

Parenting on the Spectrum: A survival guide
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Essentials for surviving

- Rules
- Behavior plan
- Schedules and routines
- Responsibility
- Toy management
- Clutter reduction
- Evaluating treatments

Rules

- Rules must extend to all environments including extended family, friends' homes
- Make a list and post the list
 - Decide as a family what the rules are
 - Have reasonable expectations
 - Make portable copies
 - Review the rules at least weekly if not daily

Behavior Plan

- Decide as a family the consequences of breaking rules
- BE CONSISTENT when administering consequences
- Consult with schools/day care to ensure they can administer your consequences
- Consequences SHOULD include rewards for positive behavior and loss of privileges for negative behavior
- Catch them being good A LOT!!

Schedules and Routines

- Create daily visual schedules, minischedules, portable schedules
- Structure is more important than routines
- Avoid non functional routines
- Use calendars to note school days, holidays, etc.

Responsibilities

- Cleaning room
- Picking up toys
- Assisting with laundry, cooking, cleaning
- ALL earn privileges and positive activities
- Non-compliance results in loss of privileges and activities

Toy Management

- Do not buy EVERY car/train/whatever!
- Too many toys = not enough play
- Rotating baskets of toys
 - After purging unused items, divide remaining into 2-3 baskets and rotate them
- Limit toys that encourage physical confrontations
 - Certain anime characters, superheroes

Clutter Reduction

- Kids with ASD are usually visual learners and reducing visual clutter may help with learning
- Create a centralized space for schedules, rules, calendars, etc. to reduce visual clutter
- Blue is the most calming color and may work well in a bedroom
- Streamline bedroom décor and fight the urge to cover the walls

Evaluating treatments

- Approach all supporting literature with a critical eye
- Just because it is published, does NOT mean it works or has benefits for your child
- There is no single treatment approach that has been shown to successfully treat the behaviors associated with ASD

Making careful choices

- Soundness of theoretical framework and the research foundation: Research data should support the theory.
- Relationship of theoretical framework to the potential change in functional change: Not just test scores, but real change in the real world
- Evidence for positive treatment outcomes balanced against claims of success: Data should show functional change, not testimonials
- Evidence for lasting functional change: If it does not last, did it really work?
- Ethical considerations: We do not have the luxury of doing any treatment because we think/hope it might work....ethics demand that we do what we can reasonably expect to work based on evidence.

(Creaghead, 1999)

Intervention with Evidence (Simpson, 2005)

Significant and convincing empirical efficacy and support:

- Applied Behavior Analysis
- Discrete Trial Training
- Pivotal Response Training

Intervention with Emerging Evidence (Simpson, 2005)

Efficacy and utility for persons with ASD

- Picture Exchange Comm. System (PECS)
- Incidental Teaching
- Structured teaching/TEACCH
- Augmentative/Alternative Comm. (AAC)
- Assistive Technology (AT)
- Joint Action Routines
- Social Stories
- Sensory integration treatment (SIT)

Intervention with Limited Evidence (Simpson, 2005)

No objective support, but might have potential utility

- Fast Forward
- Gentle teaching
- Option Method (Son-Rise)
- Floor time
- Pet therapy
- Relationship Development Intervention (RDI)
- Prismatic lenses
- Auditory Integration therapy (AIT)
- Megavitamin therapy
- Diet intervention
- Music & Art therapy

Intervention with No Evidence (Simpson, 2005)

Not recommended as lack efficacy and might be potentially harmful

- Holding therapy
- Facilitated Communication (F/C)

Who to trust??

- YOURSELF first and foremost, trust your gut.

- If it sounds too good to be true, it most likely is.
- If it costs more than you can afford, but has no real evidence to support its use, opt NOT to do it.

Buddha said.....

- Believe nothing, no matter where you read it or who has said it, unless it agrees with your own reason and your own common sense.

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