

# Autism and ADHD

## Supporting Guardian Ad Litem Interactions

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# Introductions

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## Deitra A. Kuester, Ph.D.

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- From Indiana; Doctorate from Purdue University
- Teaching experience includes over 20 years in K-12 and higher education in working with individuals with special needs

## Quentin M. Wherfel, Ph.D.

- Assistant Professor of Education at Bradley University
- From Illinois; Doctorate from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- Teaching experience includes over 9 years in secondary and higher education in working with individuals with special needs

# Session Agenda

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- ✓ **Introductions**
- ✓ **Modes of language: Foundation of successful communication**
- ✓ **Diagnosis, development and characteristics (challenges) of:**
  - a. **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**
  - b. **Attention Deficit with or without Hyperactivity / Impulsivity (ADHD)**
- ✓ **Strategies for successful communication**
- ✓ **Q & A**



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**1.** Understand differences between receptive and expressive communication.

**2.** Know major characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit with/Hyperactivity and Impulsivity (ADHD), and overlap of behavior between these disabilities.

**3.** Strategies to help you successfully work with children with these challenges.

# **Modes of Language:**

## ***The Foundation of Successful Communication***

# Modes of Language:

## *The Foundation of Successful Communication*

### Receptive

Comprehension of language; receives the message (i.e., listening & reading)

### Expressive

Use of language; sends the message (i.e., speaking & writing)



# ***Why Autism and ADHD?***

# Prevalence of Autism *and* ADHD



AUTISM

**15%**  
of US children

**1:37 boys**  
**1:151 girls**



ADHD

**9.4 %**  
Age 2-17

**63.8% of this group**  
**have co-occurring diagnosis**



# Overlap of Symptoms of Autism *and* ADHD



AUTISM

**30-80%**

**Also have  
symptoms of ADHD**



ADHD

**20-50%**

**Also have  
symptoms of Autism**

## FINDINGS

- ADHD can occur with or without symptoms *of* Autism
- Autism always occurs with symptoms *of* ADHD (or other conditions)

## SO WHAT?

- Similar characteristics
- Similar challenges
- Similar success strategies

AUTISM

A hand is shown holding the word 'AUTISM' in large, colorful, hand-drawn letters. The letters are blue, orange, green, red, purple, and red. The hand is positioned on the right side of the word, holding the 'S' and 'M'.



# Diagnosis, Development & Characteristics: Autism Spectrum Disorder

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## Diagnosis:

- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition: DSM-5
- Eliminated 'labels' of Asperger Syndrome and PDD-NOS
- Autism is a 'spectrum' disorder (levels of need and functioning vary)
- Disorder is based on levels of severity:
  - ✓ Level 1 (least needs; formerly known as Asperger Syndrome)
  - ✓ Level 2 (moderate needs)
  - ✓ Level 3 (severe needs)



# Diagnosis, Development & Characteristics: Autism Spectrum Disorder

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## Diagnosis:

- Neurological disorder
- Impairments in 3 key areas
  - ✓ communication
  - ✓ social interaction
  - ✓ restricted interests and repetitive behavior
- Manifests in early childhood



# Diagnosis, Development & Characteristics: Autism Spectrum Disorder

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## **Developmental delays (in brain development and how information is processed):**

- ✓ Communication (*both receptive & expressive*)
- ✓ Fine/gross motor skills
- ✓ Social & emotional skills



# Diagnosis, Development & Characteristics: Autism Spectrum Disorder

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## List of primary characteristics hindering communication (partial list):

1. Adjusting to change & unfamiliar people/places
2. Anxiety
3. Communication
4. Emotions
5. Eye contact
6. Literal, concrete, honest thinkers
7. Sensory processing
8. Stimming & other repetitive behaviors



# Diagnosis, Development & Characteristics: Autism Spectrum Disorder

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## Characteristics hindering communication:

1. Adjusting to change & unfamiliar people/places
2. Anxiety (unfamiliar places, people & routine changes)
3. Communication (verbal & nonverbal)

# Strategies that Support Successful Communication

## What to do:

Anxiety, changes & coping with unfamiliar:

- ✓ Tell child name of person they'll be meeting, day, time & place
- ✓ Give child opportunity to visit place prior to meeting
- ✓ Create a social story (visual tool to aid child's safety)

(See list of resources for sample stories.)



# Strategies that Support Successful Communication

## What to do:

### Communication:

- ✓ Build trust, be respectful, be positive, use positive praise
- ✓ Speak to child as if s/he can hear/understand you
- ✓ Use communication aids

See list of resources for examples of communication aids.



# Diagnosis, Development & Characteristics: Autism Spectrum Disorder

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## Characteristics hindering communication, continued:

4. Emotions (interpreting, gauging, responding to)
5. Eye contact (poor to none)
6. Literal, concrete, honest thinkers (Theory of Mind)

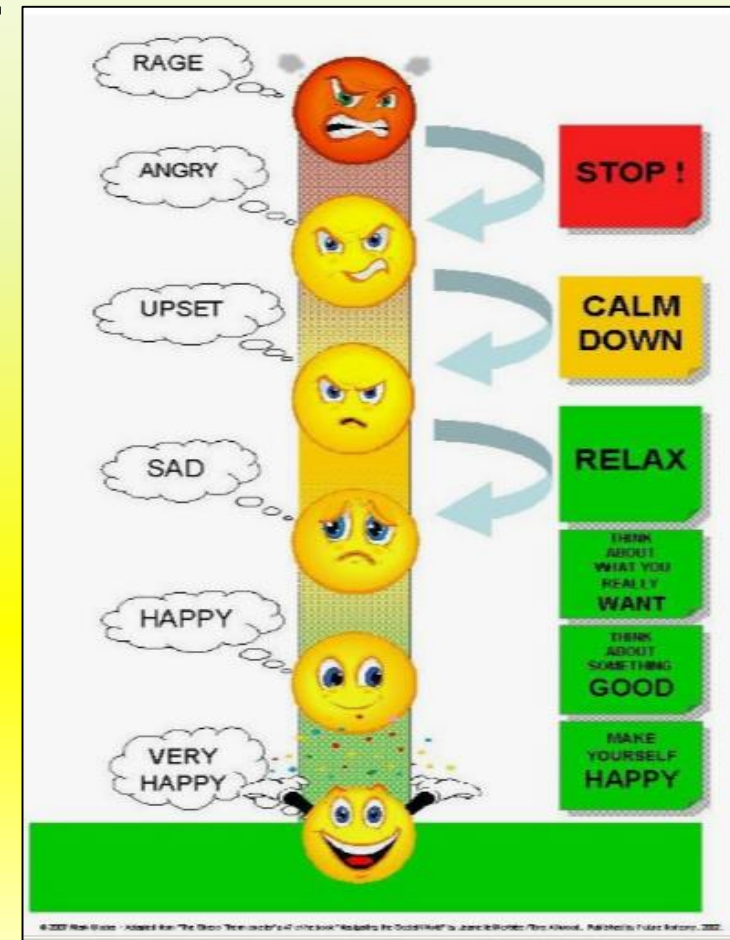
# Strategies that Support Successful Communication

## What to do:

Emotion, eye contact, & concrete thinking:

- ✓ Lack of eye contact – overlook it
- ✓ Reading emotions, describing feelings
- ✓ Literal thinking – *Visualize & Verbalize*

**Emotion Card**  
Use for self-expression or  
Describing perceived emotion of others



See list of resources for examples and free downloads of cards.



# Diagnosis, Development & Characteristics: Autism Spectrum Disorder

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## Characteristics hindering communication, continued:

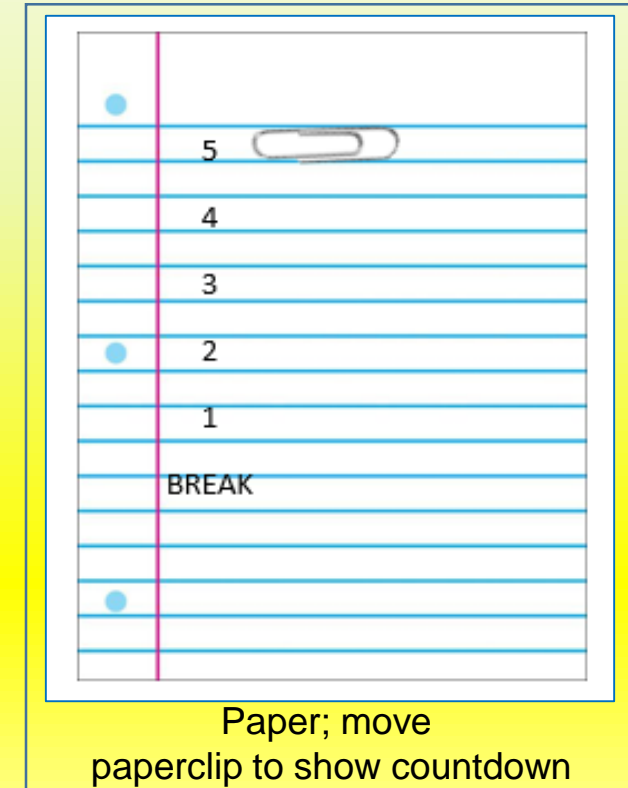
7. Sensory processing
8. Stimming & other repetitive behaviors

# Strategies that Support Successful Communication

## What to do:

Sensory, focus, attention & stimulation:

- Give sensory breaks often
  - ❖ Tell them exactly what to expect
  - ❖ Provide short breaks every XX min
  - ❖ Use a visual timer
    - Ask 3 questions, restate # left, break 1 min, repeat



# Strategies that Support Successful Communication

## What to do:

Sensory, focus, attention, stimulation, continued:

- If stimming, let them
- Provide fidget tool

ADHD

A photograph showing four hands holding up large, colorful letters that spell out 'ADHD'. The letters are: a blue 'A', a green 'D', a yellow 'H', and a red 'D'. The hands are positioned below each letter, supporting them from underneath. The background is a plain, light color.

# Diagnosis, Development & Characteristics: Attention Deficit Disorder

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## Diagnosis:

- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition: DSM-5
- Continuum of frequency & intensity of symptoms
- Estimated 7.8%-9.5% school age children (4-17) (CDC 2017)
- Based on 3 key areas, lasting for longer than 6 months:
  - ✓ Inattention
  - ✓ Hyperactivity
  - ✓ Impulsivity



# Diagnosis, Development & Characteristics: Attention Deficit Disorder

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## Diagnosis:

- Criteria also requires that symptoms:
  - ✓ Be present prior to age 12
  - ✓ Be present in more than 2 settings
  - ✓ Interfere with (or reduce) quality of social, school, or work
  - ✓ Are not better explained by mental disorder
- ADHD is **not**:
  - ✓ An attention-seeking behavior but rather stimulation-seeking
  - ✓ A learning disability

# Diagnosis, Development & Characteristics: Attention Deficit Disorder

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## Symptoms of Hyperactivity:

- ✓ Fidgets with hands/feet
- ✓ Leaves seat while expected to remain seated
- ✓ Runs & climbs excessively
- ✓ Talks excessively
- ✓ Cannot sit still

## Symptoms of Impulsivity:

- ✓ Blurts out answers before question is asked
- ✓ Has difficulty waiting
- ✓ Interrupts & intrudes on others

# Diagnosis, Development & Characteristics: Attention Deficit Disorder

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## Symptoms of Inattention:

- ✓ Fails to give close attention to detail
- ✓ Difficulty sustaining attention
- ✓ Does not seem to listen
- ✓ Avoids tasks of sustained effort
- ✓ Easily distracted by extraneous stimuli

# Strategies that Support Successful Communication

## What to do:

- ✓ Establish trust
- ✓ Be positive, use “I” statements, reinforce interaction with positive praise
- ✓ Use both visual & auditory input
- ✓ Provide drawing materials to support expressive language
- ✓ Write things out & read it
- ✓ Use pictures
- ✓ Use visual organizers

See list of resources for examples of communication aids.

# Strategies that Support Successful Communication

## What to do:

- ✓ Talk with child away from noisy & distracting location (e.g., windows)
- ✓ Alert the child to key phrases such as, “This is important”
- ✓ Provide breaks during your interview
- ✓ Alert the child to key phrases such as, “This is important”, “Are you ready?”
- ✓ Have them repeat the question you’re asking in their own words

See list of resources for examples of communication aids.

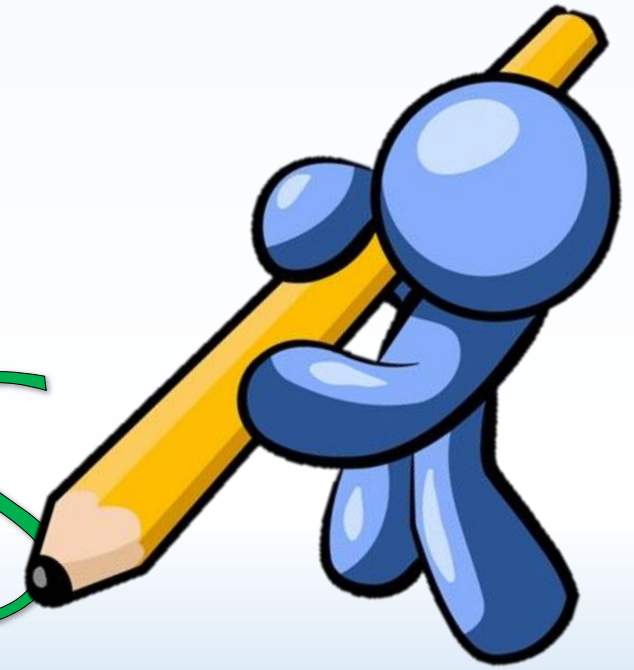
# Strategies that Support Successful Communication

## How do I manage impulsivity & hyperactivity during the interview?

- ✓ Reduce length of questions
- ✓ Allow wait time for the child to process each question
- ✓ Provide the child opportunity to move around or stand
- ✓ Give the child breaks during the interview
- ✓ Provide fidget / sensory tools to redirect energy

See list of resources for examples for visualizing & verbalizing structure words and visual organizers; source for how to talk to children with ADHD.

RESOURCES



# Development

## Child development resources

<https://childdevelopment.com.au/resources/child-development-charts/stages-of-language-development-chart/>

## Developmental milestones (CDC, 2018)

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>

## 2 mo – 5 yrs Developmental Milestones Checklist:

[https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/checklists/all\\_checklists.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/checklists/all_checklists.pdf)

## Birth – 5 yrs Developmental Checklist:

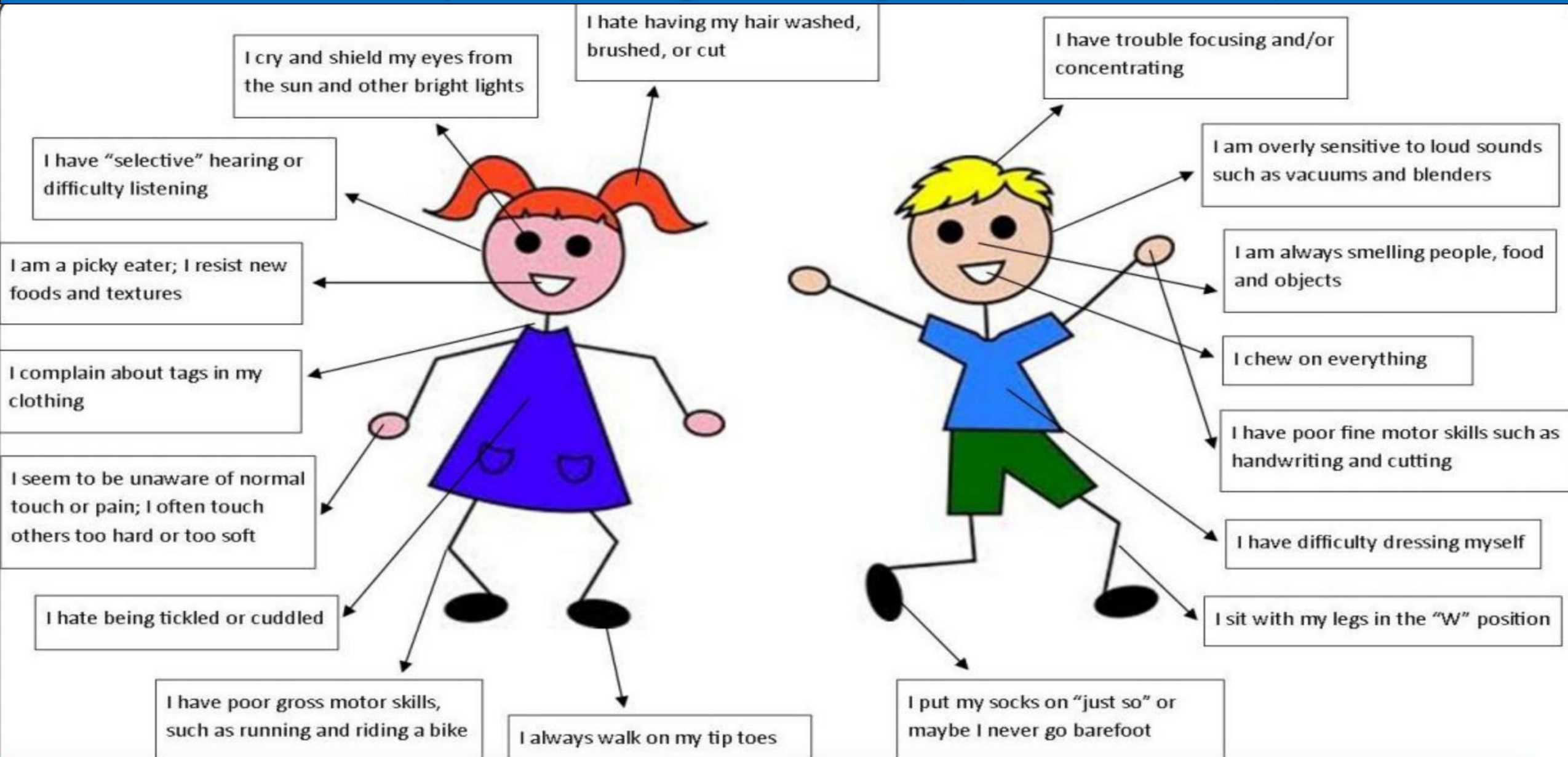
[http://ecdc.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/Developmental\\_checklists\\_Updated2012-1.pdf](http://ecdc.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/Developmental_checklists_Updated2012-1.pdf)

## Parent's Guide to Developmental Milestones:

<https://childmind.org/guide/developmental-milestones/>



# Sensory Processing Challenges (Autism, ADHD)



# Sensory Processing Challenges (Autism, ADHD)

## Under-sensory Stimulation (Looks like this.)

- ▶ Visual
  - ▶ Swaying / rocking, leery of elevation changes (stairs), or fascinated with moving objects (spinning wheel)
- ▶ Auditory
  - ▶ Speaks loudly, likes loud noises, handles things 'roughly' so they make loud noises (throwing), fascinated with rushing/gushing water (flushing toilet), vibrating toys
- ▶ Tactile
  - ▶ "Stimming" (head-butting -banging, biting, pinching, deep pressure), bumping into things, wants tight/textured clothing, unaware of pain or hot/cold
- ▶ Olfactory
  - ▶ Over-interested in smelling/sniffing, eat unusual things (dirt, coins, soap), lack sensitivity to foul odors (urine, feces)
- ▶ Gustatory
  - ▶ Eat everything or nothing, may eat nonfood items or unusual taste combinations (pickles with ice cream)
- ▶ Entertainment
  - ▶ Particular behavior of self or others may be amusing & difficult to control 'reactions' (laughing, giggling)

# Sensory Processing Challenges (Autism, ADHD)

## Under-sensory stimulation (Do this.)

- ▶ Visual
  - ▶ Use objects that spin or move (spinning top, buttons on string)
- ▶ Auditory
  - ▶ Use objects that make noise, talk (dried beans or colored beads in water bottle, dried beans taped inside of paper towel roll), use visual cue to “use inside voice”
- ▶ Tactile
  - ▶ Use weighted vest, cover with blanket & tightly wrap, use large rubber ball for deep pressure
- ▶ Olfactory
  - ▶ Use chew toy/ring, scented objects (scratch-n-sniff)
- ▶ Gustatory
  - ▶ Use chew toy/ring, crunchy or chewy foods (be aware of dietary & allergy issues)
- ▶ Entertainment
  - ▶ Use visual cues to redirect (universal sign for ‘no’ over picture of talking for ‘quiet’ cue)

# Sample Visuals Aids to Support Successful Communication

## Visualizing & Verbalizing Structure Words

### English

#### STRUCTURE WORDS

WHAT		Who/What is the story/picture about?
SIZE		What sizes are in the picture? <i>Big/Small/Tall/Short/Gigantic/Tiny</i>
COLOR		What colors are in the story/picture?
NUMBER	123456	How many people or things are in the story/picture? <i>2 legs/5 birds</i>
SHAPE		What shapes are in the story/picture?
WHERE		Where is the story/picture happening? <i>Inside/Outside/Plane/Car/House/School</i>
MOVEMENT		How are the character(s) moving in the story/picture? <i>Fast/Slow/Crawl/Walk</i>
MOOD		How do the characters feel?
BACKGROUND		What is happening in the background of the story/picture? <i>Sunny/Stormy</i>
PERSPECTIVE		Who is telling the story/seeing the picture? <i>Person/Animal/Thing</i>
WHEN		When is this picture/story happening? <i>Day/Night/Winter/Spring/Before/After</i>
SOUND		What sounds can be heard?

### Spanish

#### PALABRAS DE ESTRUCTURA

¿QUÉ?		¿De quién/qué cuenta tu cuento/dibujo?
TAMAÑO		¿Qué tamaños hay en tu cuento/dibujo? <i>Grande/pequeño/alto/bajo/gigante/minúsculo</i>
COLOR		¿Qué colores hay en tu cuento/dibujo?
NÚMERO	123456	¿Cuántas personas/cosas hay en tu cuento/dibujo?
FORMA		¿Qué formas hay en tu cuento/dibujo?
¿DÓNDE?		¿Dónde ocurre tu cuento/dibujo? <i>Adentro/Afuera/Avión/Coche/Casa/Cole</i>
MOVIMIENTO		¿Cómo se mueven los protagonistas del cuento/dibujo? <i>Rápido/Despacio/Gateando/Caminando</i>
FONDO		¿Qué ocurre en el fondo de tu cuento/dibujo? <i>Soleado/Tormentoso</i>
PERSPECTIVA		¿Quién cuenta el cuento/dibujo? <i>Persona/Animal/Cosa</i>
SONIDO		¿Qué sonidos pueden escucharse?
ESTADO DE ÁNIMO		¿Cómo se sienten los protagonistas?
¿CUÁNDO?		¿Cuándo ocurre tu cuento/dibujo? <i>Día/Noche/Invierno/Primavera/Antes/Después</i>

### Emotion Card

Use for self-expression or Describing perceived emotion of others

The Emotion Card features a vertical scale of eight cartoon faces representing different emotions. From top to bottom, the faces are: RAGE (red, angry), ANGRY (yellow, angry), UPSET (yellow, sad), SAD (yellow, sad), HAPPY (yellow, smiling), and VERY HAPPY (yellow, smiling with eyes closed). On the right side of the scale, there are four buttons: a red 'STOP!' button, a yellow 'CALM DOWN' button, a green 'RELAX' button, and a green 'MAKE YOURSELF HAPPY' button. Arrows point from the buttons towards the faces. Below the scale, there are two green boxes with text: 'THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU REALLY WANT' and 'THINK ABOUT SOMETHING GOOD'. At the bottom, there is a green box with the text 'MAKE YOURSELF HAPPY'.

# Sample Visuals Aids to Support Successful Communication

## Visual organizers and count-down examples *(Engage student in helping cross-off or move pointer.)*

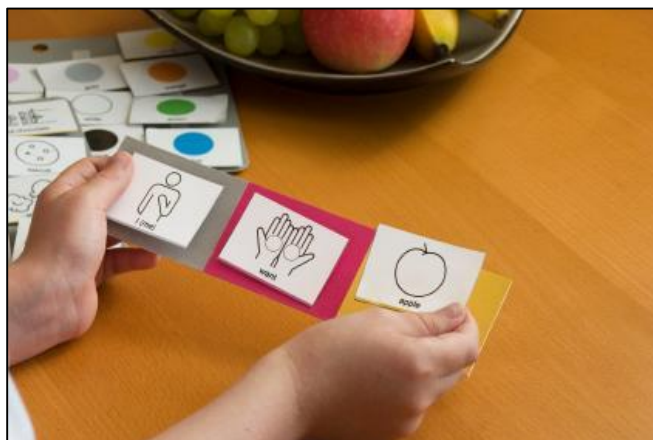
Visual organizers of what we're doing now and what comes next?

sit  
listen  
work  
break  
sit  
listen  
work  
 DONE!

**TO DO:**

- Sit
- Listen
- Answer ?s
- Break
- Sit
- Listen
- Answer ?s
- Anything else to do?
- No – done!

Now Acum	Next Pe urmă



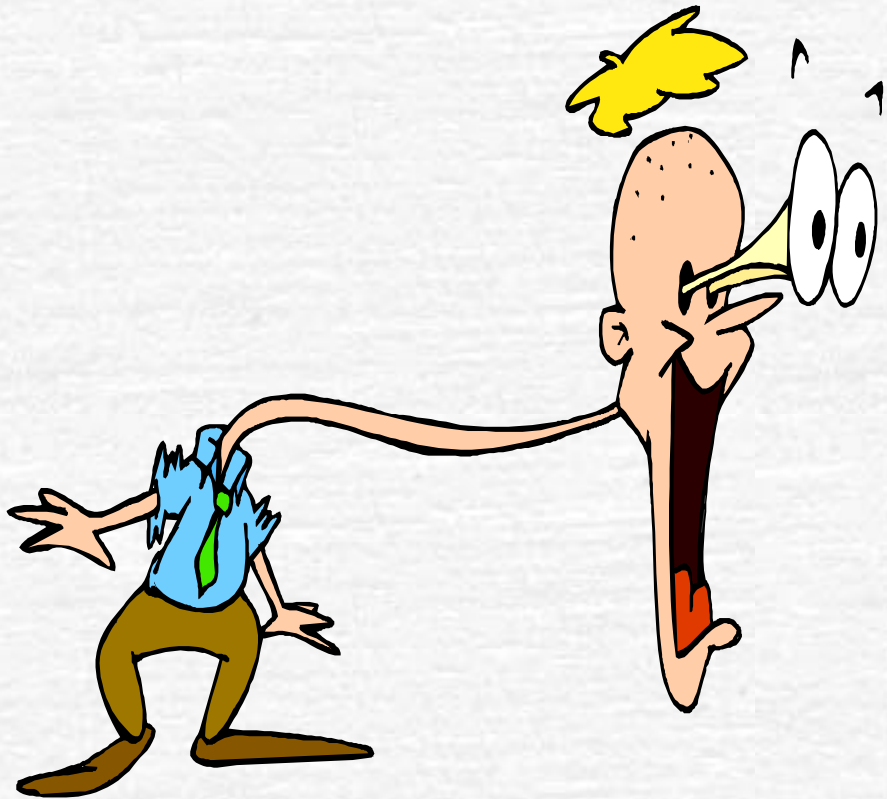
5
4
3
2
1
BREAK

Paper or cardboard; move clothespin to show countdown

Paper; move paperclip to show countdown

Countdown #s w/velcro

# Language to Help Avoid Conflict



*Adapted from Lemon Lime Adventures*

<b>Don't Say...</b>	<b>Do Say...</b>
It's not that hard.	Would you like to go to a quiet space to work?
You know better than that.	Right now you are not in control over your body. Let's try....
Quit being 'bad'.	I understand it is hard for you to...
Go away.	If you need...you can go here to do it.
Calm down.	Would you like me to give you some space? I'll be right over here when you're ready.
Why did you do that?	I notice(d) that....
It's not that big of a deal.	I am trying to understand what you are frustrated about; can you show me?
Quit being a baby.	This seems to be frustrating you; what if we try...
What's wrong with you?	How can I help your body get what it needs?
Why don't you just...	Maybe you would like to...

# Overlap of Behavior

## Is it ADHD or Autism – Level I *(formerly Asperger Syndrome)*

### ADD w/H

- 1) Poor attention in almost all situations →
- 2) Low tolerance for persistence w/o immediate *consequence* →
- 3) Impulsive →
- 4) Unable to regulate or inhibit social behavior →
- 5) More active →
- 6) Difficulty adhering to rules/regulations →
- 7) Poor peer relations resulting from behavior →

### Autism (LEVEL I)

- 1) Poor attention, short attention span; perseverate/obsessive
- 2) Low tolerance for persistence w/o immediate *reward*
- 3) Impulsive
- 4) Inability to relate socially – inability of perspective-taking
- 5) More active
- 6) Difficulty adhering to changes
- 7) Poor peer relations resulting from behavior



# Resources: Autism Spectrum Disorder

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## Communication boards & cards, pictures, line drawings

NOTE: You may have to register, but resources are free.

\* Pinterest also has several samples as free downloads.

Communication boards (may be used to help identify abusive situations):

- ❖ <http://www.noodlenook.net/free-communication-boards-autism/>

Picture cards:

- ❖ Body parts, emotions, feelings: <http://www.educateautism.com/free-materials-and-downloads.html>
- ❖ Communications, relationships: <http://autismteachingstrategies.com/free-social-skills-downloads-2/>
- ❖ Emotions, behavior, home, school: <http://www.do2learn.com/picturecards/printcards/>
- ❖ Emotions cards & blank cards: <https://www.prekinders.com/emotion-word-cards/>
- ❖ Home, schedules, chores: <http://www.victoriesnautism.com/schedule-activity-and-task-cards.html>

## iPad / iPhone APPS

NOTE: Look for 'Communication' category.

List of apps for various purposes via Autism Speaks Organization: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/autism-apps>





# Resources: Autism Spectrum Disorder

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## SOCIAL STORIES

NOTE: These may need to be adapted for your State, City and or County.

Social story explanation & samples:

<https://carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/social-story-sampler/>

Sample social stories:

<https://fasdtoolkit.weebly.com/social-stories.html>

Going to court (activity book children about having to go to court, what happens, and expectations):

<https://www.wicourts.gov/courts/resources/kid/docs/activitybook.pdf>

CHINS (social story to help explain what's happening and what they need to do):

[https://www.in.gov/idr/files/CHINS%20Social%20Story%20\(002\).pdf](https://www.in.gov/idr/files/CHINS%20Social%20Story%20(002).pdf)

Divorce and custody social story:

<https://www.in.gov/idr/files/Divorce%20and%20Custody%20Social%20Story.pdf>



Resources: Autism Spectrum Disorder

# Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wish You Knew

1. I am first and foremost a child.
2. My sensory perceptions are disordered.
3. Please remember to distinguish between won't (I choose not to) and can't (I am not able to).
4. I am a concrete thinker. This means I interpret language very literally.
5. Please be patient with my limited vocabulary.
6. Because language is so difficult for me, I am very visually-oriented.
7. Please focus and build on what I can do rather than what I can't do.
8. Please help me with social interactions.
9. Try to identify what triggers my meltdowns.
10. Love me unconditionally.

# Resources: ADHD

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## **ADHD, ODD & CD**

<http://www.chadd.org/Understanding-ADHD/About-ADHD/Coexisting-Conditions/Disruptive-Behavior-Disorders.aspx>

## **Definition by American Psychiatric Association**

<https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/adhd/what-is-adhd>

## **Fact sheet**

<http://www.chadd.org/Portals/0/Content/CHADD/NRC/Factsheets/aboutADHD.pdf>

## **How to talk to children with ADHD**

<https://www.additudemag.com/how-to-talk-to-adhd-students/>

# Resources: ADHD

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## Statistics for ADHD

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd.shtml>

<https://www.additudemag.com/the-statistics-of-adhd/>

## Understanding ADHD

<http://www.chadd.org/understanding-adhd/about-adhd/fact-sheets-on-adhd.aspx>

## What it looks like at the high school level

<https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/child-learning-disabilities/add-adhd/what-teachers-see-how-adhd-impacts-learning-in-high-school>

# Behaviora/ Resources: Emotional (Behavioral) Disturbance

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**Comparison chart for previous criteria to current relating to mental disorders**

<https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-DSM5ImpactChildSED-2016.pdf>

**Fact sheet for state of IL**

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/emotional-disturbance.pdf>

**Fact sheet about different mental disorders, including emotional disturbance**

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/emotionaldisturbance/>

**Social skill development for middle, high school and on the job**

<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/softskills.pdf>

Q

&

A



*Thank you!*

