

Parent Training: Understanding and Supporting Students with Autism

Strategies for Success at Home and in School

Presented by: Dr. Laurel Keegan, Special Education Director

What is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that affects communication, behavior, and social interactions.
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- It is a spectrum disorder, meaning it affects individuals differently and to varying degrees.

Common Characteristics of Autism

- Challenges with social interaction (e.g., difficulty understanding social cues)

- Repetitive behaviors and routines

- Sensory sensitivities

- Communication challenges (e.g., delayed speech or non-verbal)

Understanding Sensory Needs

- Students with autism may be hypersensitive or hyposensitive to sensory input.

- Common sensitivities include light, sound, textures, and smells.

- Creating sensory-friendly environments at home and school can help reduce stress.

Communication Supports

- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) tools can assist non-verbal students.
- Visual supports (e.g., picture schedules, social stories) can enhance understanding.
- Speech therapy may be beneficial to improve communication skills.



Behavioral Strategies for Success

- Use positive reinforcement to encourage desired behaviors.

- Implement visual schedules and clear routines to reduce anxiety.

- Understand that behaviors are often a form of communication for students with autism.

Social Skills Development

- Teach social skills explicitly through modeling and role-playing.



- Use social stories to explain different social situations.



- Encourage opportunities for social interaction in a supportive environment.

Collaboration Between Home and School

- Regular communication with teachers and support staff is key.
- Share successful strategies used at home with the school team.
- Attend IEP meetings to collaborate on goals and supports for your child.



Resources for Parents of Children with Autism

****Autism Speaks:**** www.autismspeaks.org

****The Autism Society:**** www.autism-society.org

****Local support groups and resources****

Q&A

Contact Dr. Keegan for questions.



Thank You

- Contact for follow-up questions or additional support

- lkeegan@sfsd.k12.pa.us

Parent/Staff Training: Autism

- Please confirm that you have completed the training by completing the form below.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1w4LUZFtgl8FHulwfGGqvsl31N7WkqD3sccjmFXZUibE/edit>