



Autism Tip Sheet

From the Elida School District Autism Team

Obsessive Interests: Be prepared to hear about it

The Basics

- Children with autism tend to have a narrow range of interests. Sometimes this will be one obsessive interest that excludes all other topics.
- It is common for children with autism to talk about their preferred interest without any regard to the listener's interest in the conversation.
- Talking about a favorite topic can be a way of reducing anxiety as this helps to control the child's environment and increases predictability.
- Children with autism may have little motivation to work on topics that fall outside their preferred area of interest.

What you can do

- Identify certain times that the child may talk about his obsessive topic, gradually reducing the length and frequency of these times.
- Show interest and give lots of praise when the child talks about something other than his obsessive interest.
- If the child's interest is limited to one particular topic, such as Thomas the Tank Engine, try to expand interest into other areas such as different types of trains or other types of transport.
- Use the obsessive interest to motivate the child. Tell the child they can read or talk about their interest after completing a task.
- Utilize the child's expertise by asking the child to share his knowledge with the rest of the class. Common obsessions include trains, dinosaurs, maps, capital cities and statistics.

Source: [Autism Help](#)