

Typical challenges for teachers of students with ASD

Table 1. Challenges	
ASD Characteristics	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty following instructions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays in communication, cognitive, and social skills all may contribute to problems following simple instructions. A child may not respond to a direction or may begin a different task.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete responses to tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When shown a picture of a house and told to “color in your family’s home,” the child may want to go home, believing that he needs to use crayons on the walls of his family’s house.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unusual style of communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child may speak with reversed pronouns (“You want the book” when referring to self), stereotyped phrases (“Ready for school” when referring to readiness to go to a party), repeated phrases, or literalness (believing a parent will hunt for a new automobile when the parent says, “If there’s not enough room for all of us for this trip, we’ll just have to find another car”).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited range of expression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children may not be able to continue a conversation and may instead give a one-word answer. Their speech may be delivered in a monotone voice.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty focusing on the person speaking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children may make little or no eye contact with the person talking to them. The child may also be easily distracted by sounds, noise, peers, or even objects in the classroom.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritability, upset, tantrums, or distress for no apparent reason 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children may be distressed for reasons they cannot express or for reasons that may seem insignificant to others. For example, when items such as seasonal decorations or art projects are removed from the classroom, children may become distressed by their absence. Similarly, adding new items to a classroom, rearranging items in a room, or the detection of inconsistencies (such as noticing a rubber base to one chair leg is missing) can be upsetting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicts with peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicts may arise due to the child’s lack of understanding of others’ perspectives. For example, a child may grab a toy without appreciating that another child was playing with it, change a peer’s project without realizing that the peer will be upset, or repeat a wish insistently without appreciating that the class has a new task.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional mental health conditions or learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with ASD may have attention problems, difficulties controlling emotions, or other learning

disorders	difficulties.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medications may have behavioural or cognitive effects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once a child is receiving treatment for symptoms, changes in mood or behaviour should be discussed with parents, as these changes can reflect medication side effects.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty following instructions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays in communication, cognitive, and social skills all may contribute to problems following simple instructions. A child may not respond to a direction or may begin a different task.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete responses to tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When shown a picture of a house and told to “color in your family’s home,” the child may want to go home, believing that he needs to use crayons on the walls of his family’s house.

Table 2: Interventions

Interventions	Why?
Communication interventions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote language development by creating opportunities to use communication skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lack of confidence in using communication skills leads to reduced use and a wider gap develops between the students and his/her peers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist the child’s communication by providing pictures the child can point to when necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These visual aids will promote the child’s success at conveying thoughts and foster a positive experience for everyone in the classroom.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the message with visual cues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By pairing words with appropriate, simple gestures, a child may more readily understand the message.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly indicate when instructions are given(for example, “Peter, this is a direction”). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child with ASD often misses basic social cues.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep it short and sweet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child will understand short sentences more easily than long sentences. One or two word statements work well. For example, say, “close” and “book,” rather than, “Now, it’s time for you to close your book
Social interventions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach the ABC’s of a conversation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruct the child how to begin a conversation, reply to others’ responses, and end a conversation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice social skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with ASD need to learn social skills the way other children learn reading or writing skills. Step-by-

	<p>step exercises that are clearly described, written, reviewed and rehearsed are helpful. These may include a broad range of routine social activities (such as arriving at school and settling into a chair, raising a hand to answer a question, or sharing a toy at recess). Start with an easy social activity, and tell the child that practicing that skill will be his or her special project for the week. Review the steps (“First look at me. Then say my name. When I look at you and say your name, then you can ask your question”). Providing positive feedback is helpful.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role-play social interactions using a script with simple steps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and review “social stories” with the child. These are illustrated vignettes designed for children with ASD, which offer reassuring lessons written in simple language on how to act and what to expect in specific circumstances. Social stories provide guidance for common social situations and explain the meaning of many everyday interactions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities for the child to work with another student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another student or adult can help the child when interacting with others.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the child’s efforts by designating a helper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another student or adult can help the child when interacting with others.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach the child to become aware of others’ thoughts or feelings, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarify intended statements when the child makes literal interpretations, and help the child to understand humor and jokes. •
<p>Behavioural interventions addressing repetitive actions, unusual behaviours, or limited interests</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize behaviours to be addressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority may initially be given to safety issues.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify appropriate times/places when the child can move 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with ASD may need to move about more frequently than other children. They may need significant support to wait for such times, or they may need to be allowed a less disruptive form of movement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before an activity, clarify expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the expected volume level and activity level before unstructured activities will help reinforce desired behaviours.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer alternative activities, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • particularly when the child is experiencing sensory overload •
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest a comparable substitute for activities causing concern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example, ask the child to play a video game involving driving cars instead of an aggressive, first-person shooter video game. An alternative that is one step different from the child’s preferred play may be accepted by the child more easily than an activity that is

	unrelated.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign the child a seat that limits distractions. Sitting at the front of the class may be helpful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A student with ASD will find it too hard to concentrate when distractions contribute to sensory overload
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an alternative, less distracting source of Additional aids may help reduce distractions or disruptions activity such as a squeezeball or fabric to rub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with ASD may be particularly sensitive to sounds or to particular types of touch. Noisy classroom chairs can be quieted with tennis balls or padding at the end of the legs. Firm touch or hugs may be tolerable while light touch may irritate the child.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the child to help develop interventions with adults 	Enlisting the child in the task will lead to more successful strategies and will foster the child's ability to problem-solve.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a behaviour plan that is a true incentive to the student. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewards may be given at school by a teacher or school counsellor or at home by a parent. Teachers, school counsellors, and parents can collaborate to use similar reward systems at school and home.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward a child's efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every good effort deserves to be praised.

Table 3: Classroom strategies with examples: Communication	
1. Create situations to motivate language use	Example: Structure situations so that language becomes helpful (choose the flavour of ice cream from a list).
2. Engage peers or other adults to help the student interact with others	Example: Have a peer or adult "translate" between the student and others, particularly during activities ("he wants to go on the slide, too").
3. Supplement verbal directions to the student with written directions	Example: Write instructions on the board, then say them aloud, and check to see that the student understands by asking "what's first?."
4. Present instructions to the student at a slower rate	Example: Go slower with instructions, and check in more frequently to ensure that the student understands and is following instructions.
5. Have the student give feedback to the teacher to check for understanding	Example: Particularly with symbolic language, ask the student to explain what he/she just heard to ensure correct understanding
6. Review new vocabulary with the student/class before beginning a lesson	Example: Identify new vocabulary, such as words with multiple meanings, so the student will correctly understand (" 'stalk' can mean corn plant, or to follow someone -- in our lesson today 'stalk' will refer to corn plants").

7. Allow the student time to process information and respond	Example: Provide sufficient time for the student to understand direction and to respond (wait 10 seconds for student response).
8. Ensure that the teacher is positioned strategically to engage the student's attention	Example: Align at the student's eye level. Touch the student's desk or chair while quietly saying something like, "Look at the -----(checklist or material) and listen. I need you to know....." Pause to give the student time to shift attention.
9. Provide plenty of processing time before repeating or rephrasing a question	Example: "What is the capital of Australia?" (Stop, wait and count to 5-15 in your head before repeating/rephrasing the question. Then if needed, rephrase, "is the capital Canberra or Sydney?")
Specialized Instruction: Communication	
1. Use short word prompts or commands	Example: Simplify instructions for the student ("laces" to signal shoe-tying).
2. Provide choice boards for the student to communicate preferred activities	Example: Show the student different options for tasks (picture of a book [for reading], food [for snack], counting cubes [for math]).
3. Use pictures to enhance communication	Example: In addition to spoken or written words, provide pictures so the student can understand tasks and sequences.
4. Expand the student's language use	Example: Connect words to other forms of communication (connect phrases with visual cues, match words with gestures).
5. Explain direct, literal language vs. metaphors, idioms and puns	Example: When a person says "he's in a pickle" and you can see he is not in a pickle, it means he is in trouble or out of luck. Use visuals to define each meaning.
6. Develop visual cues to reduce sensory overload	Example: Devise visual cues such as hand signals or use of pictures to diminish reliance on verbal and physical prompts.
7. Use adult verbal modelling to teach a younger student to ask for what he/she wants	Example: Connect words to instrumental acts (when the student reaches for a cracker, ask "does [student name] want a cracker?").
8. Use scaffolding techniques to promote spontaneous language	Example: Add "parts" (sentence starters, transition statements to connect ideas) to facilitate conversation with the student.
9. Teach the student specific statements to obtain help when facing challenging tasks	Example: Provide the student with statements to obtain help, such as "can you help me with this problem?."
10. Verbalize information simply, briefly, and clearly	Example: "It's time for lunch. You must be hungry" instead of "Would you like to go to lunch? By this time, you must be really hungry."
11. Start with picture cues but	Example:

systematically fade to promote maintenance of desired responses	Provide an "I need help" picture cue, eventually fading to the student asking for help on his/her own
12. Present instruction in the way that is best understood by the student (whole to part, part to whole, etc)	Example: Have the student use a "zoom lens" to "zoom in and out" on information. "Zoom out" to get the big picture, "zoom in" for a more detailed approach.
13. Provide academics in visual format	Example: Use calendars, transition cues, checklists, cue cards, or semantic maps (line drawings, printed words) to show relationships between many details

Table 4: Classroom strategies with examples: Social interaction

1. Use visual "emotional gauge/thermometer" to help the student to process emotions	Example Draw a gauge or barometer that measures the degree of a specific emotion. Points on the gauge can be given numerical values and/or appropriate words and actions. For each point, appropriate words, tone of voice and body language can be explained with illustrations from stories, television and role play.
2. Identify opportunities for the student to work with other students	Example: Look for situations that encourage peer communication (playing ball, sharing food at lunchtime).
3. Assign a "typical peer" to participate in a weekly social skills group with the student	Example: Have "typical" peers engage the student in social encounters similar to regular, real-life conversations.
4. Use peer modelling for community and classroom skills	Example: Have peers model walking in the halls, getting materials together to change classes.
5. Pair the student with a "typical" peer/buddy to help carry out social interactions in structured settings	Example: Team the student with a "typical" peer during a structured recess kickball game to show the student how to kick, run, and catch.
6. Provide structure for the student's talking and interaction	Example: Give the student five minutes at the beginning and end of each day to talk about his/her area of interest. If the student has questions in the interim, he/she can be instructed to write down questions for review at end of the day. ("We can talk about the weather for five minutes. Then I get to choose the topic". Or " we can talk about the weather for four minutes, but tell me one new thing about the weather. Then it is my turn". Or "what do you want to talk about first: the garden, the weather or the ball game?") End promptly at the appointed time and use a timer if necessary.
7. Clarify expectations for eye contact in different situations and contexts	Example: Specify "socially appropriate" eye contact for greetings and asking questions. Do not insist that the student look at teacher/staff/others. Instead, to monitor the student's comprehension, ask the student what he/she is going to do next (after he/she receives instructions).
8. Role model effective communication by	Example: Model the expression of feelings as emotional

accompanying words with facial expressions, gestures and body language	situations are explained. Use natural facial expressions to avoid distracting attention from the words. Frown, look sad and concerned while explaining, "oh, you feel sad and you hurt your knee."
9. Encourage the student to modulate voice volume and intonation. Encourage "think it, don't say it" when talking is not appropriate	Example: Develop written rules for volume and intonation ("whispering is a 1; inside voice is a 4, outside voice playing is a 7; yelling is a 9"). Devise a hand signal to signal use of a "confidential voice". Role play and practice reading aloud at different voice levels.
Specialized Instruction: Social Interaction	
1. Divide social skills into successive steps and teach the steps incrementally	Example: Break down social encounters and teach multiple ways to accomplish each part (you can introduce yourself by saying your name, by asking what the other person is doing, by showing the other person an interesting object, by just saying "hi," or by having a friend who already knows someone introduce that person).
2. Identify more appropriate "one step up" routines when the student is "stuck"	Example: If the student is fixated on certain items, look for alternatives that are more acceptable (pilot video game to replace violent combat video game).
3. Facilitate generalization of social skills via role-playing, games and puppets	Example: Have the student practice social encounters by role-playing, acting in "plays," or, for younger students, using puppets.
4. Illustrate in writing and/or pictures the steps of social skills	Example: Show pictures of two people greeting each other, and have the student explain how it's going in the picture by examining eye contact, distance between the characters, and their facial expressions.
5. Have an adult prompt the student to initiate or engage in specified interactive behaviour with peers	Example: Identify prompts to signal the student for social encounters ("time for introductions").
6. Provide a cue card to clarify conversation rules	Example: Have the student use a "cue card" with steps to conduct conversations.
7. Use visual systems of social scripts, cartooning, "social autopsies" and visual cards	Example: Use "social stories" to provide the student with direct access to social information such as understanding other people's perspectives and the reason for certain rules. Click here for sample social stories: www.thegraycenter.org
8. Provide social skills instruction within natural environments	Example: Work on social skill component skills (introductions, sustaining conversations) in natural environments such as the lunchroom or gym.
9. Build social/emotional awareness by explaining extra meanings of statements	Example: Cultivate social and emotional understanding by examining classroom situations (point out thoughts or feelings of others, clarify literal interpretations, explain humour and jokes).
10. Provide explicit teaching about how to start conversations, respond to	Example: Describe specific phrases and behaviors to create

comments, and end conversations	conversations ("stand this far from a person, look at their eyes, say 'hi', ask if they want to play four square with you," "say 'maybe another time' if they say 'no.').
11. Teach the student to identify correctable causes of social failures	Example: Role-play with the student various social situations and teach situation-evaluating statements such as "I have a harder time talking with others when _____, but it is easier when _____."
12. Schedule regular time to process peer and social interactions and concerns	Example: At the end of each day the student and teacher or other adult talk for 10 minutes about what they did at recess, lunch, or on the way to school.
13. Identify a specific place and time to talk about worries or preoccupations	Example: Do not schedule worry time at the lunch table or at times inappropriate to think about or possibly trigger worry. "We can talk about worries when we sit in these chairs."
14. Establish structured social activities with pre-assigned roles that can be practiced	Example: Facilitate activity, asking "who wants to build a fort?" Invite children by name and assign them jobs like holding up a wall piece or putting the pieces together. Also assign a job to the student.
15. Target social skills development on conversational skills, perspective taking, and making appropriate complaints	Example: Help the student understand when to speak using "comic strip conversations". Words are shown in bubbles, interruptions occur when bubbles collide. Click here for sample social stories: www.thegraycenter.org
16. Identify and teach appropriate peer(s) to provide "social translations" for the student	Example: Assign a peer buddy who enjoys helping the student and who is attentive to his/her needs. Train the peer buddy to help his/her classmate converse on the bus, during recess, at lunch time, and during passing periods.
17. Develop scripts for commonly occurring problem situations	Example: If the student frequently interrupts other students, develop a social story about appropriate conversation turn-taking and allow the student to identify cues for speaking/listening, such as "wait until the other student stops talking and looks at me or asks me a question."
18. Use scenes from TV or movies to identify and illustrate social reasoning skills	Example: Allow or encourage the student to watch scenes from his/her favourite videos. Pause and replay scenes to help the student understand more subtle aspects of what was going on. For example, to teach social reasoning skills use scenes from the TV series Third Rock from the Sun in which aliens attempt to socialize like humans.
19. Divide free play so the student interacts with peers first, and then is allowed to engage in solitary and constructive activities	Example: If the student is unmotivated to play with other children, use a visual schedule/visual choice list to indicate cooperative activity first (game) and then solitary activity (computer) after the interactive game

	is played for 10 minutes.
20. Teach a process for negotiating conversation topics	Example: Teach the student that when another person introduces a topic, it is a good idea to ask them two to three follow-up questions; it is not a good idea to change the topic immediately to your interest.
21. Teach rules, sentence frames, and coping/calming statements to manage repetitive talking	Example: Develop and review a cue card to clarify conversation rules, topics, and questions
22. Devise a subtle cueing system to help the student identify appropriate and inappropriate times for physical contact	Example: Accompany a colour cue with a verbal statement of the rules for touching. "Red" means no physical contact; "yellow" means handshake but no hug or kiss, and "green" means a hug or kiss is okay

Table 5: Classroom strategies with examples: Sensory issues

1. Provide alternative tasks, particularly when the student is sensory overloaded	Example: Allow the student several choices within his/her daily tasks. The student can choose the order of tasks, or when/where to take a break.
2. Use buddies/peer assistants to expand the student's interests/activities beyond current routines	Example: Identify other students (perhaps from other grades within the school) to assist the student or practice novel tasks/assignments.
3. Tell the student the steps you would like him/her to take before he/she engages in a task	Example: Break down and clarify steps for the student to take to complete a task. ("First, hold your pencil; then, put your paper in the middle of your desk, then write on the line at the top.")
4. Allow the student to have some choices with regard to performing instructional tasks	Example: Give the student an opportunity to choose the activity, location or materials for an instructional task.
5. Have the student learn the daily routine by watching peers perform tasks	Example: Have a peer stand beside the student in physical education class to demonstrate/model exercise routines and movements.
6. Specify the student's routine for asking questions or describing topics when the student seeks or presents information	Example: Explain that the procedure for asking questions is to limit him/herself to two questions, then allow others to ask; or to proceed with working two problems before asking questions. ("You can ask the two most important questions to begin work, then we will check in after you have completed the first two problems.")
7. Apply the student's interests to classroom tasks to improve motivation	Example: If the student has a special interest in baseball, use baseball scores or averages for math activities and skills. Schedule opportunities to engage in special interests throughout the day as a powerful reinforcement for extended periods of hard work.

Specialized Instruction: Sensory issues

1. Use alternative sensory modalities when teaching in order to interrupt the student's restrictive routines and to engage the student	Example: In teaching fractions, present information in three ways: auditory instruction ("follow these three steps..."), visual representation (pizza activity) and
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	students "acting out" the concept (2 out of 5 in the group are boys).
2. Alternate preferred and less preferred activities and note each on a visual schedule	Example: Begin and end the student's schedule with familiar and positive activities. Follow disliked activities with preferred activities to reinforce difficult work and to increase tolerance for undesired tasks.
3. Assess the demands of the next setting/transition and teach needed skills to deviate from current routines	Example: For a student transitioning from preschool to elementary school, prepare the student for how to engage in independent tasks and how to follow group and individual prompts. Provide the student with more opportunities to engage in these tasks before he/she begins elementary school.
4. Allow choices to support the student's preferences when given instructional tasks	Example: For instruction in math, the student can choose to do a related "math program" on the computer or to do a "math activity" with a peer.
5. Change at least one or several elements of the schedule each day while keeping the basic structure the same	Example: Introduce new elements within familiar situations to avoid overwhelming the student with too much confusing stimulation from new or changing events. Use a calendar to introduce variations and new activities.
6. Teach the younger student how to use toys and objects in appropriate activities to replace restrictive routines	Example: For a student who "lines up" toy cars, demonstrate how to roll the car down a "road" (board, desk, floor, etc.); adding noises ("vroom") may be necessary to help alter the routine

Behavioural Planning

1. Prioritize target behaviours	Example: Adjust instruction to first ensure the student's safety, then ensure the student is engageable, then focus on altering the current routine.
2. When the student is highly aroused/resistant to deviate from routine, attune by going "low and slow"	Example: Lower your body, slow down your speech and reduce language output to a few words every 10 seconds.
3. Provide visual cues and a work-reward routine to facilitate independent task completion	Example: Use a transition object such as a "ball" to remind/cue the student to go to the gym (without added verbal directions).

Table 5: Interventions and examples: Behaviour support

1. Prepare the student for transitions and deviations from regular routine in order to minimize overstimulation or anxiety caused by a change in the schedule or routine	Example: Tell the student what to expect: who will be there, what will happen, how long it will last. If needed, use a visual (list, picture schedule) to ensure the student understands what is happening and what you are saying.
2. Develop a list of calming and/or stimulating activities and sensory choices for the student to use when over or under-stimulated	Example: If the student likes music, allow him/her to listen to certain calming songs when over-aroused. Student-developed sensory choices can also be used as rewards following on-task behaviour.
3. To control sensory inputs, allow the	Example:

student to be first or last in line or to leave class early	Allow the student to change classes five minutes before the other students, or have him/her hold the door open for other students and then join the end of the line as the "caboose."
4. If the student is disruptive due to over-stimulation, move him/her away from the source of stimulation	Example: Prior to over-stimulation, with the student, agree upon quiet spots for retreat and regrouping. Equip the space with beanbag chairs, big pillows or favourite books. At lunch, assign quiet lunch with a counsellor or have assigned seating at the perimeter of the lunchroom
5. Teach students who use distracting vocalizations or other self-stimulating behaviours to employ other acceptable (less intrusive to others) vocalizations or behaviours	Example: Practice humming loudly and softly and have the student role-play appropriate times to hum loudly and appropriate times to hum softly
6. Use ear plugs or headphones to diminish auditory stimulation	Example: Allow the student to wear portable CD player earphones (more socially acceptable than earplugs) to reduce background noises during an assembly, bus rides, gym, or recess.
7. Use leading questions or pictures to help the student articulate and identify over-stimulating emotions and situations	Example: "Did you feel angry at school today?", or "did you feel disappointed?". If needed, use a pictorial dictionary of feelings (a feelings poster containing a series of faces depicting emotions that act as prompts to help students find appropriate language to describe feelings).
8. Teach simple stress management techniques and relaxation activities	Example: Encourage the student to listen to appropriate music, do deep breathing, think positive thoughts, or use the computer.
9. Follow instructional work with opportunities to release energy	Example: Have a specific and somewhat private space where rocking or jumping can occur without disrupting others or attracting undue attention. Highlight a stopping time (with a timer) and clarify the next activity on the schedule.
10. Use visual/picture supports in the form of "rule charts" and directions during distressing, recurring tasks to support the student's self-regulation	Example: If the student is upset with fire alarms, post the "fire alarm procedure." Have the student review it daily to make sure that he/she knows what to do in the case of an alarm.
11. Use visual supports to prepare the student for changes that typically lead to sensory overload and escalations	Example: Use a mini-calendar to help with planned changes. The last item on the calendar can be a transition cue so the student knows what to do and where to go next. Write a note to the student to explain any changes in the schedule ("we usually go to recess after lunch, but today we are going to stay in the classroom after lunch
Specialized Instruction: Behaviour support	
1. Identify and diminish sensory contributions to disruptive behaviour	Example: If the student is not in a condition to listen, learn, work or communicate: stop talking, reduce auditory

	stimulation, and provide printed words/line drawings to clarify instructions.
2. Use written and pictorial formats to document group and individual routines/schedules in order to minimize sensory issues related to changes in the routine or schedule	Example: Use an individually designed calendar to visually represent events and times. Review the calendar consistently each morning and reference it throughout day.
3. Allow the student to do "heavy work" before sitting down	Example: "Heavy work" includes pushing, lifting, pulling, stair climbing, or carrying books
4. Give relaxing/solitary activities to reduce pent-up anxiety	Example: Allow the student to work on a solitary item of his/her choice (computer, reading a book) 30 minutes prior to school dismissal.
5. Diminish sensory overload by practicing handling stressful feelings through role-plays, stories, puppets, or drama	Example: Role-play with the student via puppets, skits, scripts, or scenario situations where self-monitoring statements are used, such as "I am furious. But if I keep my temper under control at school, I will be able to use the computer after school."
6. Devise a self-control routine for the student to ask for and take a break when he/she feels "over-loaded"	Example: Insert a break into routines to relieve frustration or tension. The break can be as simple as "take five" (minutes) to get a drink, or look out the window for a few minutes before continuing the task
7. To minimize sensory over-load, systematically configure for major transitions (changing schools, teachers)	Example: Allow the student to create a photo album of new and old teachers and friends. Accompany the photo album with a "social story" depicting transitions. Click here for sample social stories: www.thegraycenter.org
8. Teach the student to identify when he/she is over-loaded and how to self-regulate	Example: Teach the student that when neck and shoulder muscles tense up, the body is signalling it is overloaded. "Take five deep, slow breaths, and push your shoulders down and back like a dancer." Provide a quiet space where the student can go in the classroom (mat, rocking chair, or bean bag chair).
9. Explicitly state and model examples of desired, acceptable behaviours when sensory issues escalate	Example: Speak positively and tell the student what to do. ("Please sit in the chair until I finish eating my carrots" rather than "don't get out of that chair")
10. Identify signs of sensory distress - raising voice, shaking shoulders, pacing - and establish a hierarchy of student responses to de-escalate	Example: When the student's voice gets louder, the student will breathe deeply three times and go to the bean bag chair to relax