

# News Notes

A Newsletter for Teachers of Students with Significant  
Cognitive Disabilities  
Educational Equity for All



April 2018

APRIL IS NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH



## 9 Best Strategies to Encourage Eye Contact:

1. Model appropriate eye contact with your child; always turn to look at your child when you talk to him/her.
2. Bring object/toy up to your eye level to encourage your child to look. Initially, he/she may only look at the toy, but gradually some eye contact will emerge.
3. If your child is cooperative and understands what you mean, you could say "Look at me."
4. Sometimes gently touching your child's chin can be a reminder to look, BUT DO NOT DRAG YOUR CHILD'S FACE ROUND to make them look.
5. Stand in front of your child when he/she is on the swing/rocking horse etc. Occasionally stop the swing and say "Ready, set" – wait a few moments in the hope that they may look at you and then immediately say "Go." As they turn to look at you more readily, you can encourage a vocalisation for "Go."
6. Blowing bubbles, and then waiting, is often a successful way of eliciting eye contact.
7. Use a variety of ways to gain your child's eye contact. Do not constantly nag him/her with "Look at me, look at me."
8. Some children feel more comfortable when engaged in a gross motor activity, e.g. on the swing, having a tickle. The child may give spontaneous eye contact during these activities.
9. Praise all spontaneous eye contact, i.e., say "Good looking."

<https://goo.gl/fqSTGy>

## Paying attention: children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

Most children find that paying attention can be hard work at times. For children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), it can be a big challenge. Play is an ideal way to help your child develop this skill.

### About attention

When we pay attention, we focus on one thing and put other things out of our minds. For example, we listen to what someone is saying while ignoring other conversations and background noise in the room.

Paying attention uses particular networks in the brain. It's a skill that develops over time. To pay attention well, we need to be alert. This allows us to sort out the right information from our surroundings and put this information together.

**Paying attention is a key skill for learning.** For example, children need to pay attention to a teacher's instructions to be sure they're doing things the right way. Children also need to be able to keep their attention on tasks to be able to learn.

When children have trouble paying attention, it can lead to problem behaviour. A child who isn't doing what she's told might look like she's deliberately behaving badly. For example, if a child rarely follows instructions, her parents could get frustrated and angry because it seems like she never listens. This could upset the child and lead to difficult behaviour like tantrums.

### Eye contact: the first step towards paying attention

Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) can learn to pay attention, and they can get better at it with practice.

**Making eye contact is the first step** in teaching your child how to pay attention to people and not just to his favourite toys or activities.

[http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/autism\\_spectrum\\_disorder\\_attention.html](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/autism_spectrum_disorder_attention.html)

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EQUITY FOR ALL  
..... Giving kids what they need to succeed.

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## FEATURED IDEA OF THE MONTH

### 21 CLASS-APPROPRIATE SENSORY BREAK ACTIVITIES FOR BETTER FOCUS



Sensory Integration at School: 21 Sensory Break Activities for Kids

Also known as 'brain breaks' & 'movement breaks', these sensory break activities develop gross motor skills, improve self-regulation & help with behavior management in the classroom while also helping kids focus & learn!

<https://goo.gl/TYcAc6>

## *Burnout Blockers: A Series for New Teachers*

The *Burnout Blockers* video series helps new teachers manage their stress and anxiety so they're able to make better work-related decisions and increase their happiness and longevity in the classroom. *Burnout Blockers* is a valuable supplement to college classes for pre-service teachers, seminars for student teacher cohorts, school districts' new teacher induction programs, and self-directed professional development. The entire series is free-of-cost and available online.

With a focus on bolstering teachers' mental health, *Burnout Blockers* covers elements of habit psychology, mindfulness, cognitive biases, and decision science to help teachers become more aware of how they plan class time, manage students' behavior, and prioritize the behind-the-scenes work that keeps the classroom running effectively.

### *Burnout Blockers* Video Topics

1. Building Your Confidence as a New Teacher
2. A Mindset to Prevent Burnout
3. Hack Your Habit Loops to Reduce Stress
4. Is Student Misbehavior Normal in Your Classroom?
5. Plan Lessons Better with Premortems
6. How to Prioritize Your Work as a Teacher
7. Recap

Videos and Discussion Guides all free.

<https://goo.gl/S3hKSU>

## **5 Tips for Teaching Reading and Spelling to Children with Autism**

27th September 2017 By [Annabelle Short](#)

With teaching methods designed for children with autism, your autistic child will be reading and spelling just like their fellow classmates:

1. **Keep lessons incremental**
2. **Use direct instruction**
3. **Teach one concept at a time**
4. **Use multisensory tools**
5. **Reward their success**

<https://goo.gl/Q5H2da>

## ALTERNATIVE AND AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION



AAC and Autism: Using Communication Devices for Non-Verbal Children

How to Implement AAC with Children with Autism

- Show the Child How to Use the AAC
- Offer the AAC to the Child
- Help the Child Use the AAC
- Fade the Prompting
- Teach New Words

<https://goo.gl/CREoqf>

## WEBSITES AND RESOURCES

<https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2018/01/09/reading-autism/>

<https://goo.gl/tTxLTc>

<https://goo.gl/c8byFK>

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Professional Development to Enhance Autism Services

We are committed to helping professionals provide evidence-based practices for individuals with autism and their families. Here you can learn about resources and tools to help you in providing services for individuals with autism. We offer an online list of training programs in evidence-based practice for autism.

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/science/professional-development-resources>

## AUTISM AND AGGRESSION: INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Here are some strategies to use to get your child out of the cycle of aggression:

- Teach Communication.
- Teach Alternative Behaviors.
- Teach your child that he has options.
- Reinforce Good Behavior.
- Change Your Behavior.
- Prevention.

The main idea to take home is that some children resort to aggression because it usually works! Therefore, it is very important to not give your child what he wants when he becomes aggressive. Set boundaries and follow through. Reinforce good behavior as often as you can. If a serious meltdown occurs, take your child to a safe place to calm down, but once he's calm, follow through with any instructions you gave prior. Other consequences such as loss of privileges may be necessary, but it's better to focus on teaching and reinforcing good behavior. <https://goo.gl/cYnSGf>