

***Skill Mastery versus Mastered Activities for  
Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders:  
Teaching and Integrating  
Social Communication Skills  
into Everyday Routines***

Barbara C. Bloomfield, MA CCC-SLP  
Speech Pathologist  
Orange-Ulster BOCES  
Consultant: Autism Spectrum Disorders  
Executive Director IconTalk, LLC  
Goshen, New York  
[bcbloomfield@yahoo.com](mailto:bcbloomfield@yahoo.com)

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***Resources: A Quick Look at the  
Best of the Best***

- [www.mayer\\_johnson.com](http://www.mayer_johnson.com)
  - Boardmaker free trial period
  - Boardmaker on-line courses
- Boardmaker Digest (Yahoo list ~~serv~~ group)
- Fastenation.com
  - Low profile, removable Velcro
  - Kiss-cut Velcro
- [www.hiyah.net](http://www.hiyah.net)
- [www.autism4teachers.com](http://www.autism4teachers.com)
- [www.teachers.ocps.net](http://www.teachers.ocps.net)
- [www.setbc.org](http://www.setbc.org)

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***What's new?  
More Pieces to the Puzzle***

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**Mastered Skills?**  
**or**  
**Mastered Activities**

- Lack of skill mastery can look like:
  - Regression
  - Performance Deficits
    - Poorly motivated
    - Oppositional
- Many educators stop short of teaching skill mastery

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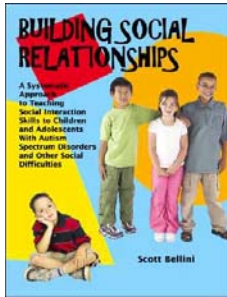
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**Stages of Skill Acquisition**

**Bellini, Scott, Ph.D.**

**Building Social Relationships**



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**Critical Steps**

- Accuracy
- Fluency (Accuracy plus speed)
- Across people, contexts, routines and places
- Multi-tasking
- Adjusting to environmental demands

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## ***Fluency Based Instruction***

- Accuracy plus speed
- Assists with:
  - Skill retention
  - Endurance
  - Stability
  - Application

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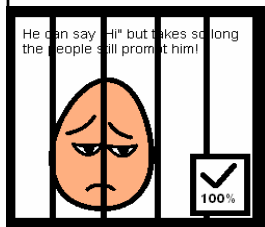
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## ***Skill Mastery: Don't Get Trapped in the 80% Correct Box!***



- "True Skill Mastery"?
- What if it takes a student 10 seconds to tell someone his name?
- After you have taught accuracy, select a fluency target rate.
- Quick, non-hesitant responses initiated within 2 to 3 seconds.
- Use the CST and target fluent production of component parts

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## ***Learning to Multi-task***

- Creating training condition with competing signal
- Use "Big three" training aids: Visual supports, proximity, reinforcement
- Adjust and fade training aids
- Particularly critical when attempting to generalize social communication skills such as response to name and greetings.

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### **Attention to Scope and Sequence**

- Erratic skill profile in ASD may result in development of limited, poorly transferred skills because supporting skills absent. (rotely learned skills limited in functionality and generalization)
- Critical to be aware of entire group of skills being targeted
- Equally critical to know and respect sequence in which those skills occur.
- Printed scope and sequence can also be important resource for families

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### **An Example of Skill Scope: Early Requesting**

- Picture Exchange Communication System
  - I give you a symbol for what I want, e.g. cookie, cracker, train, etc.
  - Soon I begin to add a carrier phrase: "I want \_\_\_\_\_".
- Other instructional targets – Pre symbolic
  - Turning toward
  - Looking to see, "Are you paying attention to me?"
  - Gestures, glances (Do you understand?) and talking with objects

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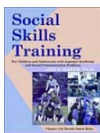
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### **Suggested Resources**



- *Social Skills Training and The Social Skills Picture Book* by Jed Baker (\$34.95 and \$39.95)
- *A Social Skills Group Program for Children with Asperger Syndrome, High Functioning Autism and Related Challenges* (39.95)

All available from [www.asperger.com](http://www.asperger.com)

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***Transdisciplinary Play-Based  
Intervention: Guidelines for  
Developing a Meaningful Curriculum  
for Young Children***

- Toni W. Linder
- [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) \$33.97
- Includes developmental skill sequences:
  - Cognitive Development
  - Social Emotional Development
  - Communication and Language Development
  - Sensorimotor Development

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- Manual, activities book and picture book.
- \$59.95
- [www.linguissystems.com](http://www.linguissystems.com)

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***Do-Watch-Listen-Say***

- Kathleen Ann Quill
- [www.autismbookstore.com](http://www.autismbookstore.com) \$59.95
- Social and Communication Intervention for Children with ASD
- Assessment protocol
- Curriculum, lesson plan, activities and materials suggestions

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**What makes a program successful?**

**Six Core Elements**

- Iovannone et al. "Effective Educational Practices for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders" Focus on Autism..
- Empirical support
- Should be included in any educational program

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**Core Elements**

1. Individualized supports and services that focus on family preferences and student preferences and interests.
  - Should target high rates of engagement
  - Engagement one of the best predictors of positive student outcomes.
  - Not engaged, not available for learning
2. Systematic instruction.

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3. Comprehensible, structured learning environment.
  - Curriculum (activities, schedule, environment) clear to both student and educator.
4. Curriculum content that assists with core deficits of autism.
  - Communication and social reciprocity
  - Prioritize high function skills that promote independence

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- 5. Functional approach to problem behaviors
- 6. Family involvement.

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***Critical Social  
Communication Skills***

- Social Attention
- Response to name
- Response to and initiation of variety of greetings
- Follow through on simple requests
- Use of learned phrases appropriate to context
- Use of questions to gain information and problem solve

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***Critical Social  
Communication Skills cont'd***

- Ability to indicate non-understanding of questions and directives
- Can successfully start, maintain and end conversations.
- Respond to and use basic courtesies
- Can request attention appropriately
- Knows when to be quiet

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***Critical Social  
Communication Skills cont'd***

- Ability to read non-verbal directives (“stop”, “come here”, “wait”, etc)
- Correctly reads and uses general forms of nonverbal communication (proximity, gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice, etc.)

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***A Blueprint for Intervention***

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***Structured Teaching:  
A Formula for Intervention***

- What do you want me to do?
- Where do you want me to put myself and my things?
- How much should I do? How long should I work?
- What’s next?

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*What do you want me to do?*

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### **Social Attention**

- Attention can be directed to object
- Attention can be directed to person
- Attention can be shared between other's object and own object
- Attention can be shared between object and person

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### ***Proximal Communication***

- *Enabling Communication in Children with Autism by Potter and Whittaker*
- Choose social response
- De-emphasize use of objects – substitute use of vestibular stimulation
- Adult positions self at child's eye level
- Silent or near-silent interaction
- Burst-Pause cycle of stimulation

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**Natural Aided Language**

- aka “Aided Language Stimulation”; “Simultaneous Communication
- Carole Goosens, Pam Elder, Joanne Cafiero
- Teaching Versus Testing
- Adult simultaneously uses visual supports while talking – emphasizing important words (shows ongoing language)

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- A model of visual support use during natural routines – student sees own system being used.
- An ongoing functional system as well as an instructional resource
- Supports both receptive and expressive language
- Can be used throughout day during any routine or activity
- Supports both child directed and adult directed learning.

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- Readily blended with other strategies
- Student is able to see how symbols are combined.
- For many students, input, input, input = output. Associated with increased verbal and non verbal response attempts.

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## Responding to one's name

- Determine desired elements of response
- Use **name card** or other visual support to teach what to say and what to do
- Begin training seated side by side with student and gradually increase response distance.
- Assist generalization to a variety of contexts including multi-tasking.



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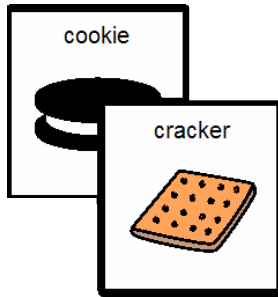
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## “PECS”: The Picture Exchange Communication System



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## *Social Communication Target*

# Greetings

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## A Suggested Intervention Sequence

- Recognize and link to **natural greeting response**
  - Student Behaviors: Orientation toward, reaching toward, glancing at, touching, etc.
  - Approach: Low, slow, hand out, Hi \_\_\_\_\_ and wait . . .
  - Initial Target: Consistency of response
  - Next Step: Link natural greeting to more conventional response.

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## The “Hello Hand”



- Provides non-verbal students with primary greeting strategy
- Helps verbal students learn to “wave”
- Can shape student gesture without skin to skin contact
- Helps to focus student attention
- Appropriate for students at TOBI symbol level

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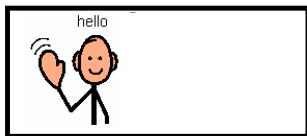
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## The “Hello Card”



- Appropriate for students above a TOBI symbol level
- Portable and easy to attach to Super Symbols, teaching binder, keep in pocket, carry in hall, etc.
- Greeting only; greeting plus name

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## ***Improving Accessibility***



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## ***Standard for Fluency***

- Suggested that response latency of greater than 2-3 seconds impedes skill transfer/generalization
- Limited skill transfer associated with limited functionality of skills

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## Multi-Tasking

- Impacts virtually every step of greeting process from natural greetings to sophisticated exchanges.
- Task analyze – separate and combine steps. Rehearse and transfer
- Include multi-tasking support at every level.
  - Direct Correlation between multi-tasking experience and degree of skill functionality.

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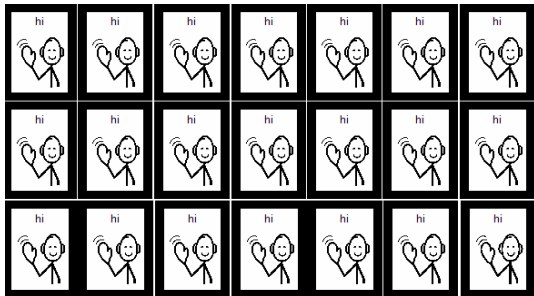
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## Greeting Tickets



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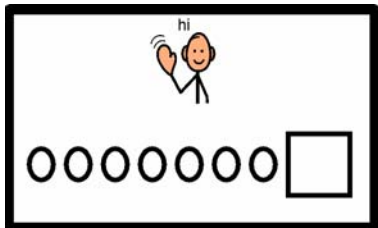
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## How Many More



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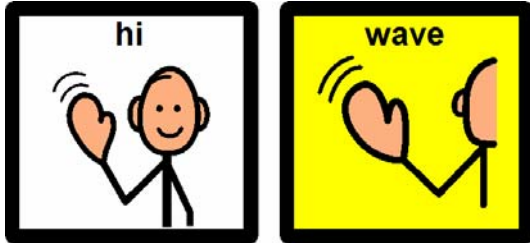
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### Say and Do Displays



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### Greeting Sequence Cards



- Help students know what to say and do.
- Produce a more “natural” response and initiation style
- Portable and easy to use

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### Alternate Greeting Choice Activity

- Large choice board of alternate verbal/non-verbal or completely non-verbal greetings
- Should include trendy “designer” greetings
- One student chooses greeting of the day.
- All students in group or class use greeting with peers throughout day

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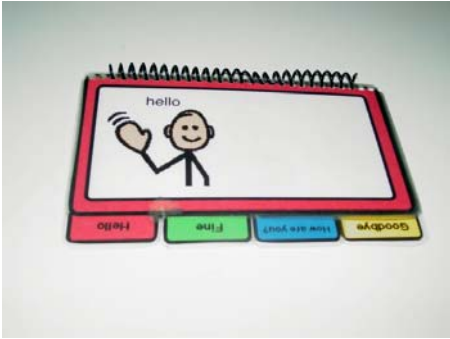
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## The "Hello-Goodbye" Booklet



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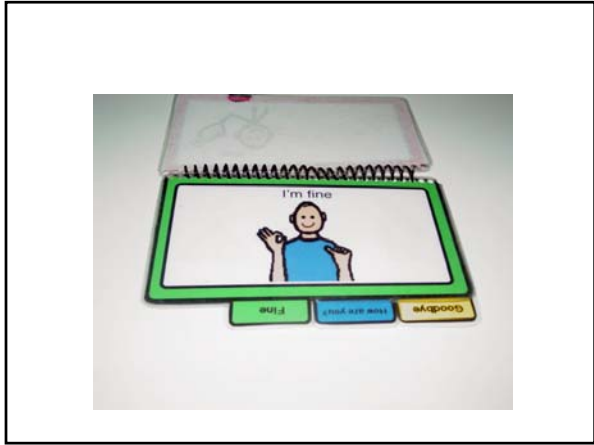
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## Improving Accessibility



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### Teaching a first question



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### Courtesy Cards



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## Courtesy Cards



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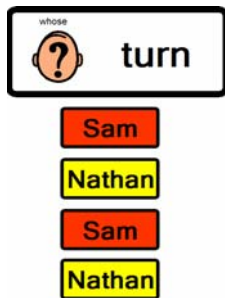
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## Turntaking Displays



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## ***Conversational Exchanges The Challenges***

- Understanding how to begin and end turns
- Knowing how long turns should be
- Choosing appropriate topics
- Staying on-topic
- Reading listener signals

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***Stick to the Subject:  
Removable Adhesives***

- Removable Velcro – Combine with set ups for an open ended adaptation strategy.
- Removable poster tape allows the adult to temporarily attach symbols to many different surfaces, e.g. thought clouds and speech bubbles.
- Post It Cover Up tape
  - Hide competing information and write targeted text.
  - Also removable

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***Talking Tokens***

“Say one thing”



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Learning to talk about other people's topics



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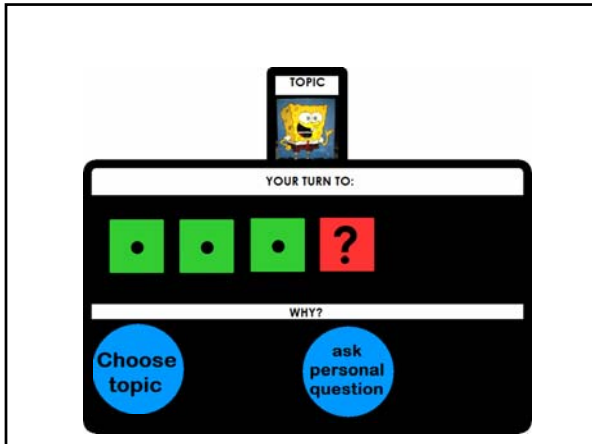
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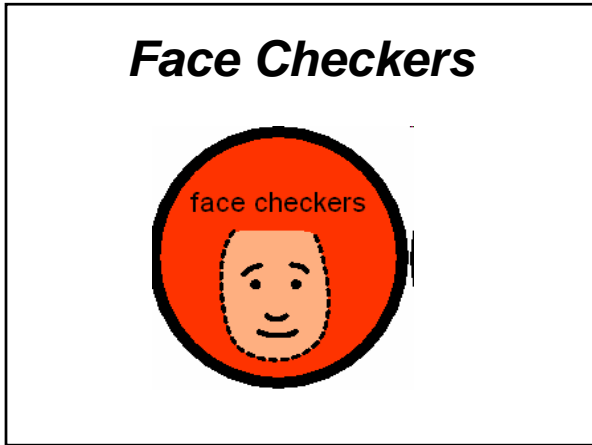
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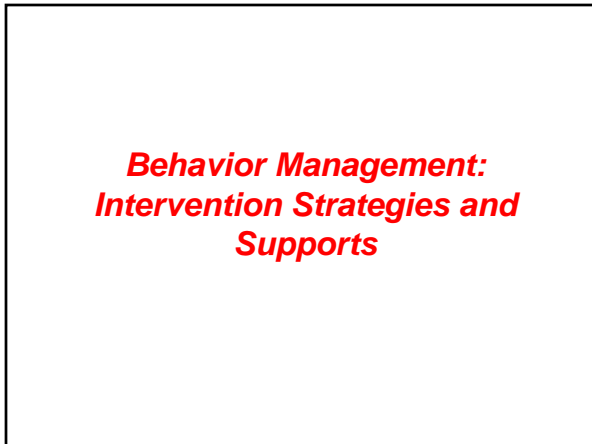
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*Asperger's Syndrome and Difficult Moments*

**Brenda Smith Myles**

Three R's of a Behavioral Cycle

Rumbling

Rage

Recovery

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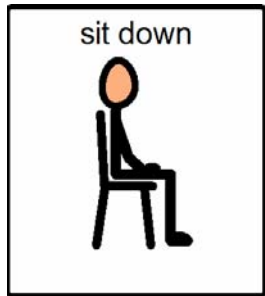
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**Super Symbols**

- Positive behavioral directives – show what **to do** versus what **not** to do.
- Large in size – 8" x 8"
- Only a single symbol on each page
- Concrete in content
- Quick "fixes"



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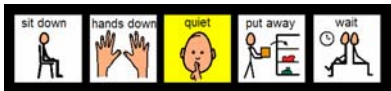
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**Super Symbol Bumper Sticker**



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## Strategies that Show

# “Where”

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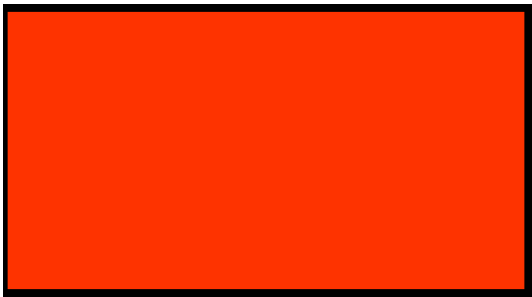
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## *The Space Mat*



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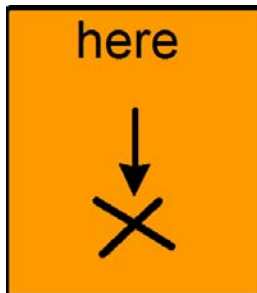
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## Portable Markers

- Here Card
- Shows student where to stand, sit, or put items.
  - Use in conjunction with a pointing gesture.
  - Eventually fade “here” card and help student rely on gesture.



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“Time to take your medicine.  
Stand here”



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Strategies that show

**“How much?”**

**“How long?”**

**“When finished?”**

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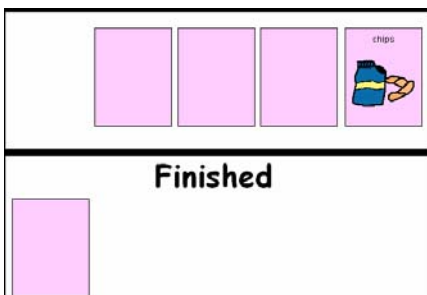
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**Tracking with Post-its**



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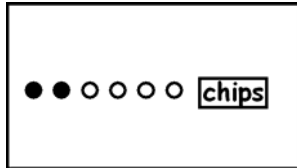
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## Tracking "On the Go"



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## *Quick and Easy* *How much? How many?*

- Links
- Pegboards and blocks
- Yarn
- Taped music

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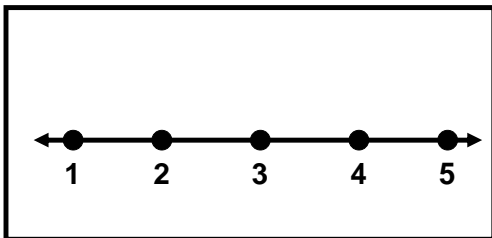
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## *The Meter*



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***Commercial Meters***

[DFNbach@aol.com](mailto:DFNbach@aol.com)

**\$15.00 plus S&H**

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Strategies that show

***What's next?"***

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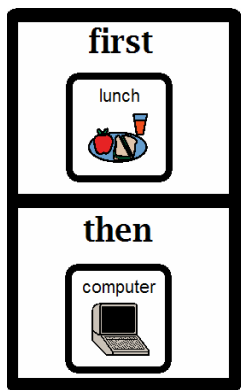
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***Embedded Schedules and  
Social Communication***

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***“Flexible Formats”  
Consolidation and Accessibility***

- Super Symbols
- Fold Up
- Uni-Book
- Flexible Trays
- Flexible Folders

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***Looking for  
“Teachable Moments”***

- Learning to teach “supplemental skills” within activities and routines.
- Learning to be prepared and equipped to teach incidentally.
- Looking for additional opportunities to encourage fluent skill production under conditions of multi-tasking and adjusting to environmental demands.

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***Finding and Using  
“Teachable Moments”***

- Targeting the teaching potential of naturally occurring routines
  - Introduction of new information
  - More often an opportunity for fluency practice (accuracy plus speed) and transfer
- Typically non academic instructional routines
  - Arrival and Departure
  - Play and leisure/Playground
  - Lunch and snack
  - Circle or morning meeting
  - Art, music, p.e.

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- May also involve “in between” routines
  - Walking to and from remote sites
  - Lining up
  - Waiting times
  - When student finishes work early
  - Food line in cafeteria, etc.
- Critical to have visual supports accessible

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***Teachable Moments in  
Sample Routine: Snack***

- Greeting and goodbye – should accompany most routines throughout the day
- Requesting – classic option
- Visual/verbal inputting of language concepts
- Pragmatic communication targets
  - Offering someone else a snack
  - Getting another student’s attention
  - Showing objects
  - Passing items to peers
- Turntaking out of order
- Waiting
- “Garbage”

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**The Fold Up**  
**A Consolidated Visual Support**



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**The Object Must Wait**



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**The Count Down Card**



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### The Bumper Sticker



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### Wipe Off Schedule



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### First-Then Display



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## The Meter



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