

IHS Autism Spectrum Disorder Series:  
**Special Topics in ASD**

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# Disclosure

- The presenters have no financial relationship to this program.

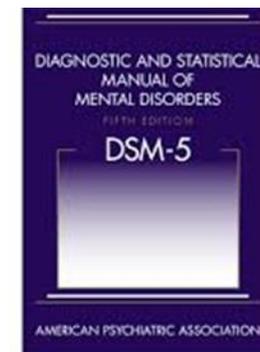
# Objectives

At the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Recognize two challenges (or special topics) related to ASD
- Name one support for one issue in ASD (sleep, feeding, or toileting, etc.)
- Illustrate school (Individualized Education Program) supports
- Discuss how one might address ASD with families

# Review of ASD Core Deficits

- Deficits in social communication and social interaction
  - Social approach/interaction
  - Nonverbal communication
  - Relationships
- Presence of restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities
  - Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, objects, speech
  - Routines
  - Restricted interests
  - Sensory



# Special Topics

- A variety of challenges may arise when working with children (and adults) with ASD
- Some of the most common are
  - Social Skills
  - Sleep
  - Feeding
  - Toileting
  - Communication
  - School
- Professionals may also wonder how to best address the topic of ASD diagnosis or intervention with families

# Social Development

- Individuals with ASD struggle with:
  - Back and forth communication and interactions
  - Nonverbal communication
  - Initiating and maintaining as well as understanding relationships
- Social skill development is an essential component of most interventions for ASD



# Social Skills Training in ASD

- Several evidence-based programs available
- Assessment of social skills is beneficial
- Social skills often need to be explicitly taught
- It is important to identify and “break down” the steps in any given social interaction

# Strategies for Social Skills

## Young Children

- Focus on beginning steps
  - Imitation
  - Joint attention
- Examples



## Teens

- Focus on explicit teaching and practice
- Generalization
- Examples



# Question #1

When teaching social skills to a child, what is important to remember?

- A. Teach each specific step separately
- B. Give very specific examples
- C. Model it yourself
- D. All of the above

# Sleep

- Between 40-80% of children with ASD have sleep problems
- Not getting enough sleep contributes to academic, behavioral and mood problems
- It is important to rule out any medical causes of sleep disturbance first



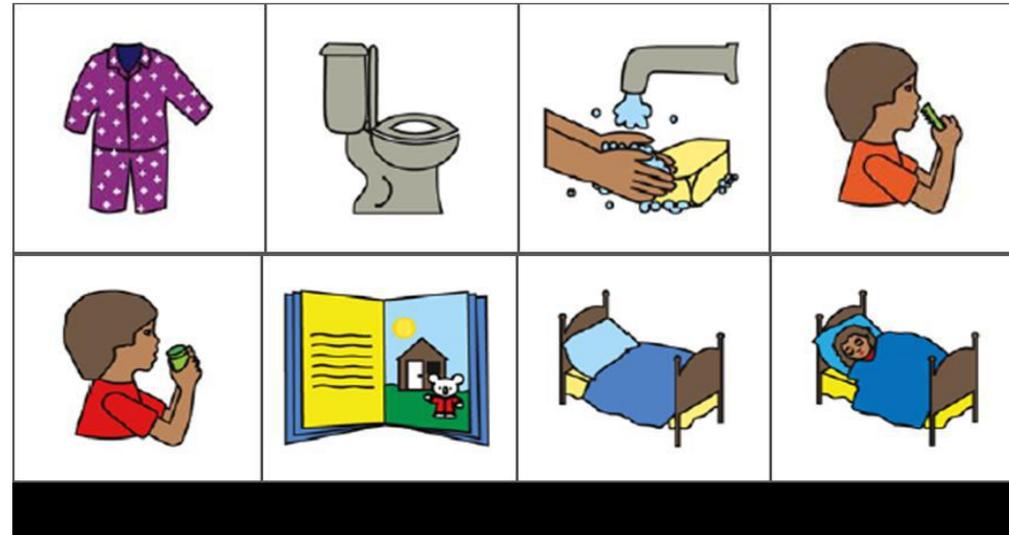
# Sleep

- The first step in intervention is to determine the cause of the problem
- Assessment of the sleep problem
- Determine number of hours of sleep needed for optimal functioning
  - Naps?
- Medication?
- Referral for specialty care may be necessary



# Sleep Hygiene

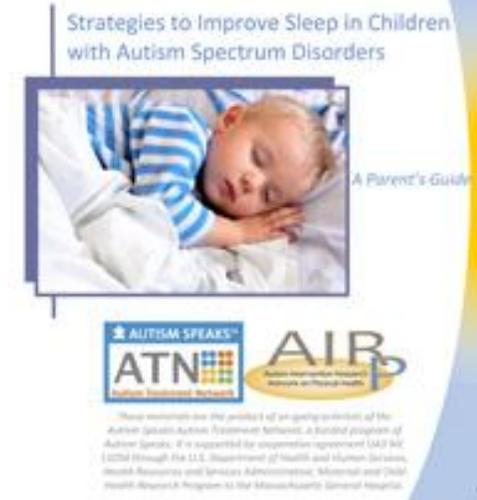
- Bedtime Routine
  - Regular bedtime
  - Visual schedule
  - Create rules for sleep
- Diet and Exercise
- Minimizing distractions
- Calm/soothing environment
- Reward



## Autism Speaks Toolkits for Sleep in Children and Teenagers

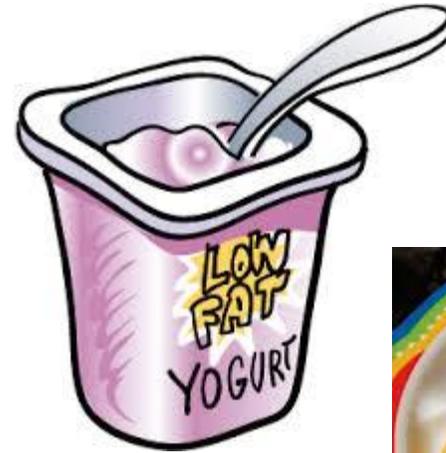
★ ★ ★ Bedtime	
	pajamas
	brush teeth
	go potty
	read
	lights out

www.being-visual.com



# Eating and Feeding

- “Picky eating”
- Behaviors such as gagging and vomiting or tantrums
- May create poor nutrition or GI problems
- Assessment of mealtime problems is necessary
  - May require specialized attention



# Strategies for Feeding



## Things to Do

- Routine and Schedule!
- Create a healthy eating environment
- Reward positive behaviors
  - Trying new food or even tolerating it on the plate
- Offer choices



## Things to Avoid

- Grazing
- Too many distractions
- Paying too much attention to negative behaviors
- Negotiating

## Question #2

What is often the first step for dealing with sleep and feeding problems?

- A. Talk to the child about the problem
- B. Create a routine around the problem behavior
- C. Eliminate rewards
- D. Nothing, it will go away on its own

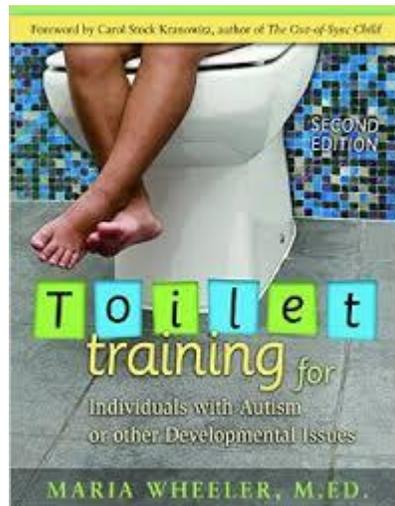
# Toileting

- Assessing toilet readiness
  - Checklist
- Prepare the family for toilet training
  - Prepare the child
  - Create a visual task list
  - Gather data
  - Set up the bathroom
  - Think about reinforcement



# Toilet Training Programs

- There are a number of great programs
- Most successful ones suggest a combination of the same components



- **Components that work:**
  - Schedule bathroom trips
  - Set a consistent toileting routine
  - Use physical or gestural prompting
  - Have lots of shorter practices
  - Use reinforcement
  - Ensure hydration
  - Make a switch to underwear
  - Schedule dry checks
  - Keep a record

# Helpful Questions

- Is there a good way to handle accidents?
- Should boys learn to use the toilet sitting or standing?
- Why is it hard for him/her to learn to wipe?
- How long will the process take?
- When should nighttime training start?



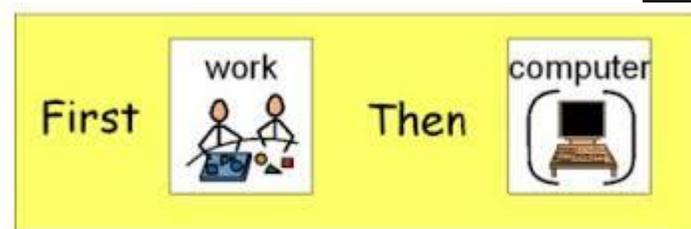
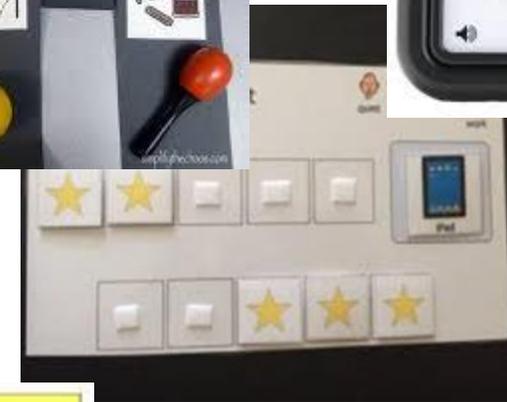
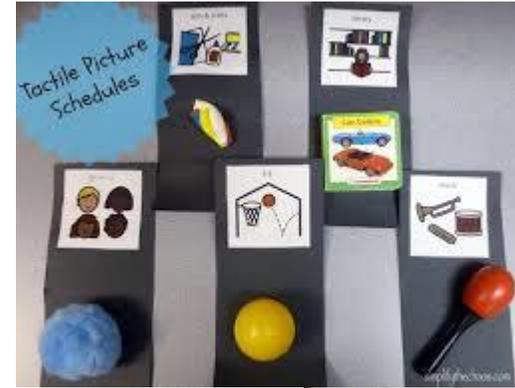
# Visual Supports

- Strategy for communicating using pictures and drawing instead of using words
- Children with ASD are visual learners
- Children with ASD may process language slowly, but visual cues and supports stay as long as the child needs it
- Visual supports do not prevent children with ASD to use language later

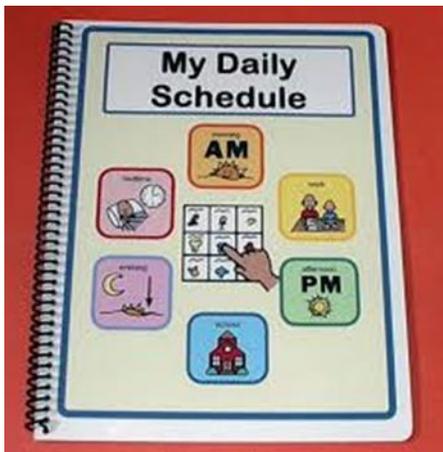


# Types of Visual Supports

- Choice Boards
- Transition objects
- 'No' sign
- Visual countdown timers
- Visual positive reinforcement



# Types of Visual Supports



- Visual labels
- Visual boundaries
- Work systems
- Finished or all done documents
- Pictures

# Tips for Success

- Simple and low tech is usually best
- Teaching will be needed
- Consistency
- Pair with language but keep it simple and short



# Question #3

Some parents of a child you are working with is afraid to use visual supports for fear that it will reduce the child's motivation to talk. What can you advise?

- A. Most children with ASD are visual learners
- B. Visual supports can facilitate understanding
- C. Using visual supports has been shown to assist with functional communication
- D. All of the above

# School Supports

- Effective tools for making school supports effective for children with ASD include:
  - Knowledge about the characteristics of individuals with ASD
  - Knowledge about the necessary supports
  - Knowledge about evidence based practices and treatments
  - Knowledge about staff and family training



# IEP and Eleven Considerations (New Mexico)

- Considerations are designed to help IEP teams consider some essential issues when developing an IEP:
  - Extended educational programming
  - Daily schedules
  - In-home and community based training
  - Positive behavior support strategies
  - Transition planning
  - Parent/Family training support
  - Staff-to-student ratio
  - Communication interventions
  - Social skills supports
  - Professional educators/staff support
  - Teaching strategies based on peer-reviewed and/or research based practices

# Supporting Transitions/Dealing with Change

- What happens after high school?
- Difficult behaviors that might impact transitioning into higher education
- Strengths that will serve and support individuals with ASD
- Necessary elements for making the transition possible and supportive

# Areas of Support for Transition

- Some areas to consider include:
  - Talks too much in class
  - Behaviors annoying to others
  - Does not collaborate well with a group
  - Problems with hygiene
  - Overwhelmed by number of social relationships

# What skills are necessary for independence?

- Activities of daily living
- Academic
- Social interaction



# How to Talk about ASD with Families?

- Typical concerns from parents
- How to start the conversation as a provider?
- What are the next steps?
  - Referral and evaluation
- Providing support to the family as a provider



# Tips for Success

- What to say?
- Do's and Don'ts when talking about concerns
- Saying the word 'Autism'
- Be specific about the concerns



# Question #4

What is one good way to bring up concerns about ASD to a parent?

- A. Never say the word autism
- B. Provide specific examples of concerning behavior
- C. Recite the DSM-5 criteria
- D. Tell the parent to go see a psychologist right away

# Resources

- Autism Speaks Toolkits: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits>
- Act Early: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html>
- Center for Development and Disability (CDD) Autism Portal resource handouts: <http://www.cdd.unm.edu/autism/portal/families.html>
- *Toilet training for Individuals with Autism and Other Developmental Issues* by Maria Wheeler, MED
- *Treating eating problems of children with autism spectrum disorders and developmental disabilities* by Keith E. Williams and Richard M. Foxx

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