

Behavior Essentials, *Visualized*

Templates & Tools



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Introduction

The Benefits of Visual Supports

Visual supports, which utilize images or text instead of spoken words, serve as a powerful tool for communication. They effectively convey information in ways that are accessible to students with language delays. However, they are not just helpful for students with language delays! We all use similar kinds of visual supports in our day-to-day lives because, sometimes, a visual representation of information is the best way for us to process information. In our daily routines, we often turn to various visual aids as they serve as effective tools for processing information. Street signs guide our way, calendars help us manage our schedules, and grocery lists ensure we get what we need. These visual cues play a crucial role in supporting our daily tasks.

Visual supports are invaluable for students to acquire new skills, understand expectations, and enhance self-management abilities. By utilizing visuals, teachers can effectively convey information to students, facilitating improved communication and understanding. Consistent use of visual supports fosters independence and can diminish challenging behaviors.

Research indicates that visual supports help by:

- Enabling students to concentrate on key terms and ideas
- Transforming abstract concepts into clear visual representations
- Encouraging students to express their thoughts more easily
- Establishing routine and structure
- Reducing anxiety and frustration
- Facilitating smooth transitions
- Enhancing understanding
- Decreasing challenging behaviors

Some neurodiverse students may find it difficult to understand and follow instructions that are only provided vocally. Visuals make instructions last longer than spoken words alone. Visuals can also help teachers communicate what they expect and allow students to express their thoughts and needs more effectively. This decreases frustration and may help reduce challenging behaviors that result from difficulty communicating.

For students who experience anxiety relating to changes in routines or when they are in unfamiliar situations, visuals can help them understand what to expect and what will happen next in order to reduce anxiety.

The use of visuals in the classroom can improve classroom behaviors and enhance learning for students. We encourage you to explore our collection of tools and templates and see how incorporating visuals can enhance your teaching methods and promote student success.

Within this collection, we offer visuals that you can use directly with your students like our “Greetings at the Door Poster,” “Token Boards,” “Class Pass Tickets,” and “Behavior Contract.” Additionally, there are visuals designed to aid teachers in planning, organizing, and tracking progress effectively.

Greetings at Door Poster

A Look at the Research

A recent study showed that an act as simple as giving personalized greetings to each student at the start of the day led to a 20% increase in academic engagement time and a 10% decrease in disruptive behaviors. This shows how this zero-cost, low-effort strategy can improve expected behaviors without giving any office referrals or detentions.

Goal

Start the day with the power of positivity.

How

Hang this poster by the classroom door and stand near it as you greet students with a smile as they enter. Give them the opportunity to choose how you greet them to start the day. These simple actions can significantly contribute to creating a positive and welcoming atmosphere in your classroom.

Context

While this poster may be more beneficial for younger students, the strategy itself is helpful for students of all ages! Stand at your classroom door and positively greet students as they enter.

Tip

Giving students a few words of encouragement and guiding them to their first activity can establish a positive atmosphere for the day. This practice, known as giving a pre-correction, involves gently reminding students of expectations as they enter the classroom.

Welcome!



Pinky shake



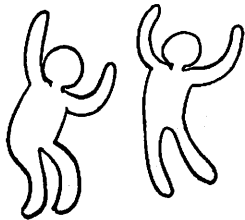
Hug



Fist bump



Shake hands



Let's dance



High five



Say hello



Wave



First, Then Board

Goal

Increase motivation in completing tasks.

How

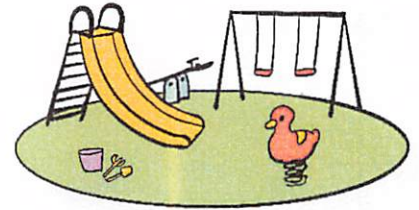
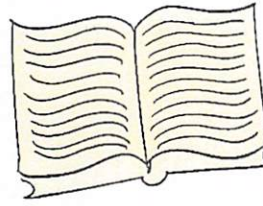
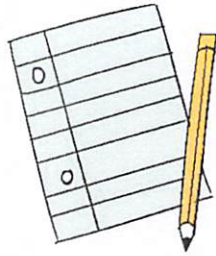
Prior to starting a non-preferred task, show students the options of available rewards they can earn when they finish, helping to build their motivation. When giving the instruction, remind the student what they will earn afterward by using text, pictures, or a vocal reminder in "first, then" terms.

Context

Use this with students who respond better to visuals rather than vocal instructions. You can also use this visual along with the vocal instruction and continue to point to the visual as a reminder of the current expectations.

Instructions

1. Cut out and laminate the board and reward icons, adding other reward icons based on your students' interests as needed.
2. Add velcro to the icons. Tip: Velcro them to the back of the board for easier organization.
3. Prior to starting the non-preferred activity, give the student options of available rewards to earn.
4. When giving the instruction, add the icon of the expectation in the "First" box, and add the icon of the chosen reward to the "Then" box.



First

Then



Token Board

Goal

Increase motivation to complete a target task by providing moments of positive, visual feedback along the way.

How

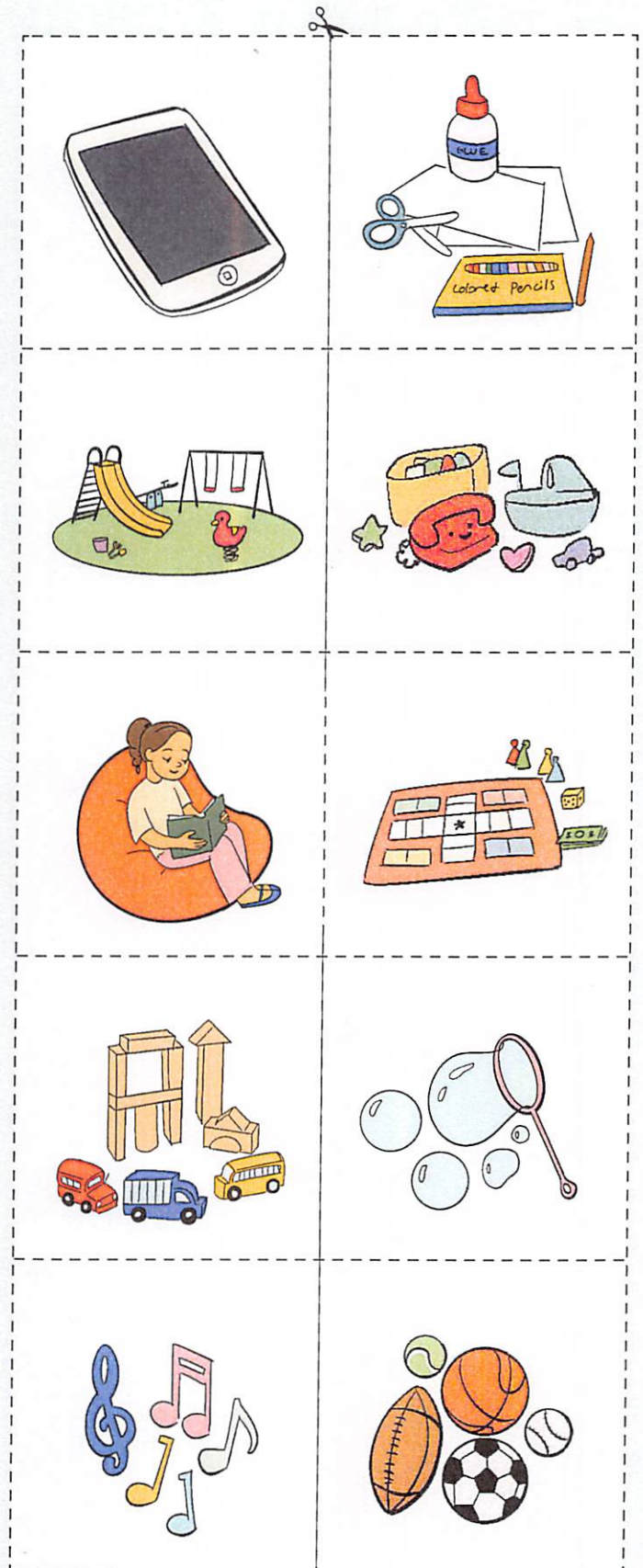
The student chooses a motivating reward. Set clear expectations for how to earn each token and how many tokens are needed to earn the chosen reward. When the board is full, immediately give the reward.

Context

Use as a visual reminder to build motivation with a variety of tasks, teach delayed reinforcement, and facilitate self-management by allowing students to reward themselves after completing tasks.

Instructions

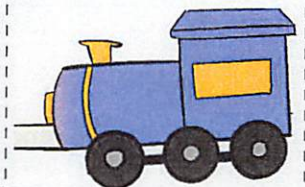
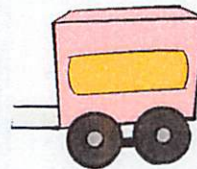
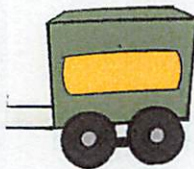
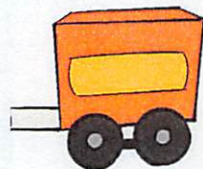
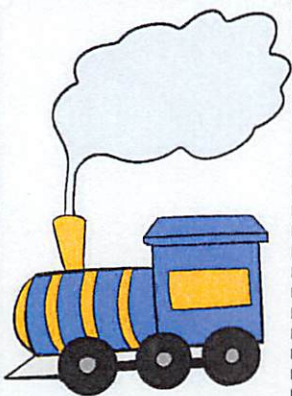
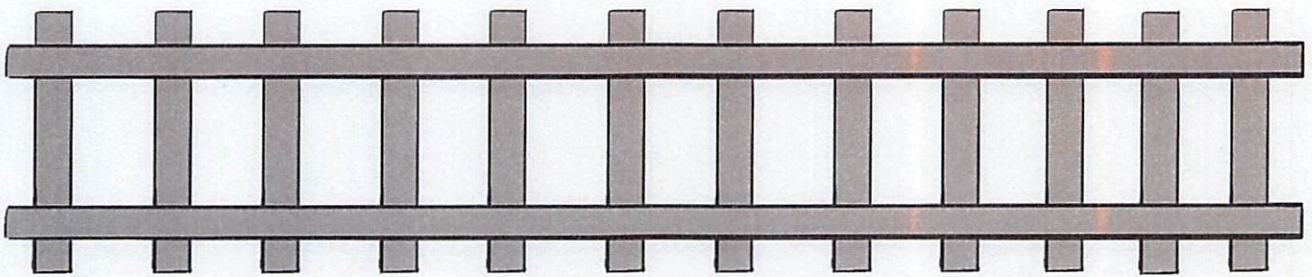
1. Cut out and laminate the board and reward icons, adding other reward icons based on your students' interests as needed.
2. Prior to starting the non-preferred activity, give the student options of available rewards to earn.
3. As the student engages in the target skills, add a scoop of ice cream and then the toppings to the cone.
4. When the ice cream cone is finished with the cherry on top, they earn their chosen reward!





**I am
working
for**

Place reward icon here



Token Board

Goal

Increase motivation to complete a target task by providing moments of positive, visual feedback along the way.

How

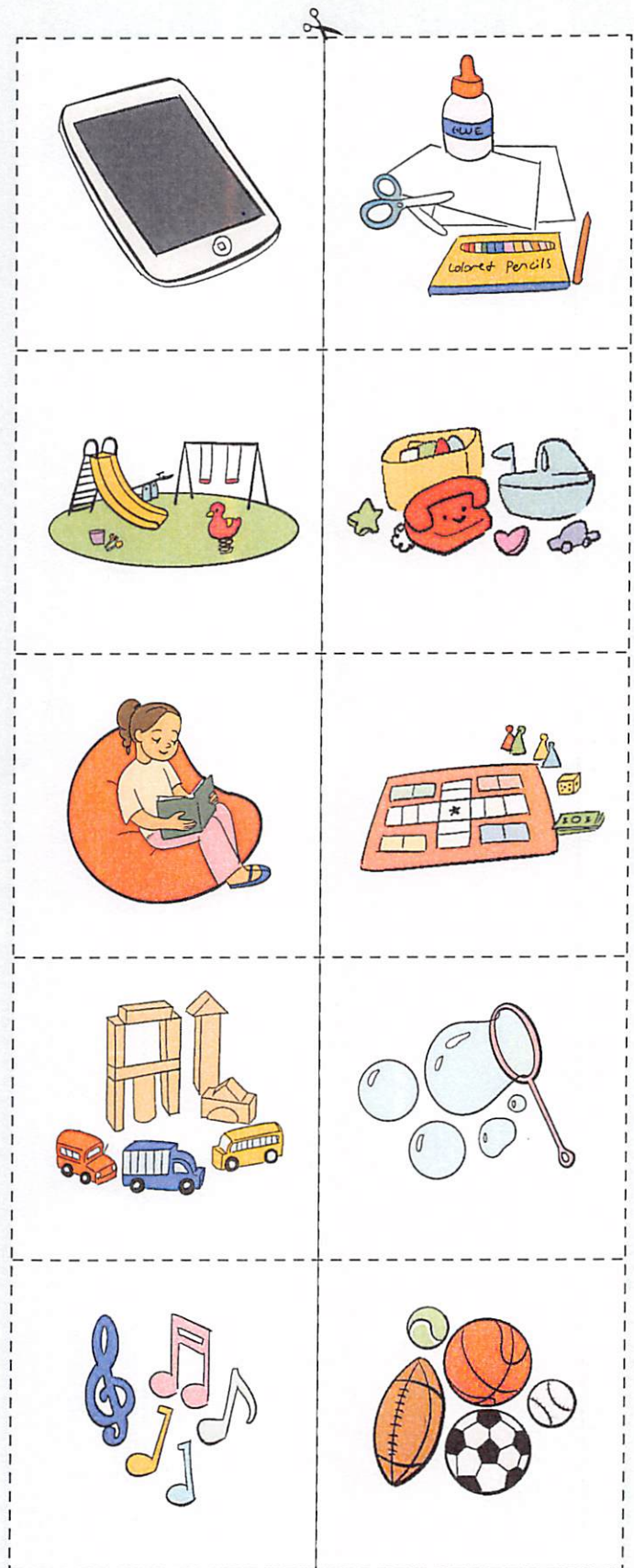
The student chooses a motivating reward. Set clear expectations for how to earn each token and how many tokens are needed to earn the chosen reward. When the board is full, immediately give the reward.

Context

Use as a visual reminder to build motivation with a variety of tasks, teach delayed reinforcement, and facilitate self-management by allowing students to reward themselves after completing tasks.

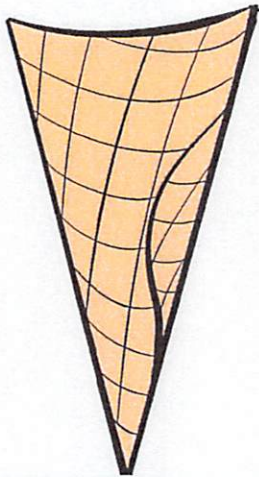
Instructions

1. Cut out and laminate the board and reward icons, adding other reward icons based on your students' interests as needed.
2. Prior to starting the non-preferred activity, give the student options of available rewards to earn.
3. As the student engages in the target skills, add a train to the train track.
4. When the train is full, they earn their chosen reward!
5. Refer to the Token Boards visual strategy on page xxx for an example.

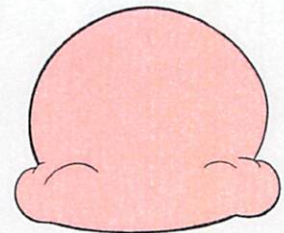
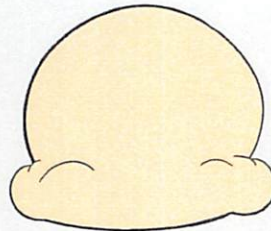
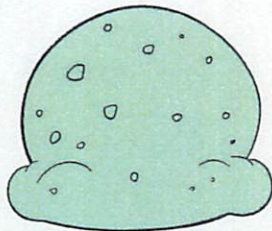
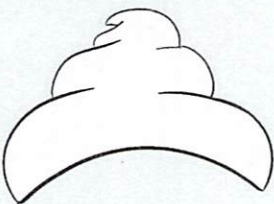




**I am
working
for**



Place reward icon here



Break Tickets

Goal

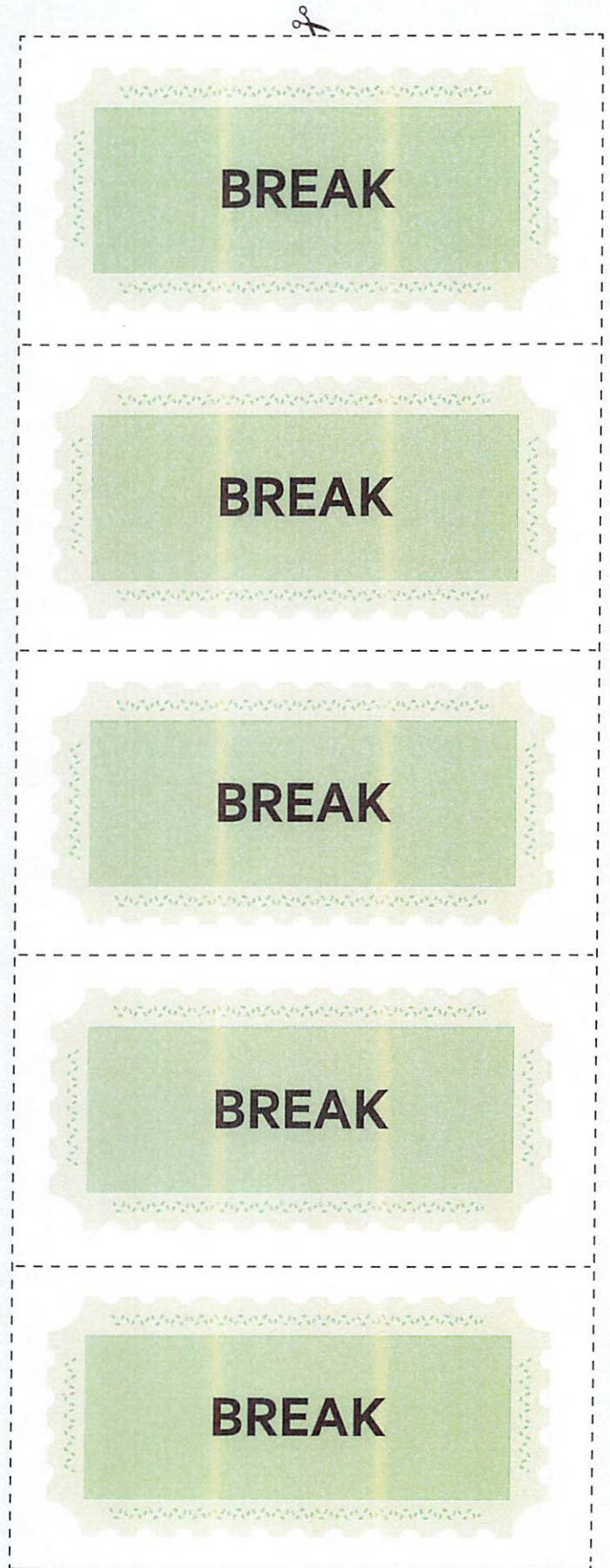
Improve self-management and prevent challenging behaviors.

How

First, determine about how many times per day the student engages in work avoidance. Add one or two to this, and that's how many break tickets you'll give them! Students can decide when to exchange these tickets for a break, fostering self-awareness and self-regulation. Unused break tickets at the end of the day can be traded for free time or a reward, motivating engagement throughout the day. You can lessen the amount of tickets given overtime.

Context

This strategy is beneficial for individual students, as the number of breaks students may need varies. Given that students must manage their tickets and exercise self-awareness, it may be more advantageous for older students.





BREAK

BREAK

BREAK

BREAK

BREAK

BREAK

BREAK

BREAK

BREAK

BREAK

Check-In, Check-Out Template

Goal

Improve a specific student's behaviors by giving frequent reminders and feedback.

How

When introducing this reward system, determine one to three positively-worded behavior expectations that will remain consistent for the student. Set the check-in schedule based on how often they engage in the challenging behaviors. You should be meeting more often than the behaviors are occurring. Assign a teacher who can briefly meet 1:1 with the student during the check-in times.

Context

Use this individualized reward system with a student in any classroom setting. The student should already have these skills in their repertoire; you are just aiming to build their motivation to engage in them more consistently.

Instructions

1. Fill out the selected daily expectations (these should be the same every day).
2. Determine the goal number of points by calculating their baseline and then making the goal one to two less than that.
3. Each day, fill in the reward that the student chose to work toward (ensuring that it's available).
4. At each check-in time, briefly evaluate with the student if they met each of their expectations during the previous time block. Provide specific feedback.
5. At the end of the day, calculate the total "yes" to determine if the learner earned their reward!

Sample

My daily expectations

Keep hands to self

Follow directions first time asked

Use kind words

My goal: 15 yes

If I meet my goal, I earn:

15 minutes of playing basketball at the end of the day

Check-In Time	Expectation 1 Keep hands to self	Expectation 2 Follow directions	Expectation 3 Use kind words
8:15am	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again
9:15am	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again
10:15am	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again
11:15am	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again
12:15pm	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again
1:15pm	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again
2:15pm - Check-out	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again

Total times I met my expectations (yes): 17

My daily expectations

My goal:

If I meet my goal, I learn:

	Expectation 1	Expectation 2	Expectation 3
Check-In Time			
	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again
	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again
	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again
	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again
	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again
	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again
	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again	Yes / Will try again

Total times I met my expectations (yes):

Individual Points Plan Template

Goal

Build specific skills for an individual student by recognizing and rewarding these behaviors.

How

When introducing this reward system, determine one to three specific skills that will help the student reach their long-term goals at school. Set a daily points goal that is achievable. Over time, you can increase the points needed to earn the reward.

Context

Use this individualized reward system with a student in any classroom setting. The student should already have these skills in their repertoire; you are just aiming to build their motivation to engage in them more consistently. An added bonus of this system is that it promotes organizational skills as the student needs to keep up with their paper throughout the day.

Instructions

1. Fill out the selected daily expectations (these should be the same every day).
2. Determine the goal number of points by calculating their baseline and then making the goal one to two less than that.
3. Each day, fill in the reward that the student chose to work toward (ensuring that it's available).
4. Throughout the day, give points when the student engages in the target expectations.
5. At the end of the day, calculate the total points earned to determine if the student earned their reward!

Sample

My daily expectations

Writing homework in agenda

Bringing materials to class

Turning in work on time

Daily points goal:

12 points

If I meet my goal, I earn:

An extra 30 minutes of computer time at home

Time / Class period	Points earned	
Morning meeting	2	<i>ttt</i>
Math	1	<i>if</i>
English	3	<i>mo</i>
History	2	<i>mo</i>
Science	2	<i>ttt</i>
Art	0	<i>mo</i>

Total points earned: *10*

Goal: *12*

Met goal? Yes / Will try again tomorrow

My daily expectations

Daily points goal:

If I meet my goal, I earn:

Time / Class period

Points earned

Total points earned:

Goal:

Met goal? Yes / Will try again tomorrow

Behavior Contract Template

Goal

Promote responsibility and self-regulation; improve student's motivation and effort; provide structure and consistency.

How

Involve the student in setting up the expectations and choosing rewards to earn. Initially guide the student in building independence by reminding them to review the contract and determine if they are meeting goals.

Context

Behavior contracts can be used at home and in school settings; some students may have one contract for home expectations and one contract for school expectations. Use with students who exhibit persistent challenging problems, challenges with organizational skills, or challenges with completing daily tasks.

Instructions

1. Determine the target behavior(s) to improve.
2. Work as a team (teacher, parent(s), student) to create the rules for the contract—what is expected and what can be earned.
3. Everyone agrees and signs.
4. Promote independence by having the student review the contract daily/weekly to determine if they earned the reward.

Note

Research indicates behavior contracts without consequences/penalties are just as effective as those with them and may even better support the parent-child relationship. Consider making your own version without this section of the contract. For more information on behavior contracting, we recommend the book *Contracting with Kids* by Dardig & Heward.



Behavior Contract

Student Name _____

Goal _____

Rewards _____

Student's responsibilities

Parent's/s' responsibilities

Signatures

Student

Teacher

Parent(s)

Visual Schedule Template

Goal

Improve independence during typical routines and transitions between tasks. Reduce challenging behaviors related to changes in schedules.

How

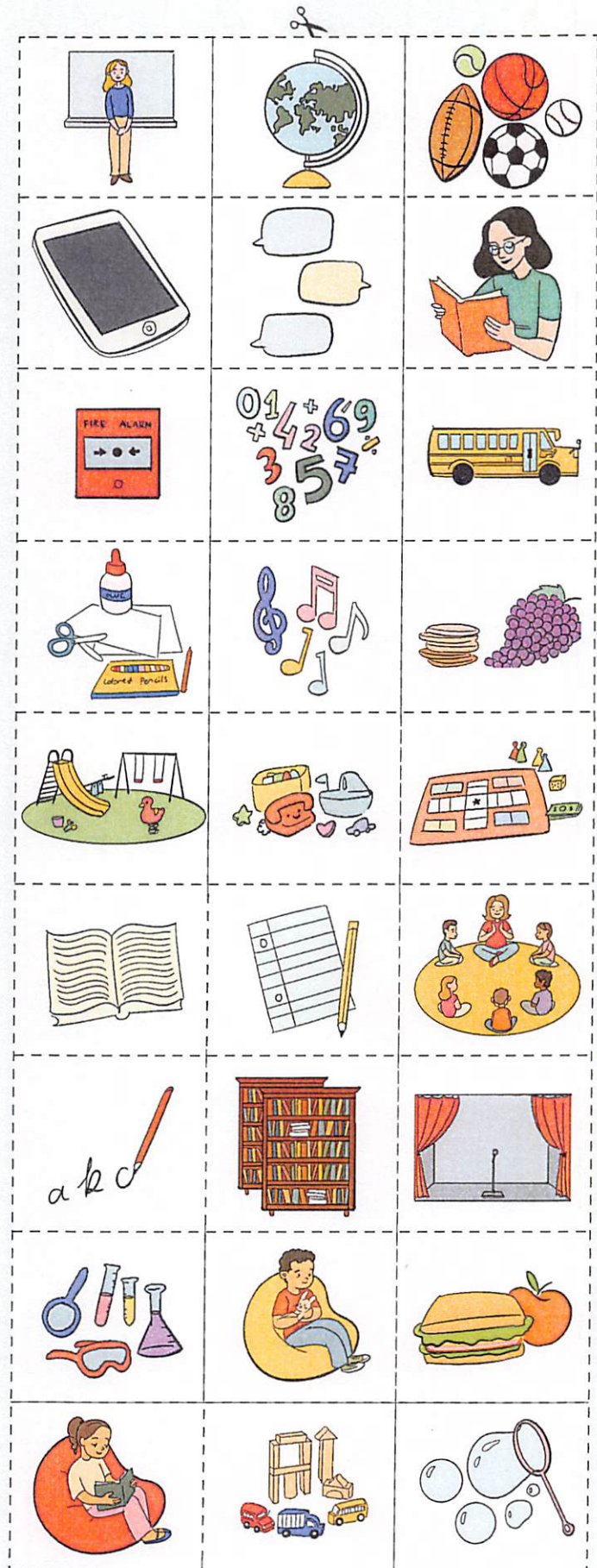
Provide predictability and structure by outlining the tasks/activities that will be completed that day. Recognize and reward independence in completing these tasks and transitioning between the activities.

Context

Visual schedules can be used classwide where the teacher posts the daily schedule in the "To Do" column and moves it to the "Done" column as the day moves on. They can also be used to support individual students. We've provided visuals for both options.

Instructions

1. Place picture icons on schedule in order that the events should occur.
2. Hang the schedule in a place easily visible to all students.
3. Move pictures from the left column to the right column as they are completed, inviting students to help with this to build more independence in transitions.



Daily schedule

To Do

Done



_____ **'s schedule**

To Do

Done



Choice Map Template

Legend

- Student positive behavior
- Student challenging behavior

Goal

Promote decision-making skills.

How

Walk through a scenario relevant to your student. Think of a situation in which they sometimes engage in challenging behaviors. Fill in the squares as you discuss the different pathways and their results.

Context

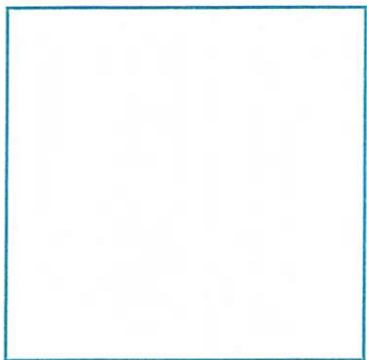
This strategy should be used 1:1 with individual students, as you want to encourage their participation as much as possible. Once they've filled out their choice maps, it could be helpful to show these as a visual reminder prior to the scenarios chosen.

Instructions

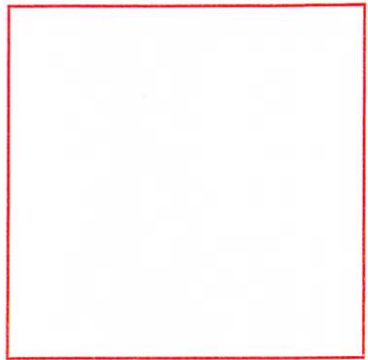
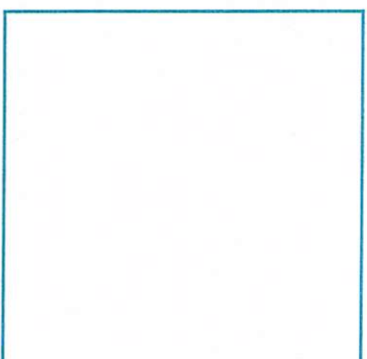
1. Together with the student, determine which situation to complete the choice map for.
2. In the green boxes, fill in two expected behaviors and a positive result. In the red boxes, fill in potential challenging behaviors and the result of those behaviors.



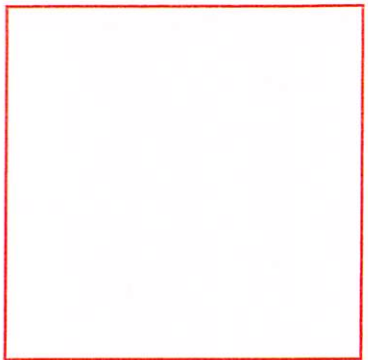
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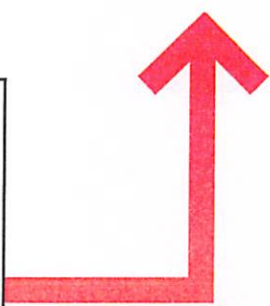
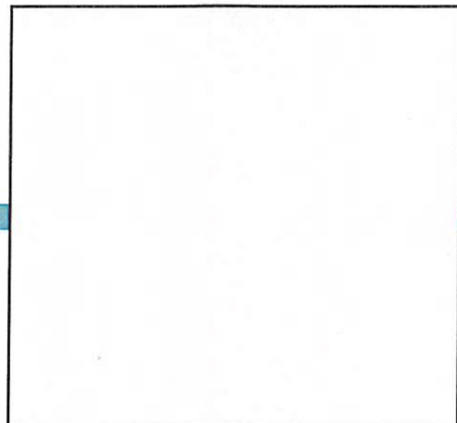
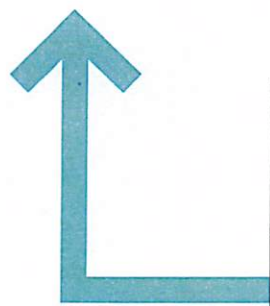
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Problem Solving Template

Teaching independence
in finding solutions

Goal

Improve independent problem-solving skills across a variety of situations.

How

Talk through common scenarios and guide the student through each of the problem-solving steps. You can ask the student to suggest the problems, or you can write down problems the student frequently encounters and randomly draw them to practice the steps. When problems occur in real life, guide the student through the steps, emphasizing their collaboration and eventual independence.

Context

Students of all ages encounter problems and would likely benefit from direct teaching to the problem-solving steps. Teachers can choose to teach problem solving as a whole-class lesson or with individual students.

Instructions

1. Choose a scenario to role-play problem solving.
2. Together with the student, fill out each step, encouraging them to lead as much as possible..
3. No matter which solution they want to try out, work through the steps so they can practice determining if it worked.

1

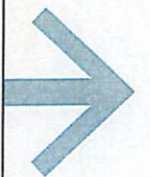
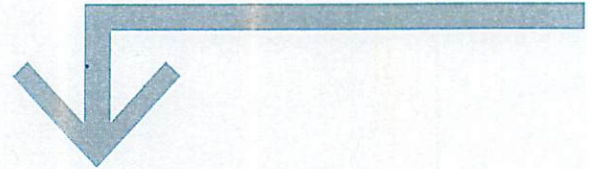
Problem

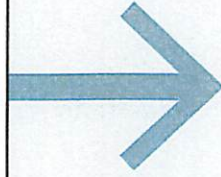
Student encounters a problem.

4

Choose

Encourage the student to choose one solution and try it.



2**3**

Identify

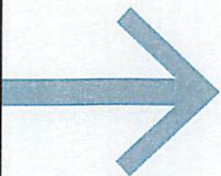
First, ask the student to identify what the problem is (even if it's obvious to you!).

Options

Guide the student in coming up with a few solution options. Validate all ideas, no matter how realistic they are.

Legend

- Student positive behavior
- Student challenging behavior

5**6**

Evaluate

Determine whether the solution worked or if there's a need to try a different solution.

Conclusion

If the chosen solution solved the problem, the goal is reached. If not, return to step 4.

Firm, but Flexible Planning Sheet

Legend

- Teacher preparation
- Student positive behavior

Goal

Plan out how to avoid power struggles.

How

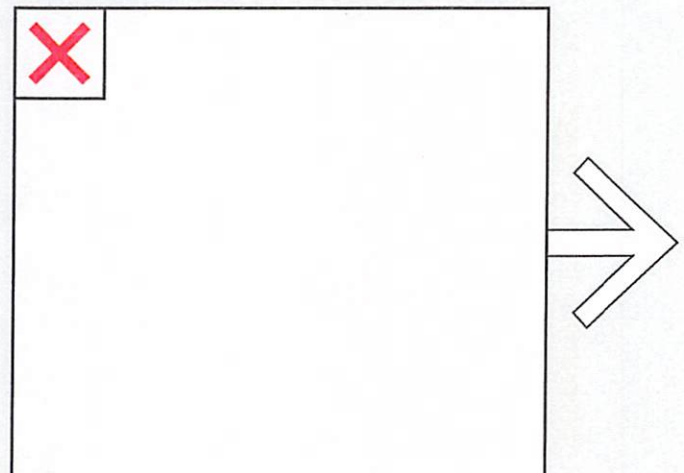
Identify "firm" instructions in your classroom, such as transitioning with the class, arriving to class on time, or turning in assignments. Next, brainstorm ways that you can be flexible in these moments, allowing the students to have some shared control as a way of avoiding power struggles.

Context

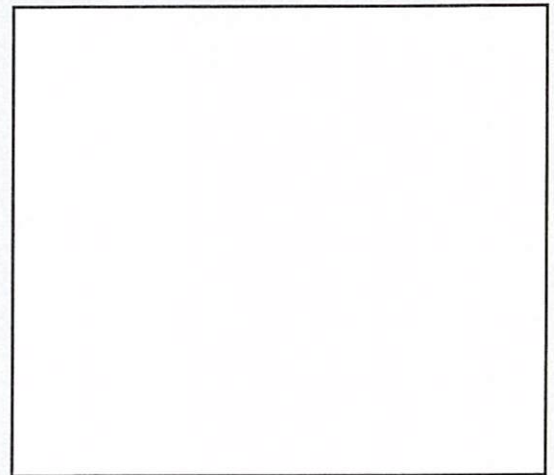
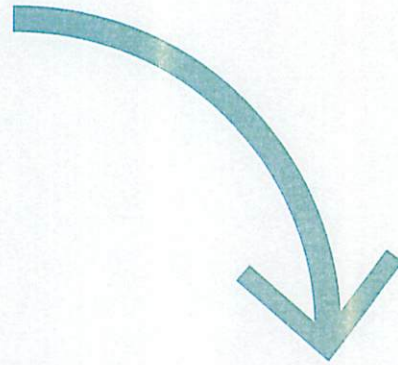
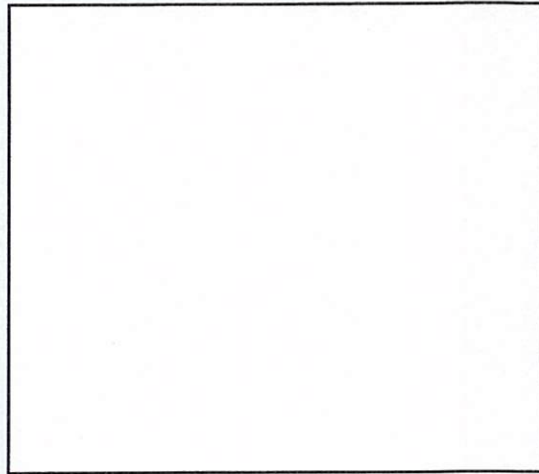
Use this planning sheet to prepare for situations where challenging behaviors are related to following directions. It can be used with students of all ages!

Instructions

1. List out your "firm" instructions.
2. In the three boxes, brainstorm ways that you can be flexible within these instructions.
3. When students start to engage in low-intensity behaviors relating to these instructions, think back to how you planned to be flexible in these moments!

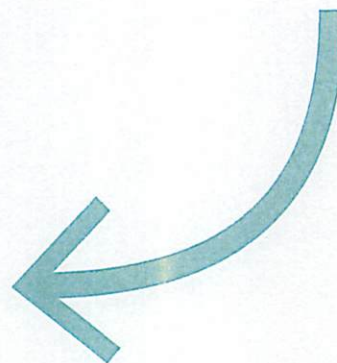
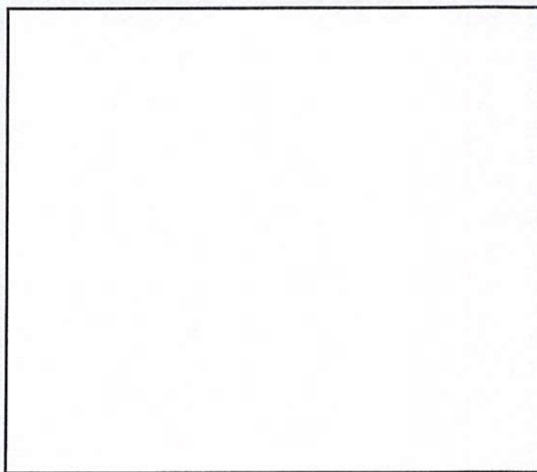
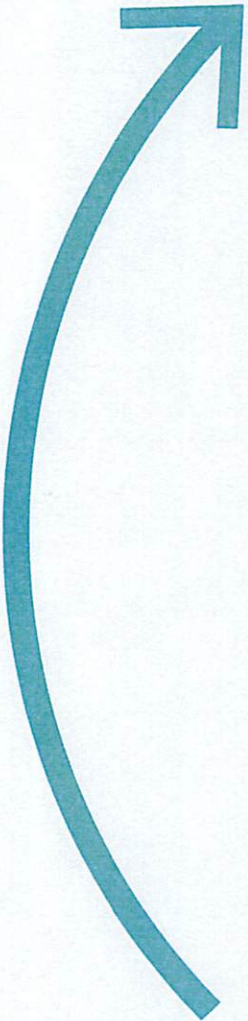


A challenging behavior



Ways to be Flexible

- Adjust the pace
- Modify the expectation
- Provide choices within the task
- Offer support in completing the task
- Support with self-regulation strategies
- Offer a change in location
- Allow a delay in starting the task
- Provide an alternative option



Escalation Plan Template

Goal

Have a calm, consistent approach to responding to challenging behaviors.

How

With the guidance of a behavior expert, develop a plan for responding to a student's escalating behaviors. The entire team should be trained in this plan.

Context

Create an escalation plan for any student who engages in a clear pattern of escalation, where there are apparent precursor behaviors that lead up to a more intense, challenging behavior.

Instructions

1. As a team, describe the student's typical behaviors at each level of the escalation cycle in the "Student's Behavior" column.
2. With the guidance of a behavior expert, determine how the team should respond at each level.
3. Identify who will train the team on the behavior strategies included in the response column, and provide ongoing feedback.
4. Provide a copy of this plan to all team members, including the family.

Tips for Developing your Response Plan

1 Calm

Include individualized proactive and teaching strategies.

2 Trigger & 3 Agitation

Include additional proactive strategies and a description of how the team should support the use of functional communication and coping skills.

4 Acceleration

Describe how the team can prepare for a more intense behavior by decreasing interactions, refraining from providing instructions, and taking steps to ensure safety.

5 Crisis/Peak

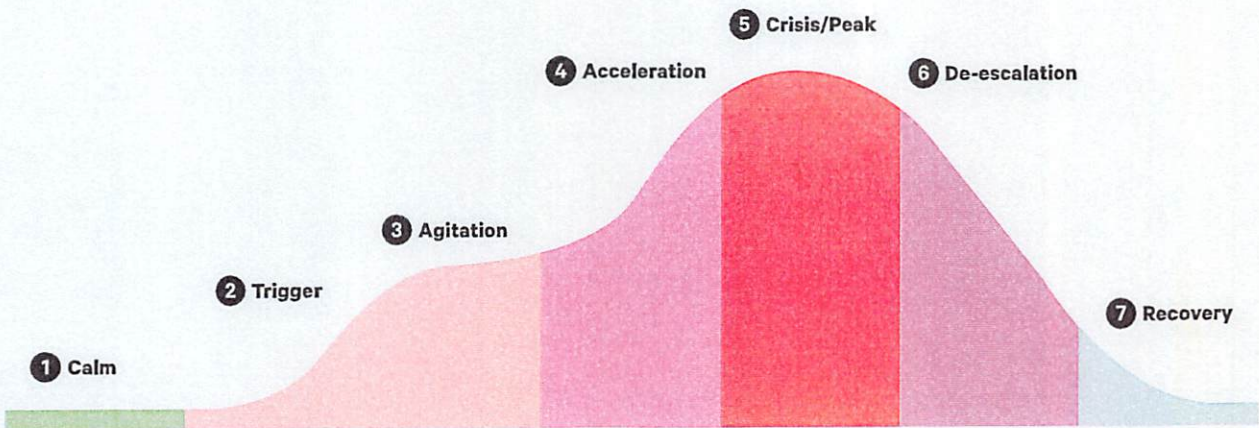
Identify who is responsible for maintaining safety and who (if anyone) can go hands-on if needed. Refrain from giving instructions. The only goal here is to keep everyone safe.

6 De-escalation

Include individualized strategies for introducing coping skills. Determine if the student would benefit from support or space at this time.

7 Recovery

Include individualized strategies for rebuilding rapport. Determine the best approach for talking with the student about the incident.



Phase	Student's Behavior	How to Respond
1 Calm		
2 Trigger		
3 Agitation		
4 Acceleration		
5 Crisis/Peak		
6 De-escalation		
7 Recovery		

My Autism Spectrum Color Wheel

Goal

Provide a tool for Autistic students to articulate their experiences, which can help guide us in knowing where to support.

How

Ask the student to reflect on each area of the color wheel, representing aspects affected by an Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis. Starting from the center, they should fill in the number of sections corresponding to the level of impact they perceive. They can use any colors they prefer. The student's support team can then use this as a guide to identify which areas require more support and to discover inspiration for promoting strength-based learning.

Context

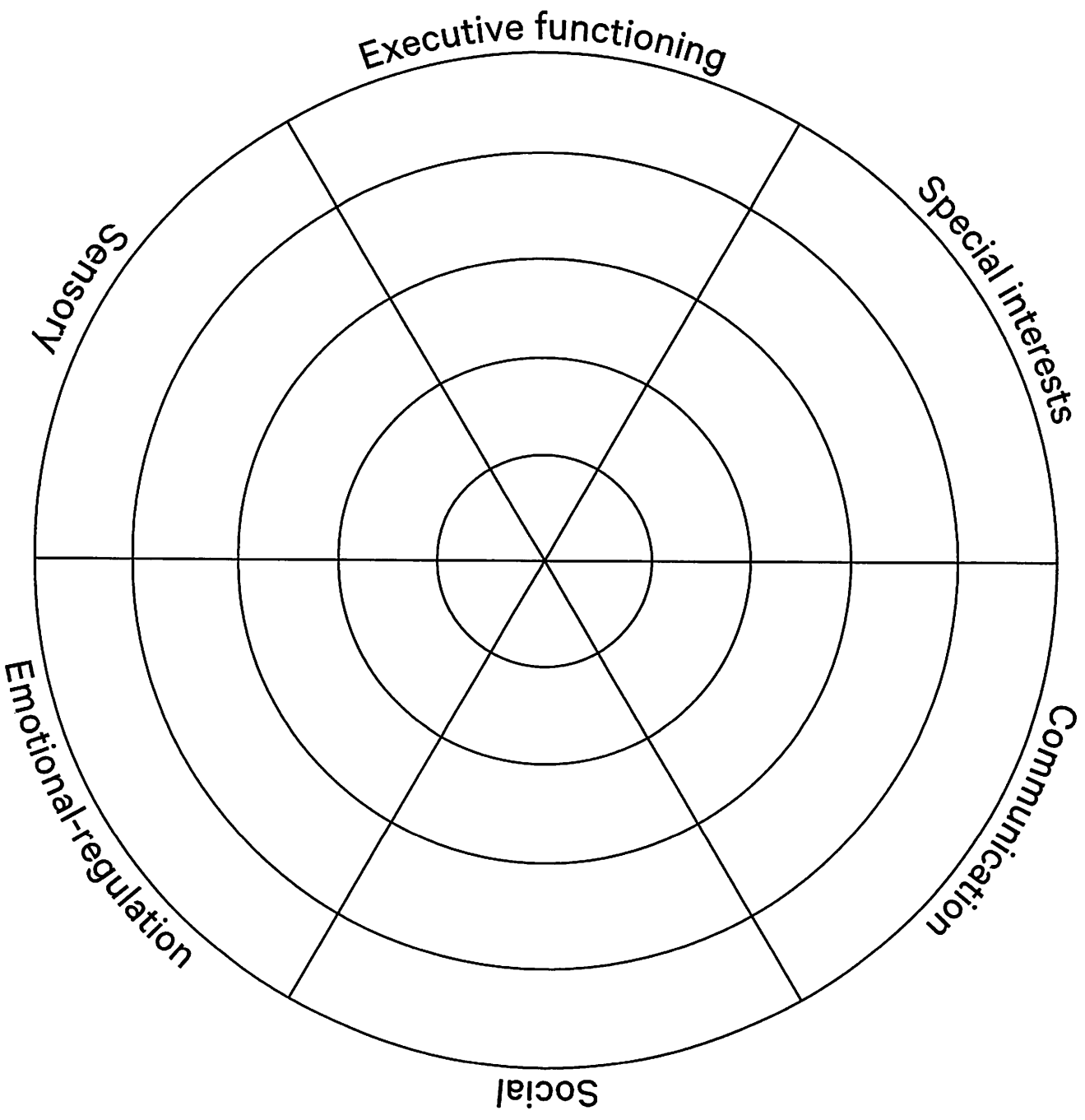
Instead of thinking of the Autism spectrum as linear from "less autistic" to "more autistic," we encourage you to view it more like a spectrum color wheel. It's not about measuring up to external expectations; it's about expressing oneself authentically. This approach acknowledges that each autistic person's profile is as unique as anyone else.

Instructions

Fill in the areas of your life that are impacted the most.

1. No impact on my quality of life
2. Occasional but minimal impact
3. Sometimes, but easy to manage
4. Regularly interferes
5. Significantly affects my daily functioning and overall well-being

My Autism Spectrum



My Spectrum of Support

Goal

Provide a tool for students to articulate their areas of strength and their areas of need for more support, normalizing that we all need support in some areas.

How

Ask the student(s) to self-reflect on each area of the color wheel, which represents common areas of need for support at school. Starting from the center, they should fill in the number of sections that match the level of support they feel they need. They can choose any colors they like. The student's support team can then use this as a guide to determine which areas require more support and to discover inspiration for promoting strength-based learning.

Context

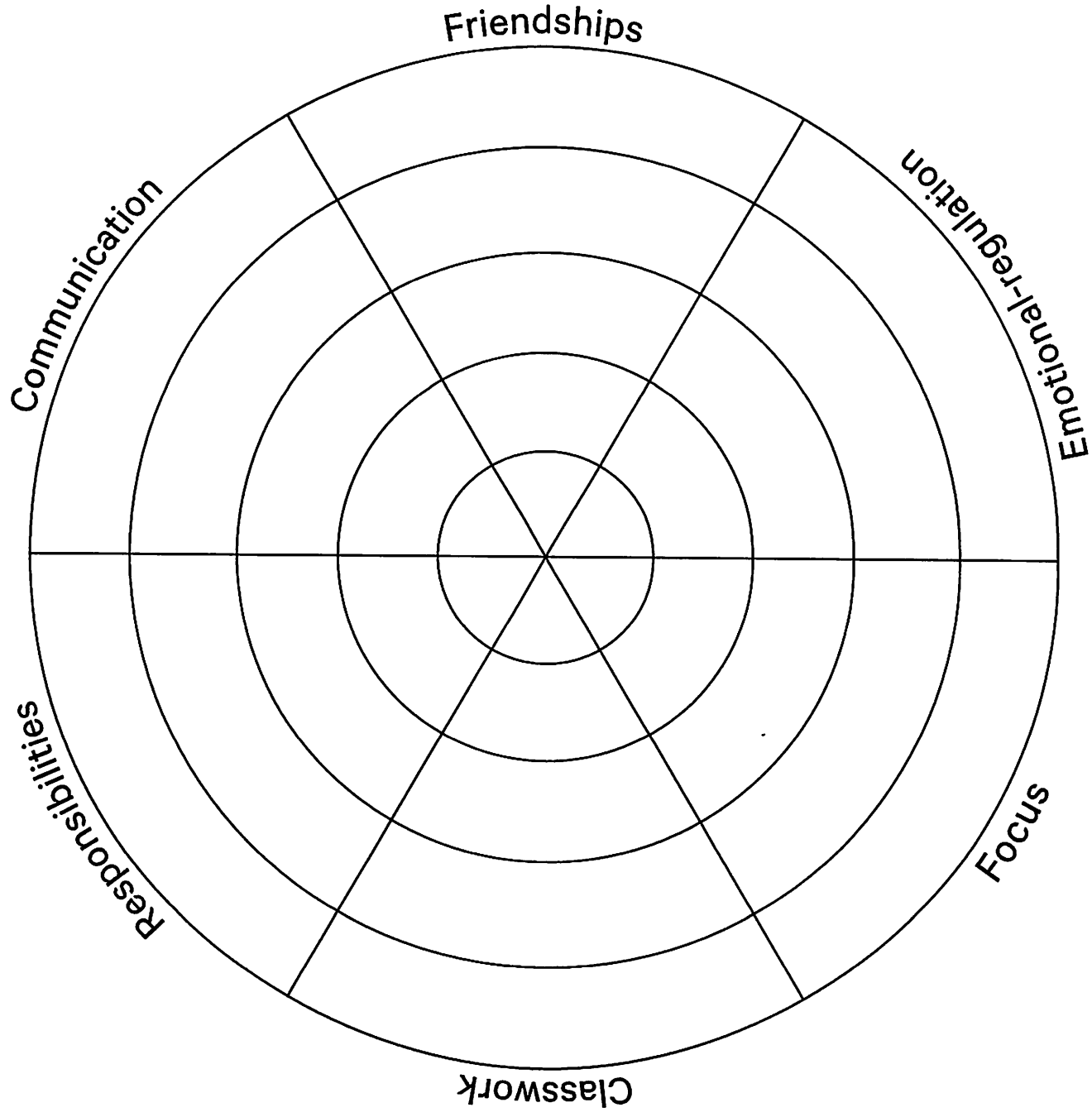
We encourage you to invite all students to participate in this activity. Additionally, consider displaying everyone's spectrums to showcase the beauty of our differences. This not only normalizes differences but also celebrates neurodiversity within a classroom.

Instructions

Fill in the areas of your life where you feel you need the most support.

1. I do this mostly independently but occasionally need reminders
2. I appreciate occasional assistance
3. I require daily assistance or reminders with this
4. I am actively working on this, but I still need considerable support
5. This is challenging for me, and I need your full support

My Spectrum of Support



Calming Tools

Visual

Goal

Promote self-regulation skills.

How

Hang this poster in the designated calm area in your classroom. Take time to proactively teach each of the self-regulation strategies listed when students are happy, relaxed, and engaged so that when challenging moments arise, this poster serves as a reminder of what they already have been practicing.

Context

While self-regulation skills are essential for students of all ages, this illustrated version may be more suitable for younger students. Older students who respond well to visual supports may also benefit from having this more as an individual resource.



Calming Techniques



Stretch



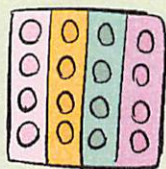
Draw



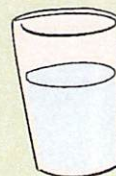
Read



Snuggle



Use sensory toy



Get water



Take deep breaths



Listen to music



Hug/squeeze sensory item

5-4-3-2-1

Calm

Goal

Promote self-regulation skills.

How

Hang this poster in the designated calm area in your classroom. Take time to proactively teach how to do the 5-4-3-2-1 coping strategy when students are happy, relaxed, and engaged so that when challenging moments arise, this poster serves as a reminder of what they already have been practicing.

Context

While self-regulation skills are essential for students of all ages, this illustrated version may be more suitable for younger students. Older students who respond well to visual supports may also benefit from having this more as an individual resource.

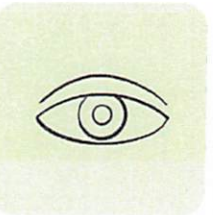


5 · 4 · 3 · 2 · 1

Calm

Take a deep breath and identify...

5 things
you can see



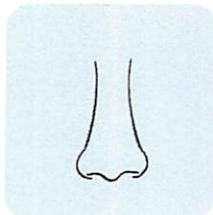
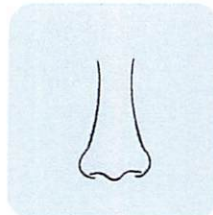
4 things
you can
touch



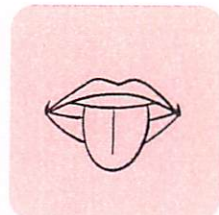
3 things
you can hear



2 things
you can
smell



1 thing
you can
taste



My Sensory Flow Template

Goal

Promote student voice, choice, and autonomy in identifying sensory activities that benefit them.

How

Support students in filling out each section of the template with movement, organization, and grounding activities that they feel are helpful for them. During scheduled breaks, guide them through each phase of a sensory flow, starting with engaging in their choice of a brief movement activity, then a brief organizational activity, and ending with a grounding activity. Finally, transition the class to start the next academic activity.

Context

This strategy can be used classwide or with individual students.

① Movement

- Bounce on exercise ball
- Dancing
- Jumping on trampoline
- Running
- Climbing
- Hopping
- Tickle
- Upside-down play
- Chasing game
- Skipping

② Organization

- Walking on balance line
- Lining up objects
- Ordering & sorting task
- Complete a puzzle
- Tracing
- Stacking nesting cups
- Threading
- Playdough
- Pushing toy car
- Building train tracks

③ Grounding

- Weighted blanket/vest
- Listening to calming music
- Deep pressure/squeezes
- Arm massage
- Deep breaths
- Dim lights
- Cozy in blanket/body sock
- Reading a book
- Fidget toys
- Bean bag

My Sensory Flow

Instructions: Think about different types of activities that help you feel calm, relaxed, and focused. Fill in each box with activities that are beneficial to you, using the provided list as inspiration.

① Movement

② Organization

③ Grounding



Classroom Management vs. Behavior Management

Classroom management and behavior management are interconnected, and both are crucial in shaping a positive learning environment. Classroom management establishes clear boundaries and expectations, while behavior management provides individualized support for each student's development. Tailoring strategies to address the specific needs in your classroom ensures students can thrive academically and behaviorally. Classwide behavior management strategies involve implementing consistent strategies across the entire class to foster a positive and inclusive learning environment. By setting clear expectations, setting motivating rewards, and prioritizing proactive approaches, teachers promote student engagement and can prevent many unwanted behaviors. Behavior management focuses on understanding each student individually, recognizing their unique needs and potential triggers. This individual support approach often involves developing plans such as Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) to address challenging behaviors.

Classroom Management



Behavior Management

