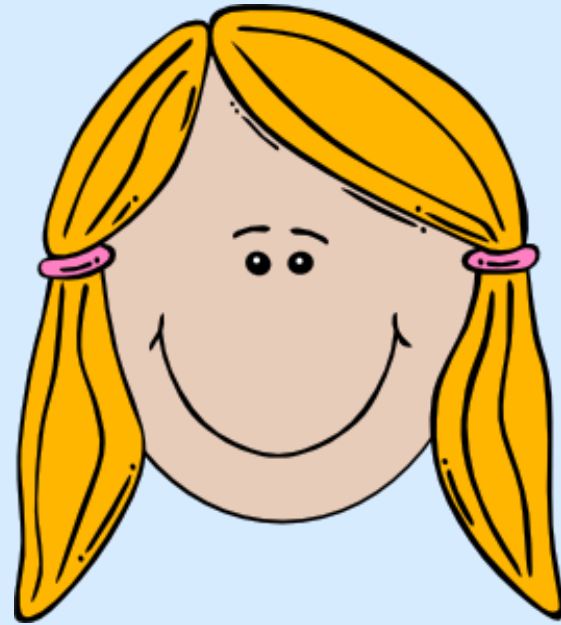
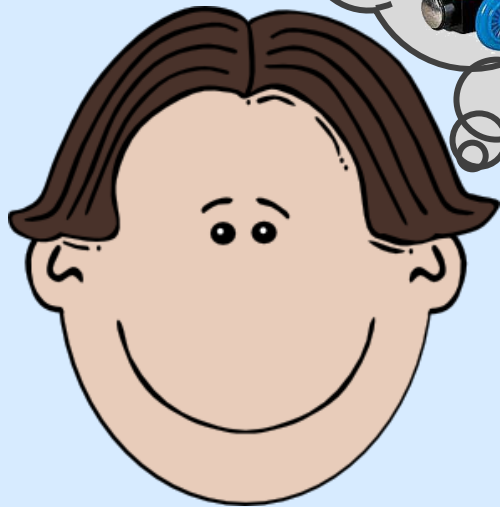
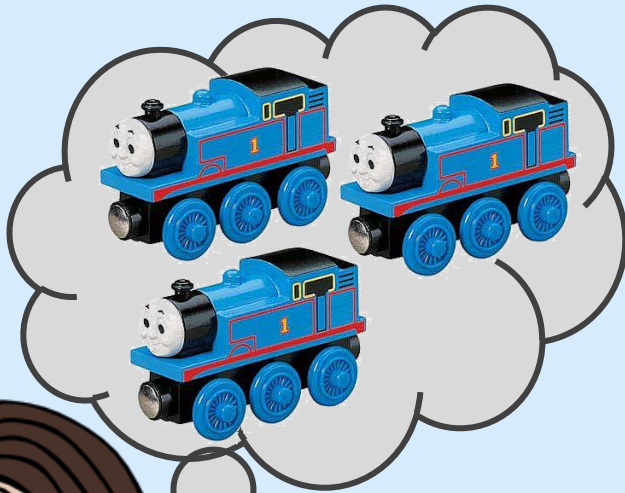


# "Understanding Autism"



# What is autism ?

A lifelong developmental disability that affects how an individual processes information. This results in difficulties in 3 areas (triad of impairments). These difficulties affect the way a person communicates and relates to people around them as well as how they relate to their environment. People with autism have difficulties with everyday social interaction.



# *Autism Spectrum Disorder*

Asperger's Disorder  
Autistic Disorder  
Atypical Autism

# Autism and Aspergers

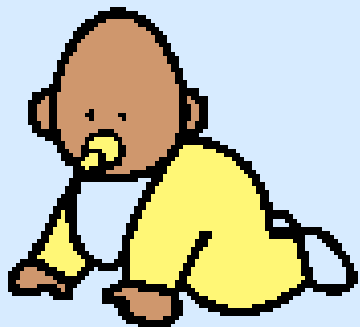
## What's the difference ?

### *Autism*

- Intellectual disability is common
- Communication is impaired
- Impairments in 3 core areas
  - Present at birth (evident at 2-3 yrs of age)

### *Aspergers*

- Typically of average or above average intelligence
- Intact communication
- Impairments in 2/3 core areas
  - Evident at 5 or 6 years of age or later



# Early Indicators

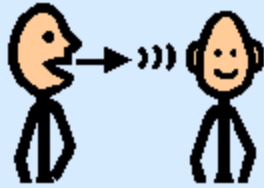
- Not responding to name by 12 months
- Not pointing or waving by 12 months
- No spontaneous phrases by 24 months
  - Does not return parents smile
- Lack of interest in other children/siblings
- Does not share attention, interest or enjoyment
  - Lack of shared positive enjoyment
    - Inexplicable tantrums
- Unusual motor mannerisms (rocking, shaking hands ...)
  - Limited social play such as "Peek-a-boo"
    - Play is limited to certain toys



# Diagnosis

- There are no particular behaviours that are 'autistic',
- There is no single behaviour that indicates autism,
- Look for a pattern of behaviours that are consistent with Triad of Impairments.

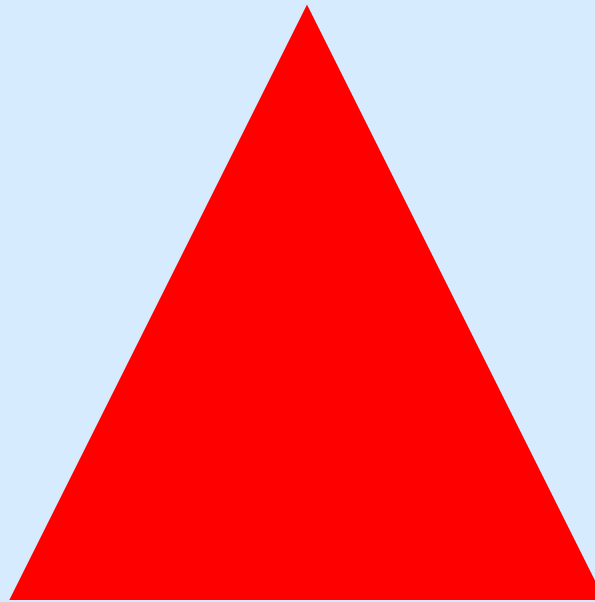
# Triad of Impairments



1. Impaired Communication

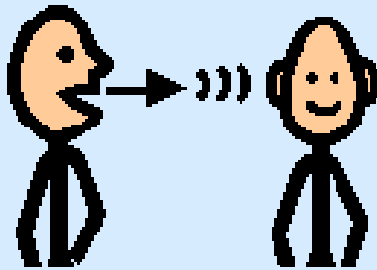


2. Impaired Social  
Relating



3. Repetitive  
Behaviours &  
Restricted Interests

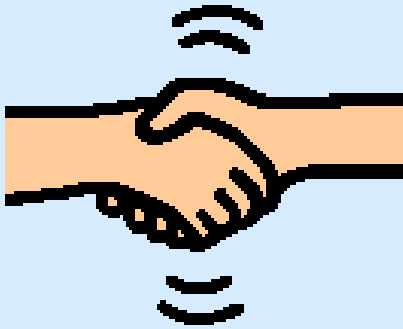
# Impaired Communication



- Repeats or echoes words
- Poor use of gesture
- Does not seem to understand word meanings
- Little /no speech
- Understands and uses words verbally
- Understands and uses words literally.



# Impaired Social Relating



- Limited use of social smile
- Uses eyes to communicate in unusual way
- May seem content when left alone
- Uses adult's hand as a tool
- Pays little attention to other's feelings

# Repetitive Behaviours & Restricted Interests



- Uses toys/objects in unusual/repetitive way
- Shows intense level of interest in one area
- Listens to same story/watches same video
- Object can only be used for one purpose

# The Autism Spectrum

Profound degree  
of Impairment

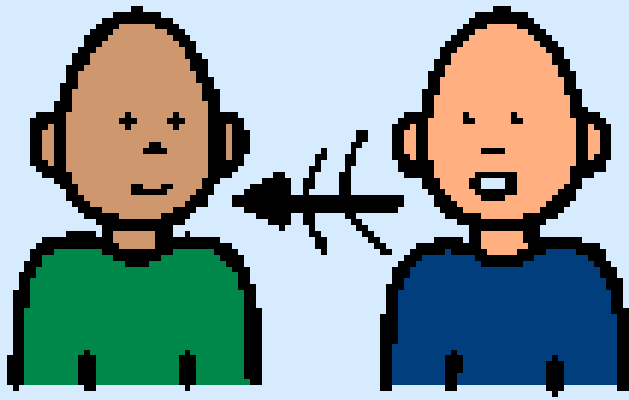
Mild degree of  
Impairment



Communication Impairment

Impaired Social Relating

Repetitive Behaviours & Restricted Interests



Give an  
example of  
how Autism  
affects your  
child ...

# Attention

## *Polytropic*

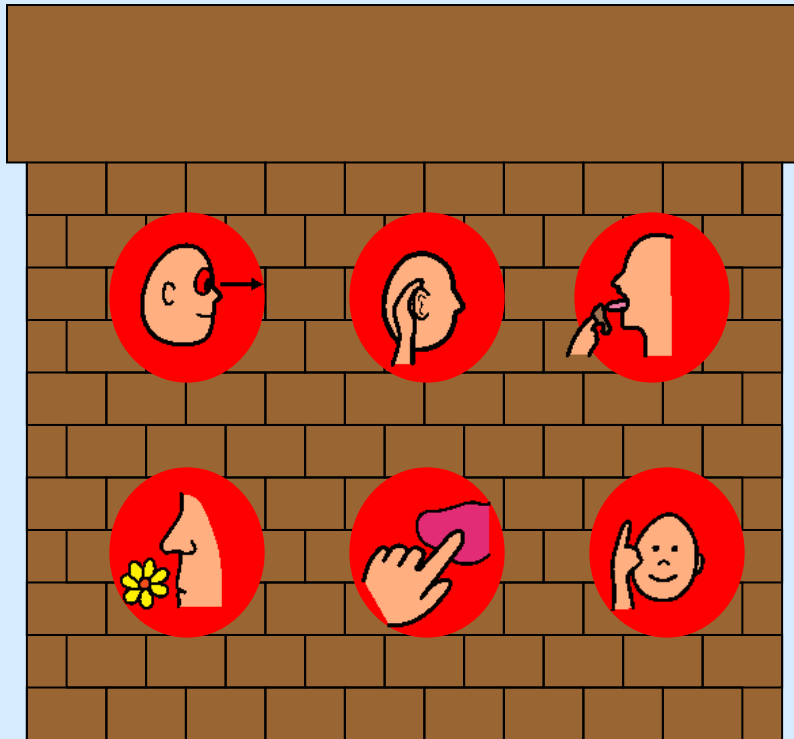
- Ability to simultaneously attend to many things
- eg. self, others, emotions, environment, relationships, everyday life, etc.

## *Monotropic*

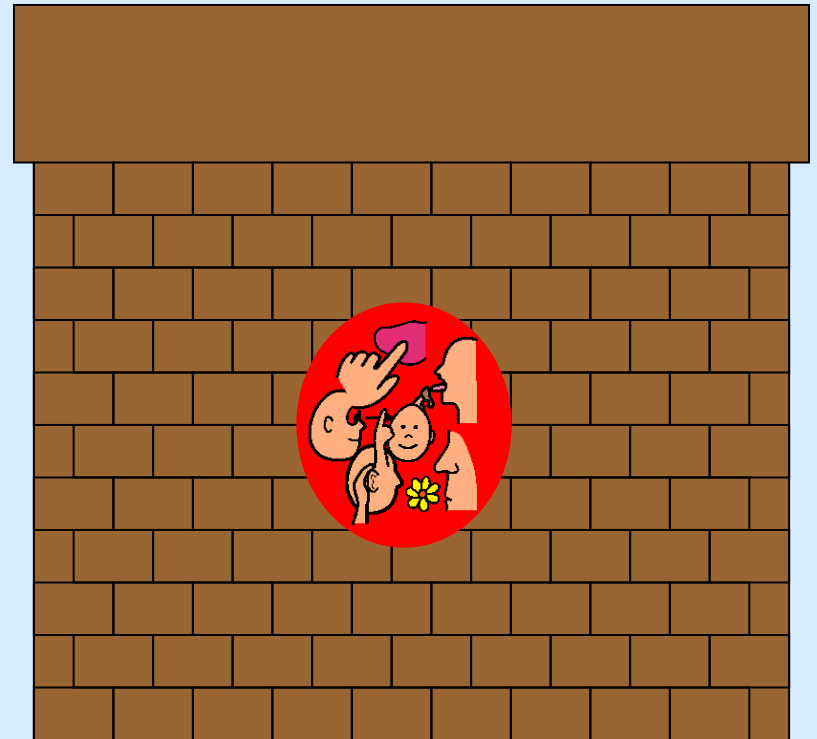
- Single, focused attention
- attention focused all in one place
- attention is a scarce commodity
- interests take precedence.

# Attention

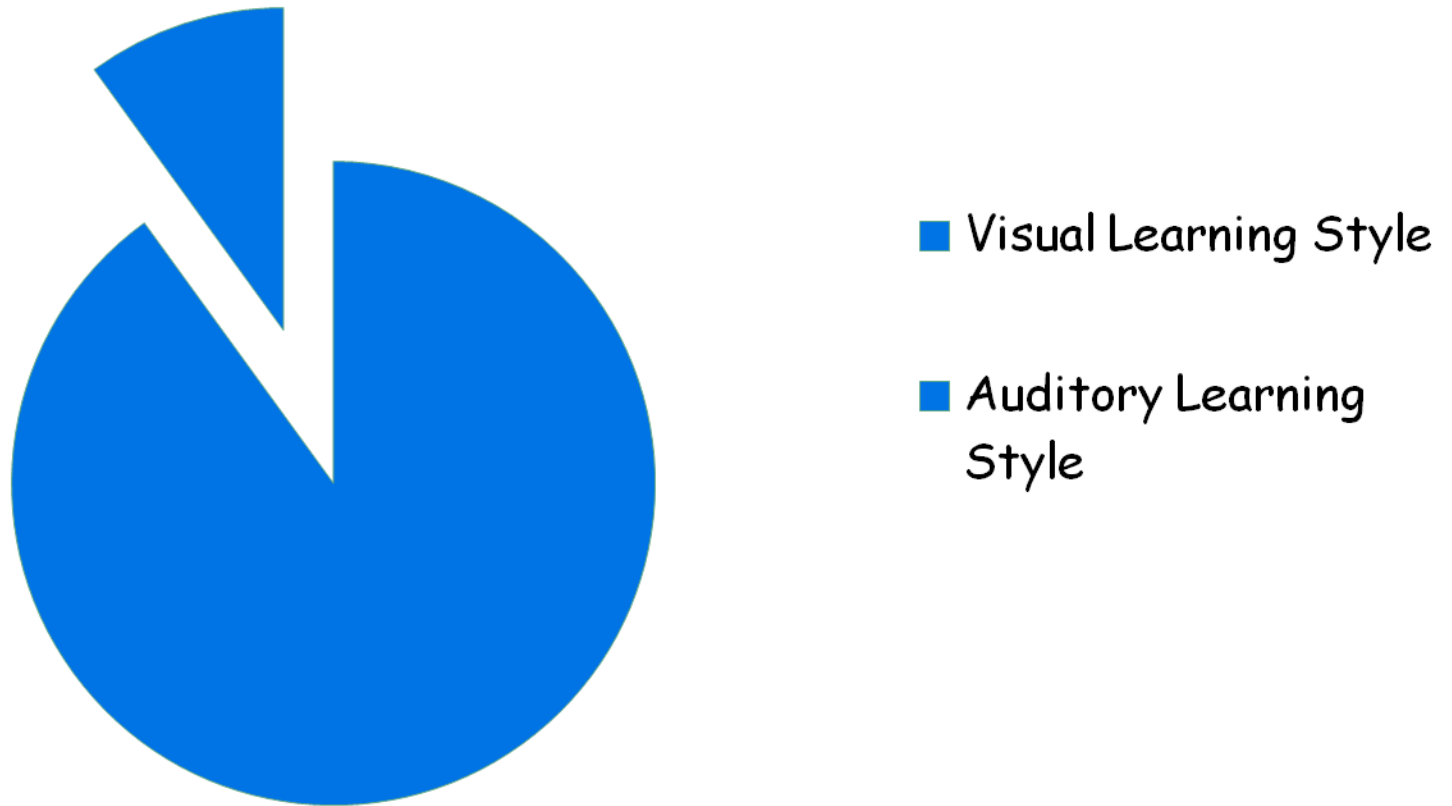
Polytropic



Monotropic



# Visual Learning



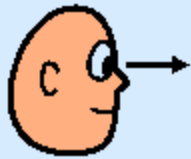
# Sensory Processing

*"Sensory processing is the ability to organise and interpret information we receive through our senses"*



# Our Senses

Visual



Auditory



Taste



Smell



Touch



Vestibular

(head position in relation to body and environment)



Proprioceptive (where a body part is and how it is moving in relation to the body)



## Sensory issues include -

- fear of loud noises, bright lights, being touched,
- difficulties filtering out irrelevant sensory information,
- seeking deep pressure (squeeze),
- looking intently at visual objects

.....

## *Over-sensitivity*

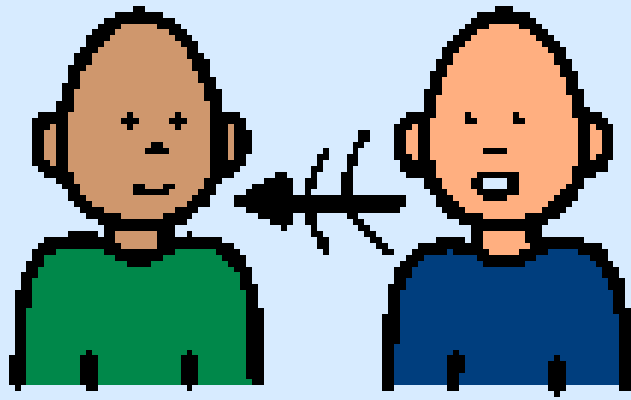
Childs nervous system becomes overstimulated

- Run from loud noises
- Strip to get 'scratchy' clothes off !

## *Under-sensitivity*

Nervous system needs more information to notice sensations

- Jumping, spinning to get more input
- May not noticed when touched (love to be squeezed !)



Does your  
child have  
sensory  
issues?  
What are  
they?

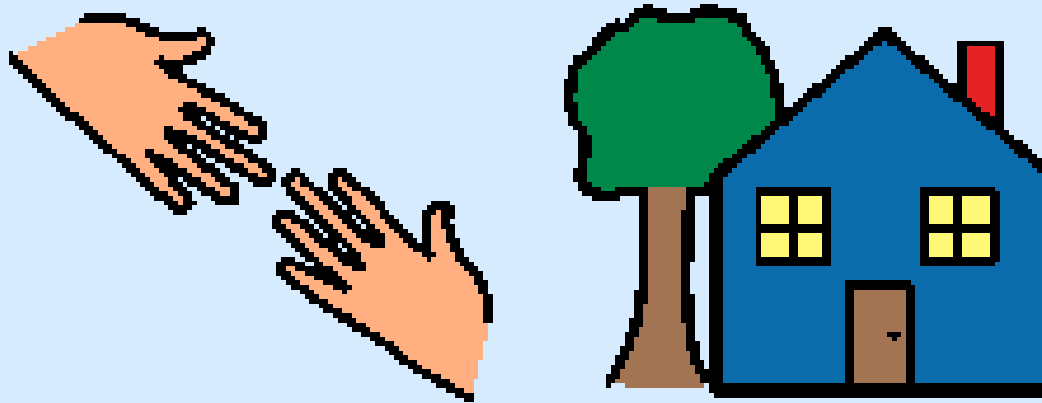
# Communication

- Children with ASD have difficulties both using and understanding communication (expressive and receptive)
- To support communication parents can:
  - Recognise communication attempts,
  - Respond to communication attempts and model the next level,
  - Create communication opportunities and wait,
  - encourage other forms of communication.

# Managing Behaviour

- Most behaviour is communication about something
- Finding out the function or purpose of the behaviour is the key to managing it
- Are our actions maintaining the behaviour ?
- To encourage positive behaviour we need to manage the environment, use plenty of positive reinforcement and teach new skills the compete with the difficult behaviour.

# How can I support my child at home ?



# Structure the environment

" A place for everything and  
everything in it's place "





# Structure Routines

- Assist students to understand their world
- Assist students to learn routines
- Concrete, non transient
- Promote independence
- Reduce anxiety

# AM

## Morning Routine



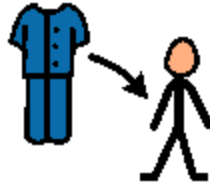
get out of bed



make bed



get dressed



breakfast



brush teeth



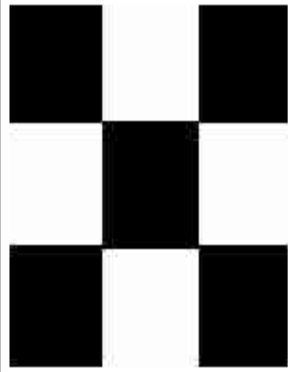
pack bag



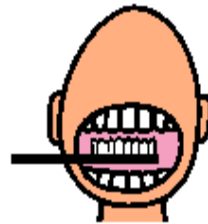
6 ✓



television



brush teeth



bed



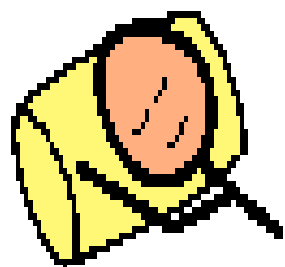
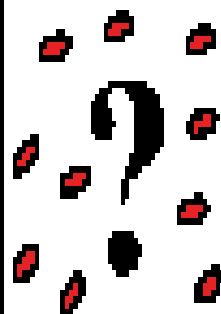
# Prepare for Changes

- Reduce anxiety
- Opportunity to teach "change" as a positive event



Kurrambee School - Little By Little 2010

How many sleeps to holidays ?



5

4

3

2

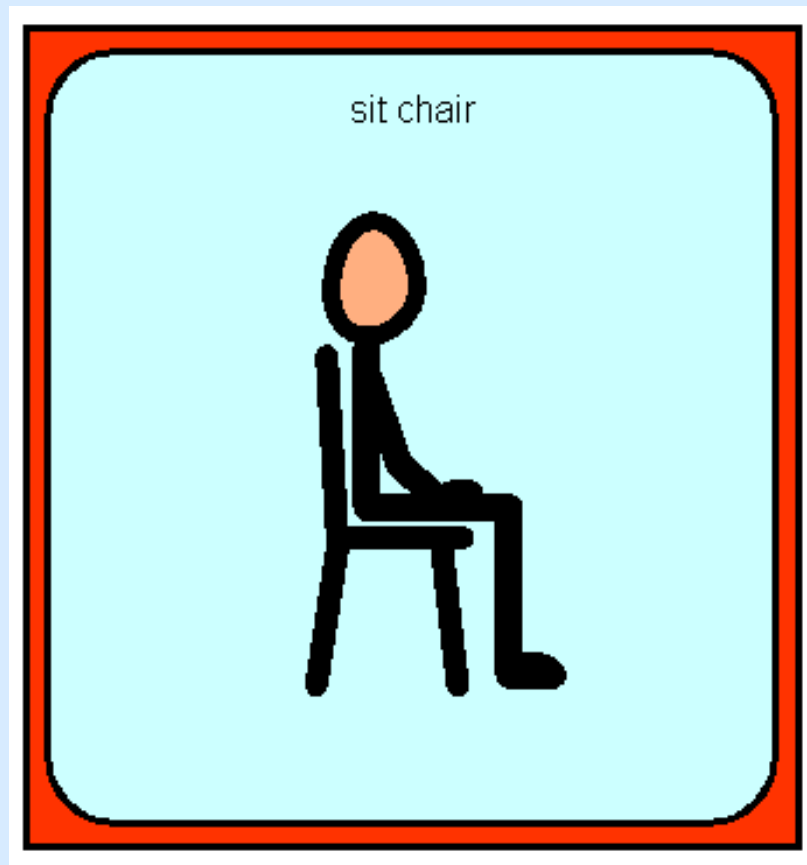
1

# Visual Supports

- Promote expressive and receptive skills
- Promote positive peer interaction and participation
- Promote independence
- Concrete/non transient
- Reduce the need for verbal cues
- Teach sequences and routines and change
- Assist in managing challenging behaviour

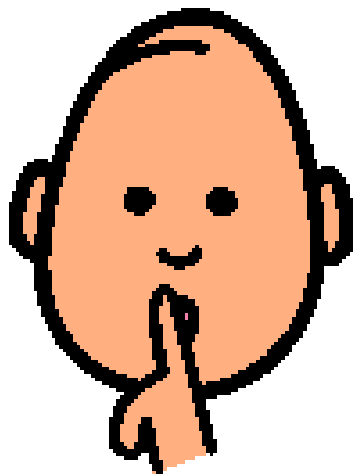
*I hear and I forget*  
*I see and I remember*  
*I do and I understand*  
Chinese Proverb



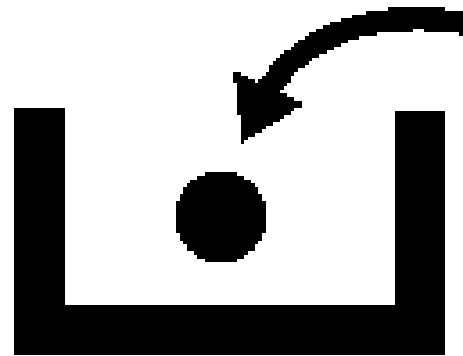


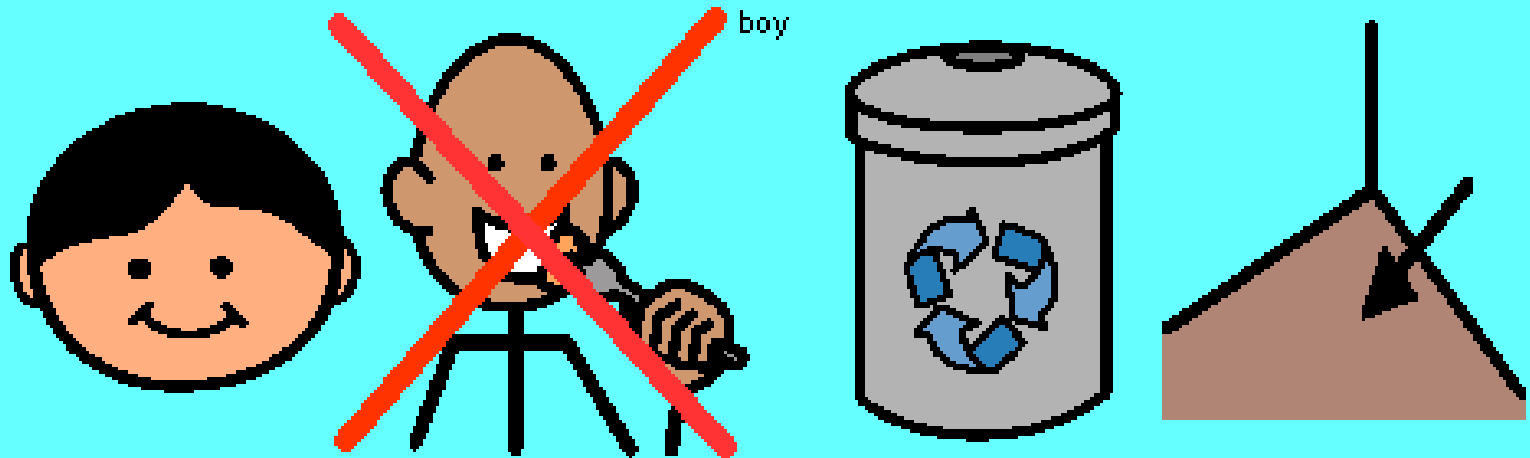


quiet



inside



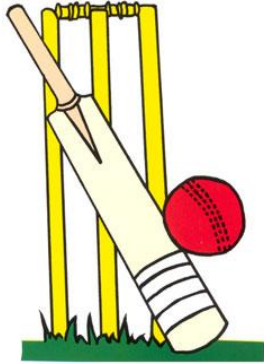


Name - No eat from bin or floor...



We eat from plates !

# Choice & Request Boards



Play cricket



Digger



Squeeze ball



Sandpit



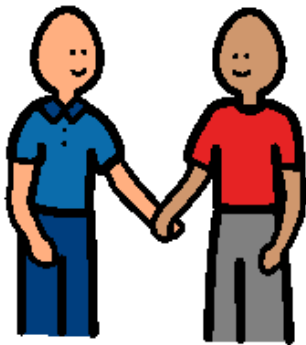
Walk the dog



Ipod

# If ... then ...

If ...



good friend

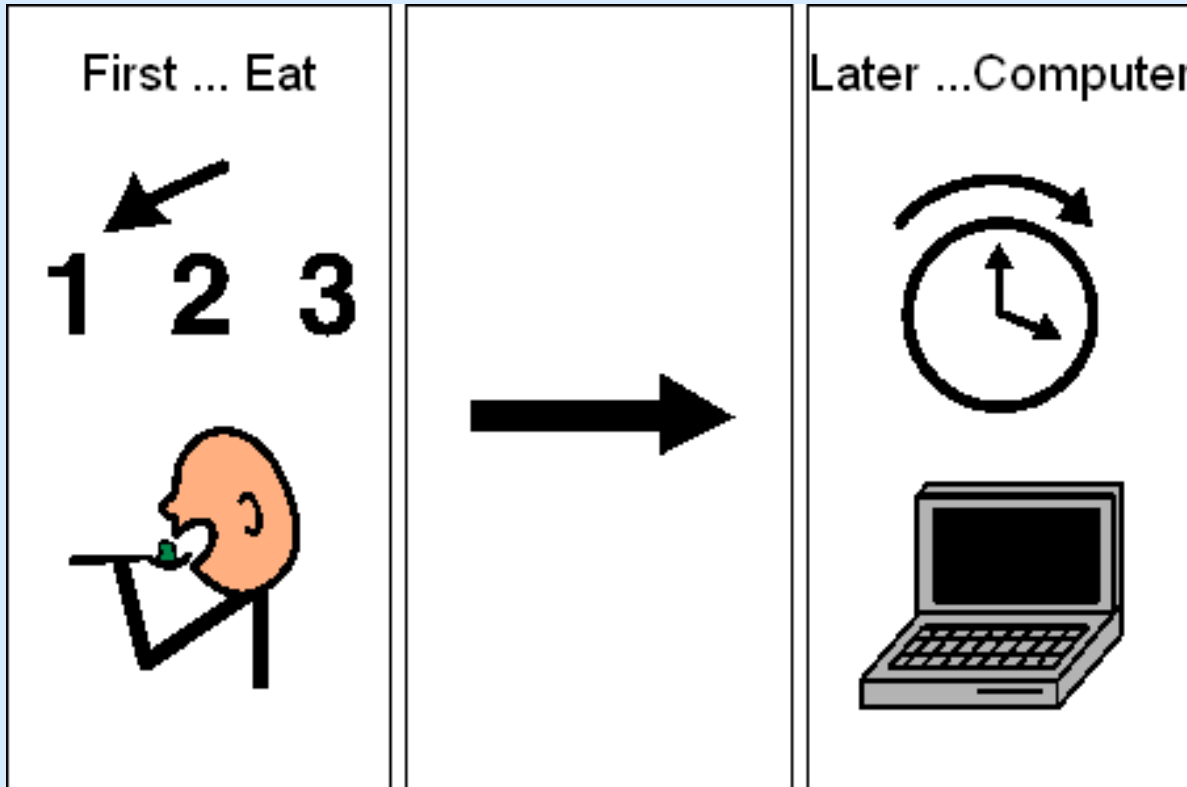


Then ...



milkshake

# Now ... Later ...

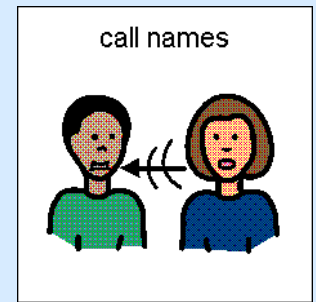


# Social Stories

A communication strategy which enables the learner to understand a situation and learn how to respond or behave in that situation.

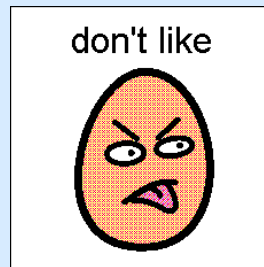


# WHEN SOMEONE SAYS SILLY THINGS.



Sometimes my friend calls me silly names.  
He might say "You're a baby with a dummy"

I don't like it



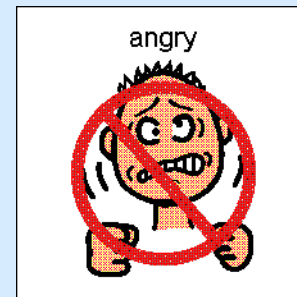
I know I'm not a baby.

These are the things I can do:

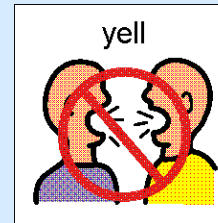
I will try to ignore my friend.



I will try not to get angry.



I will try not to yell at him.



I will try not to hit him.



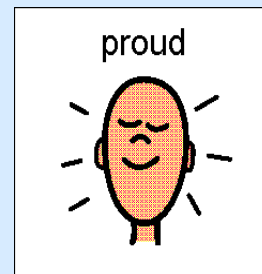
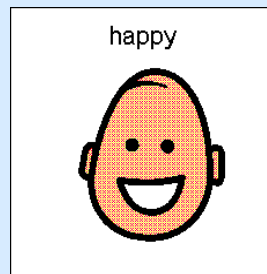
I will try not to kick him.



If I ignore him he might stop calling me names.



My teachers will be very happy with me if I ignore my friend. I will be proud if I ignore my friend



# Helpful Hints from Wendy Lawson ...

- Check out the autistic person's perception of what is being asked, demonstrated or said.
- Teach that behaviours, emotions and desires can have particular facial and bodily expressions. Explain what these are.
- Rote learn rules for specific situations (ie. we hug family members, not strangers).
- Give time, whenever possible, to acclimatise to change and don't suddenly spring things onto the person.
- \* When the individual is anxious: use music, space, reassurance, relaxation and breathing exercises, a calm voice and any other acceptable known anti-stressor.

- Learning to recognise overload is very important.
- Prevention is better than cure! Each individual is different and, therefore, will have different strengths, weaknesses and limitations. Ultimately it is in the individual's best interest to learn to recognise these themselves. However, until that happens it is up to the parent, teacher or carer to be responsible for this process.
- When a child covers their ears, becomes increasingly restless, paces the floor, loses interest or simply moves away from you, then they may be already overloaded.
- Our concentration span is very limited and we soon tire. Using subject material that we are interested in is very helpful and will facilitate longer interest. At school it was always difficult for me to learn about things that I was not interested in. I don't know why this was so. I just couldn't see the point.

# Questions & Comments ...

