

March 2017

## INSIDE...

- Tips for Teaching Young Children with Autism
- What is a Buddy Bench or Friendship Seat?
- Girls with ASD
- Social Skills for Autism: Adolescents and Children with High Functioning Autism
- Research
- Books
- Resources

Hello educators and parents,

Welcome to the latest edition of ASES eNEWS. Looking forward to connect with educators and parents during the cooler months in Victoria and South Australia.

### My services include:

- Professional learning sessions
- Parent training sessions
- Individual parent coaching
- Education behaviour consultant

For more information contact me by  
by email [educationasd@tpg.com.au](mailto:educationasd@tpg.com.au)

## Term 2 workshops

### Introduction to Autism,

**Positive and practical strategies to support Behaviour, Learning and Social success**

 May 4: Challenging behaviour -Behaviour Detective - Bulleen

May 9: Yarraville Club

May 17: Mulgrave CC

May 22: Horsham RSL

May 24: Mount Gambier South Australia: Register directly with Cristina

May 30: Bentleigh club

Register for workshop at [www.pd-online.com.au](http://www.pd-online.com.au)

**All Sessions Meet Victorian Institute of Teaching's New Requirements.**

The professional development sessions will be designed to meet the new Victorian Institute of Teaching's requirement for ALL teachers to undertake professional development in special education. All sessions will meet the following standards: **Australian Professional Standards for Teachers 1.5, 1.6 & 4.1**



## Tips for Teaching Young Children with Autism

Laura Maddox and Annette Wragge

Supporting files: [http://www.unl.edu/asdnetwork/uploads/featured-articles/tips\\_teach yng\\_child\\_autism-2005.pdf](http://www.unl.edu/asdnetwork/uploads/featured-articles/tips_teach yng_child_autism-2005.pdf)



*The following suggestions were compiled as a resource for teachers, therapists, or family members working with individuals with autism. While these tips may be very helpful we recognize that there is no one strategy that works for all students with ASD. It is important to assess your student or child's individual strengths and needs and work with team members to integrate effective practices that address those specific strengths and needs.*

*The tips are organized in the following categories: Structuring the Environment, Opportunities for Communication, Social Interaction, Systematic Instruction and Joint Attention. This is not meant to be a comprehensive list but an overview of some quick and easy things you can do to create a positive learning environment for a child with ASD.*

### 1. Structure the Environment

*Create a picture or object cue that helps the child predict the daily routine or an upcoming event. (You may use line drawings or photographs for pictures, depending on your child.)*

Set up your environment to “tell” the student and other staff members:

- what to do
- How much to do (amount, length, etc.)
- when to do
- when they are finished
- what comes next

**Example:** Prior to music time, assist a child in retrieving a maraca from an object schedule and have him take it to the music area. Over time, fade your assistance and have the maraca signify that the child should go to the music area.

**Example:** Upon arrival at daycare or preschool provide the child with a picture schedule indicating major daily activities. Assist the child to remove the first picture and takes it to the designated area and match it to an identical picture at that location. (Fade your assistance so the child becomes independent.)

## Tips for Teaching Young Children with Autism

**Example:** On the weekends or days when the schedule is different, provide child with a simple written or picture *mini-schedule* of the day's activities. If you are going shopping write a list of the stops you are going to make in order. Try to have a mix of preferred and non-preferred stops ending with the most preferred when possible.

- 1.) Car Shop
- 2.) Grocery store
- 3.) Grandma's House
- 4.) McDonalds

### Provide structure within activities

**Example:** When working on a task or activity provide the child with visual information that tells her how long the task will take. At the end of the activity when her time is up provide her with reinforcement for her efforts. (You can increase the number of balls, stickers or amount of time in the following examples as the student's time on task increases.)

Some examples of visual schedules of reinforcement include:

- 1.) Line balls of playdough on the table next to the child's work area. As the child works have her keep smashing balls until they are all flat.
- 2.) Provide a small card with places to velcro stickers and a picture of a reinforcer. When the card is full the child is done working and gets her reinforcer.
- 3.) Set up a timer that provides the child with visual information for when time will be up.

### Provide a warning that a transition is coming.

**Example:** Prior to the end of playtime, gain the child's attention and let them know you are setting the timer for 2 minutes. This will help them be prepared for the end of playtime.

**Example:** Prior to ending bathtime, let the child know they can drive their boat around the bathtub 1 more time and then it will be time to get out.

### Provide structure during transitions.

**Example:** At the beginning of an activity that requires sitting, sing (or say) with the child(ren) as they do the movements, "I wiggle my fingers, I wiggle my toes, I wiggle my shoulders, I wiggle my nose, Now there are no more wiggles in me, So I will sit as still as can be!"

**Example:** Give "job assignments" during clean up time. Pictures may help a child understand what they need to do. (remember the good thing at the end!)

## Tips for Teaching Young Children with Autism

### 2. Provide Opportunities for Communication (and Reinforce Attempts)

*Be sure the student wants and needs to communicate. (Often, using motivating topics, activities or objects may help increase communication.)*

**Example:** When looking at a familiar repetitive book with a child with autism such as *Brown Bear Brown Bear What Do You See*, provide opportunities for the child to fill in the blanks. You could say Brown Bear Brown bear what do you \_\_\_\_\_, and create an opportunity for the child to complete the sentence. \*Children with ASD enjoy hearing stories or phrases over and over and are more likely to verbally attempt a familiar word or phrase when provided a fill in the blank opportunity.

**Example:** For children who are non-verbal or reluctant to communicators, provide pictures of items the child enjoys in a communication book. The child can learn to exchange these pictures for desired objects. He can be systematically taught to make a request by exchanging a picture of the toy with an adult or peer.

**Example:** Provide wait time before asking the child what he/she wants. Give the child time to come up with the words before providing a prompt. Try to pretend you don't know what they want instead of anticipating what they want.

**Example:** Provide access to desired items and/or activities in small amounts so the child is motivated to ask for it again. If you give a large amount or overexposure to an item the child will become satiated and not want to request the item(s) anymore.

**Example:** Create language opportunities through surprise, sabotage and broken routines. Add an unusual element to a known routine or activity so the child has something new to communicate about. Sabotage familiar activities such as setting up the play dough center with empty containers of playdough. This provides a great opportunity for the child to communicate about the missing materials.

### 3. Create and Enhance Social Interactions

*Provide repeated opportunities for children to interact with their peers, even for short periods of time.*

**Example:** On Show and Tell Day, help the student prepare a script to use when showing.

#### Show and Tell

1. This is my Teddy Bear \_\_\_\_\_.
2. You can/can't touch it.
3. (Velcro comment picture like "Be careful!" "I like the pink part")

### Tips for Teaching Young Children with Autism

**Example:** Before an art activity, let the children choose the color of paper they want to use. Have “Rosy” use a choice board to ask each student what color of paper they would like. While Rosy does not speak verbally, she can show the choices to her friends and they make a selection.

**Example:** Structure activities to promote peer interaction. When playing with puzzles, give some of the puzzle pieces to a peer. Have the child with ASD request additional puzzle pieces as he needs them. Have the children switch roles and the child with ASD can provide the puzzle pieces as requested by his peers.

#### 4. Provide Systematic Instruction

**Thoroughly plan how skills will be taught and allow many opportunities for practice.**

**Example:** Prior to doing a music activity such as *Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes*, practice each individual movement with your student ahead of time. With practice he is more likely to be able to be prepared and participate in the group activity. You may need to provide the student with many opportunities to practice before he can follow along during the group activity.

**Example:** When working with a student on an IFSP or IEP goal of sorting object consider breaking it down into steps. The skills needed for sorting objects may include sorting identical objects, and then sorting objects into different groups or categories.

#### 5. Joint Attention

**Provide many opportunities for sharing experiences, role reversal and imitation.**

It is helpful to gather information about child’s interests and use them to teach joint attention.

To find out what the child likes to play with, try the following:

- Conduct a reinforcer assessment
- Observe the child during free play time and see what he chooses to do
- Ask other caregivers what things the child enjoys playing with or doing

**Example:** Observe what a child is focusing on and bring that object to a joint point of regard. Use this opportunity to label and comment on the object, while allowing the child to continue enjoying it.

**Example:** Create opportunities to interact with the child that are better with you than without you. If the child likes bubbles use a bubble dispenser that she needs you to operate. After providing some bubbles pause for a few seconds and wait for the child to look in your direction and indicate they want you to make more bubbles.

**Example:** Play *What’s in the Bag?* Put some motivating items in a brown paper sack. Teach the child to ask, “What’s in the Bag?” and then label the item when you pull it out. Be sure to provide opportunities for the child to be the “Holder of the Bag” also. This provides opportunities for communication, imitation, role reversal, and you may also be able to work on specific individual learning goals as well!

## GIRLS WITH AN AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)

[http://suelarkey.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Tip\\_Sheet\\_-\\_Girls\\_with\\_an\\_ASD.pdf](http://suelarkey.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Tip_Sheet_-_Girls_with_an_ASD.pdf)

Girls with an ASD are often undiagnosed, because original diagnostic criteria have a boy bias. The criteria were created by actually examining mainly boys, and the girls can be very different. I think we all know 'neuro-typical' boys and girls are very different in their social, communication and behaviour. There are many characteristics that are very similar to boys with an ASD but I thought I would list the main differences to girls with an ASD.

### Ten Ways Girls with an ASD differ to Boys with an ASD

1. Their special interests are usually animals, music, art, literature.
2. They often have a very good imagination which includes imaginary friends, games, being animals or taking on persona of other girls.
3. They often see speech therapists for their speech and may be diagnosed with specific language disorders however there is something different about this girl no one can quite put their finger on.
4. They often play with older children or much younger children. This play is sometimes unusual for example 'Mums and Dads' but she will want to play the same role and game every time. She usually wants to be the pet or baby, whereas most girls want to be the Mum or Dad.
5. They often have hyperlexia – the ability to read but comprehension does not always match their reading skills. They are often the class book worm or write stories but they write the same story over and over changing a few characters. Many have a special interest in literature.
6. They have unusual sensory processing, like the boys, however bigger fluctuations often going from one extreme to the other.
7. They get anxious like boys, however their anxiety is rarely physical or disruptive. In fact many have great copying mechanisms at school however the family see a very different child at home where the anxiety can explode.
8. Often their difficulties with social skills are called 'shy', 'quiet', 'solitary'.
9. They often like to organize and arrange objects. I watched one little girl spend hours seemingly playing "My Little Ponies" however on closer examination she was just arranging and re-arranging the horses over and over.
10. The main difference is there are MANY more undiagnosed girls/women than boys/men. Currently we only diagnose 1 girl to 7 boys. In the future it is thought by many psychologists the ratio could be more like 5 to 7 as we become more aware of this group.

## What is a Buddy Bench or Friendship Seat?

<http://buddybenchaustralia.com.au/blog/>



**A Buddy bench or friendship seat can be a fantastic tool to help stop or prevent bullying and social isolation in schools.** A Buddy bench or friendship seat needs to be in the right position to work perhaps under a tree or another shady spot for summer, or moved to a warmer spot in winter, but in full view of the playground or sporting facilities.

The position of the seat should be chosen so if a child is sitting there for any length of time they are likely to be noticed and they are still able to watch other children playing. If they start to feel better they may decide that they can join in. A Friendship Seat or Buddy Bench is a safe way for students to express that they feel lonely or upset or have no-one to play with. It can become an important part of play time at any school.



Staff can discuss the friendship seat with students in the context of the school vision and value to develop a shared understanding that it is a place students can sit when they don't think have anyone to play with and do not feel good about that. A Friendship seat can play a significant role in students' sense of belonging and connectedness to the school and their peers.

All students should understand that they can take an important buddy and leadership role to ensure that none of their peers are socially isolated during play times. Children pick up on the idea very quickly. One student said. "As a grade six student, if children go on the friendship seat, I will see who is lonely and I can invite them to play with me" "It's important because it means that we will all have to work together to make sure that everyone has a friend," another added.

The concept can be introduced to students in younger grades using role play incorporating the actual seat to familiarize them with its purpose and use. The friendship seat is good for solving problems. Children who are sad and alone can sit there and wait for someone to invite them to play with them. The friendship seat gives students a good opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. The friendship seat can build confidence to talk to different people.



Of course the buddy bench must be an attractive good quality, durable, safe, low maintenance seat to sit on, similar to other standard playground equipment, but clearly marked with its purpose. BAB Aluminium have been making such school seating for many years and now they offer a buddy bench seat as part of their range.

Author [Buddy Bench Australia](#) Posted on [October 12, 2016](#)

## Social Skills for Autism: Adolescents and Children with High Functioning Autism

<http://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/social-skills-for-autism-adolescents-and-children-with-high-functioning-autism/>

### Social Skills and Autism

- Who are these kids?
  - high-functioning autism
  - Aspergers
  - social interaction problems
  - want to have friends
  - don't understand rules
- How to know which social skills to work on?
  - Observe in natural setting as much as possible
  - Ask teachers or other caregivers about what they've noticed
  - Observe other children that age
- Research about how these kids learn social skills  
best: [www.speechandlanguagekids.com/socialresearch](http://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/socialresearch)
  - Review of research by White and Keonig
  - group-based social skills training
  - Direct teaching of social skills

### Social Skills strategies Which Were Found Helpful

- **Teaching Social Scripts**
  - Specific rules that govern these activities
  - watch other kids
  - introductions, entering conversation, sitting in the lunch room, phone conversations,
- **Modeling and Role Play**
  - watch someone else do it first
  - practice skill on their own
- **Differential reinforcement**
  - change reinforcement based on their behavior
  - could be verbal praise or corrective feedback or the reaction of the listener

### Peer Involvement

- use other children with social needs
- use typical peers
- use siblings

### **Multiple Trainers**

- Don't get too used to the same communication partners

### **Parent Involvement**

- Practice skills or talk about them at home

### **Practice in natural environments**

- Use peers to help with re-introducing the skill into a natural setting
- Talk about before the child enters the situation
- Review how it went afterwards

### **Foster Self-Awareness**

- Watch videos of self, doing the skill
- Talk about how it went
- Encourage child to judge if it went well
- Encourage child to judge based on other person's reaction

## **How This Would Look in Practice:**

### **1. Choose children who need social skills training, group together and add peers if possible      OR**

**Tell child you'll be working on social skills; bring in peers, friends, other children with autism, siblings if possible**

2. Observe natural social interactions to choose one target, for example: entering a group conversation

3. Observe typical kids in that situation

- if body language is closed off, don't enter
- stand quietly by to see if they let you in
- watch body language to see if they're ok with you being there
- listen for topic
- make comment that is relevant and on-topic
- don't change topic away
- don't hog spotlight, ask others questions and let others take turns

4. Write social script/social story

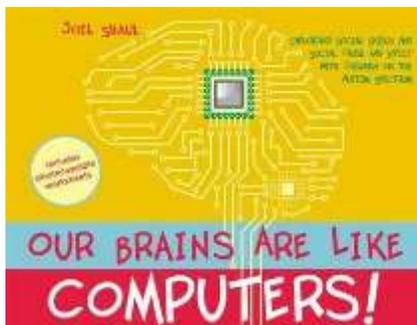
5. Read the story with the group and discuss

6. Act out the story with different people being the person approaching

7. Provide reinforcement about how each child performed
8. Ask peers to rate how other child performed
9. Send home info to parents and have them practice/talk about it at home
10. Take that skill to a natural setting with the same children
11. Have the child rate his own performance
12. Take child to a natural setting with whatever people are there.
13. Talk about skill before he goes in
14. Have him rate his performance after done and give feedback
15. Maintenance:
  - discuss performance periodically to keep fresh
  - Provide feedback on what you observe

Thanks so much for listening! If you'd like to download the mp3 of this podcast to save on your computer, you can click the link below.

[Click here to download the mp3 version of this podcast!](#)



## BOOK

[Our Brains are Like Computers! : Exploring Social Skills and Social Cause and Effect with Children on the Autism Spectrum](#)

By (author) Joel Shaul

This highly visual social skills book uses computer metaphors and visual diagrams to help children on the autism spectrum to understand how their words and actions can affect other people. Easily identifiable computing and social networking metaphors are used to explain how memories are saved in the brain, like files in computer folders, and how, just as files can be shared and downloaded on the internet, people learn about you by sharing their positive and negative impressions with each other. The author explains why certain actions may be 'liked' or 'disliked' by others, and offers guidance on appropriate and inappropriate social behavior. This book also features photocopiable worksheets to reinforce the guidance and lessons offered in the book.

## RESEARCH

### For Those With Autism, Fixations Can Be Beneficial

by Shaun Heasley | February 3, 2017

<https://www.disabilityscoop.com/2017/02/03/study-autism-fixations/23270/>

Parents and teachers should do more to embrace the preferred interests of those with autism, researchers say, pointing out that such aptitudes can be calming and form the basis for careers.

Individuals on the spectrum often display intense interests in topics like computers, animals or trains. Traditionally, many experts thought that such preferences might inhibit social development.

However, in a new study looking at the experiences of 80 adults with autism ages 18 to 70, researchers said they found otherwise.

“Many of our study participants referred to their preferred interests as a ‘lifeline,’” said Kristie Patten Koenig of New York University who led the study published this week in the journal *Occupational Therapy in Mental Health*.

Overall, 92 percent of study participants said that their interest areas provide a calming effect for them.

What’s more, the vast majority — 86 percent — said they have a job or are in school or other training that’s related to their preferred area.

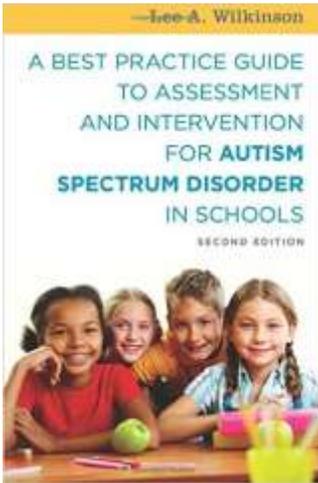
Of the adults studied, most reported that their interests were not static over time, with 68 percent saying that they have different preferences as adults than they did as youngsters.

While about half of those surveyed said that their parents were supportive of their intense interests, only 10 percent said their teachers were.

“This highlights an important gap in the educational practices of supporting students on the spectrum and the potential for incorporating their preferred interests in the classroom,” Koenig said.

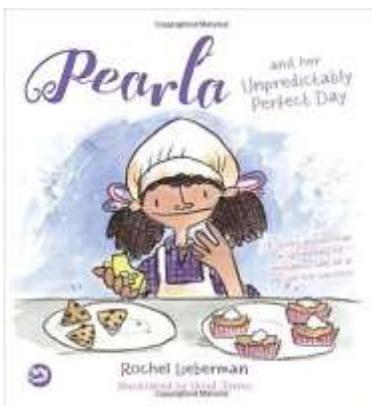
**For the complete article go to “Characterization and Utilization of Preferred Interests: A Survey of Adults on the Autism Spectrum” by Kristie Patten Koenig & Lauren Hough Williams (2017): *Occupational Therapy in Mental Health*, DOI: 10.1080/0164212X.2016.1248877**

# BOOKS



**A Best Practice Guide to Assessment and Intervention for Autism Spectrum Disorder in Schools, Second Edition**  
**Lee A. Wilkinson**

This updated edition is the definitive guide to practical, evidence-based approaches to the assessment and diagnosis of ASD in schools. Bridging the research to practice gap, this award-winning book shows education professionals and clinicians how to identify school-aged children with ASD and carry out appropriate interventions.

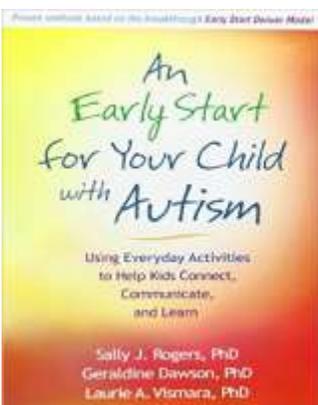


**Pearla and her Unpredictably Perfect Day**

**A story about how a sprinkling of mistakes can be a recipe for success**  
**Rochel Lieberman, illustrated by Lloyd Jones**

Pearla loves to bake! Her favourite foods are cookies and cupcakes, which she sells at her dad's bakery. She always tries very hard to make her baking absolutely perfect, but one day Pearla is so busy that she makes a huge mistake! Have fun with Pearla as she learns how to adapt when her day doesn't go to plan and realises it could turn out to be pretty perfect after all.

This is a scrumptious tale for children aged 4-12, particularly those who experience anxiety or developmental issues. It demonstrates that you can't succeed unless you try and that it's ok to make mistakes. Pearla's strategies for solving her problems will help children to overcome their own hurdles



**An Early Start for Your Child with Autism: Using Everyday Activities to Help Kids Connect, Communicate, and Learn** by **Sally J. Rogers PhD (Author), Geraldine Dawson PhD (Author), Laurie A. Vismara PhD (Author)**

Cutting-edge research reveals that parents can play a huge role in helping toddlers and pre-schoolers with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) connect with others and live up to their potential. This encouraging guide from the developers of a ground breaking early intervention program provides doable, practical strategies you can use every day. Nearly all young kids—including those with ASD—have an amazing capacity to learn. Drs. Sally Rogers, Geraldine Dawson, and Laurie Vismara make it surprisingly simple to turn daily routines like breakfast or bath time into fun and

rewarding learning experiences that target crucial developmental skills. Vivid examples illustrate proven techniques for promoting play, language, and engagement. Get an early start—and give your child the tools to explore and enjoy the world.



# Everyday Speech

<http://everydayspeech.com/>

Everyday Speech is a leading provider of social skills materials for speech therapists, special educators, and diverse learning professionals. **Their social skills videos, apps, and worksheets** provide professionals the materials they need to help those with social learning challenges, regardless of diagnosis. [Everyday Speech focuses on skills that are needed in daily interactions, including conversation skills, nonverbal communication, and friendship skills.](#) **30 day free trial of videos and worksheets. There are 9 videos on Youtube to download!**

## Watson Institute: Behavior Stories

<https://www.thewatsoninstitute.org/resources/behavior-stories/>



Description: Behavior stories were designed to teach appropriate behaviors. They have been developed by Watson Institute consultants and public school teachers. Stories can be adapted to suit individual needs. Some behavior stories include spaces to add photographs or clip art.



## Victories and Autism

<http://www.victoriesnautism.com/>



### Victories 'N Autism- Uniquely Connected

The purpose of this site is to introduce strategies and information to help individuals with ASD reach their potential. An easy to remember acronym, VICTORIES, has been created to assist with understanding relevant factors which have scientific evidence of being instrumental in increasing skills, appropriate behaviors, generalization of skills and decreasing inappropriate skills for many individuals with an ASD.

## Do2learn

<http://www.do2learn.com/>



Do2learn provides thousands of free pages with social skills and behavioral regulation activities and guidance, learning songs and games, communication cards, academic material, and transition guides for employment and life skills. In addition, we offer premier products including View2do, Job TIPS, FACELAND, books, and apps for purchase.





*Sensory motor tool supplier*

<http://www.senseabilities.com.au/>

**SenseAbilities** is committed to the provision of equipment and resources designed to assist with the sensory motor development of children. We provide supplies for parents, Occupational Therapists, Speech Therapists, Physiotherapists, Teachers and other allied health professionals or just to people wanting to have a little fun with sensory toys



<http://theautismhelper.com/>

We at The Autism Helper, Inc. are dedicated to empowering those who support individuals with Autism by providing resources, tools, and the methods to measure success. We aim to support teachers, parents, clinicians, and administrators. There resources and articles to help with Academics, Behaviour and Communication



## Understanding Autism: A Guide for Secondary School Teachers DVD



<http://www.researchautism.org/resources/teachersdvd.asp>

The DVD, a key component of the "[Autism in the Schoolhouse](#)" initiative, is designed to provide general education teachers with strategies for supporting their middle and high school students with autism. It was produced by the Organization for Autism Research (OAR) in collaboration with Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools.

**Watch and download these informative videos.**

**Segment One: Characteristics** (18:34) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yAAOI6JU5M>

**Segment Two: Integrating Supports in the Classroom** (15:28)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veQKDDE9C\\_w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veQKDDE9C_w)

**Segment Three: Practices for Challenging Behavior** (17:47) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LK5Pr9h10BY>

**Segment Four: Effective Use of Teacher Supports** (12:00) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X4GdaD2Izxc>