscle control.

Signs that your child or student may be ready to toilet train are:

- Stays dry for longer periods of time.
- Has a direct relationship between consuming fluids and urinating.

- Shows visual signs of needing to use the bathroom (crossing legs, squatting, pulling at pants).
- Ability to sit for about 5 minutes during an activity.
- Understands simple directions (stand up, sit down).
- Can pull pants up and down with assistance.

If your child or student is showing these signs, it's likely that they are ready to be toilet trained. The key to successful toilet training is consistency and communication between home and school. Make sure that you have enough time

and patience to start this process, along with the appropriate materials that are needed.

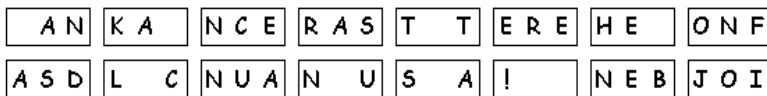
Every method of toilet training begins with charting the child's urinating patterns. It is important to have this charted across the day to see if there are any patterns so you can schedule in toileting breaks.

To find more information about the three methods that have been successful with children on the autism spectrum and a list of 100 toilet training tips, check out the book "Early Intervention and Autism—Real-life questions, real-life answers" by James Ball, ED.D, BCBA.



Letter Tile Game

Unscramble the letter tiles to decode a special message! The answer will be in the next issue.



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Answers to December's Word Scramble

- I S M U T A = Autism
- S N I T A T I N O R S = Transitions
- A I E S L P C = Special
- A R E N V L B N O = Nonverbal
- E W E L R S N E T T = Newsletter
- V A B R L E = Verbal
- S R E S E R C O U = Resources
- G U A G N L A E = Language
- O L N U C N I I S = Inclusion

Website Resources

Here are some websites that are great resources when working with individuals on the spectrum!

⇒ Mariposa School Website -

<http://www.mariposaschool.org/learning-materials>

For anyone that is implementing Verbal Behavior in their classroom, this website is a great resource for printable forms and articles on teaching specific skills or other topics related to your student's progress.

⇒ Texas Autism Resource Guide for Effective Teaching -

<http://www.txautism.net/manual.html>

This manual walks readers through evaluations of students on the Autism Spectrum, along with specific evidence-based interventions that can be implemented in the school system.



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Check Us Out on the Web !

<http://unl.edu/asdnetwork>

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

<http://seasdnetwork.wordpress.com>

Upcoming Trainings

Executive Functioning Skills: Surviving Middle School and High School

Date: February 28th, 2011

Place: ESU #6, Milford

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Presenter: **Melissa Trautman, MS. Ed**

DEADLINE TO REGISTER: FEBRUARY 18TH, 2011

For more information visit the Nebraska ASD Network website, ESU 6 Autism website
or the Southeast ASD Network blog.

THE DEADLINE FOR THE *EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION FEE* FOR THE

NEBRASKA STATE ASD CONFERENCE IS *FEBRUARY 28, 2011.*

PLEASE JOIN US APRIL 7TH AND 8TH, 2011 AT THE EMBASSY SUITES, PAPILLION, NE