Essential Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Louisiana Autism Spectrum and Related Disabilities (LASARD) Project

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Participants will:

- learn how to implement essential supports for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and related disabilities in the classroom.
- identify the essential supports for students with ASD.
- evaluate how essential supports are currently used in their school/district.
- develop a plan for implementing essential supports across settings.

The LASARD Project is a collaborative effort between LSUHSC Human Development Center and the Louisiana Department of Education.

LASARD

Louisiana Autism Spectrum and Related Disabilities

Build Statewide Capacity
LASARD Project Goals
Model Practices
Partner Teams

What is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

ASD is a developmental disability that impacts the way individuals ***communicate*** and ***interpret*** their environment, often resulting in ***challenges*** with ***social interactions*** and ***processing*** ***i***nformation.

Spectrum

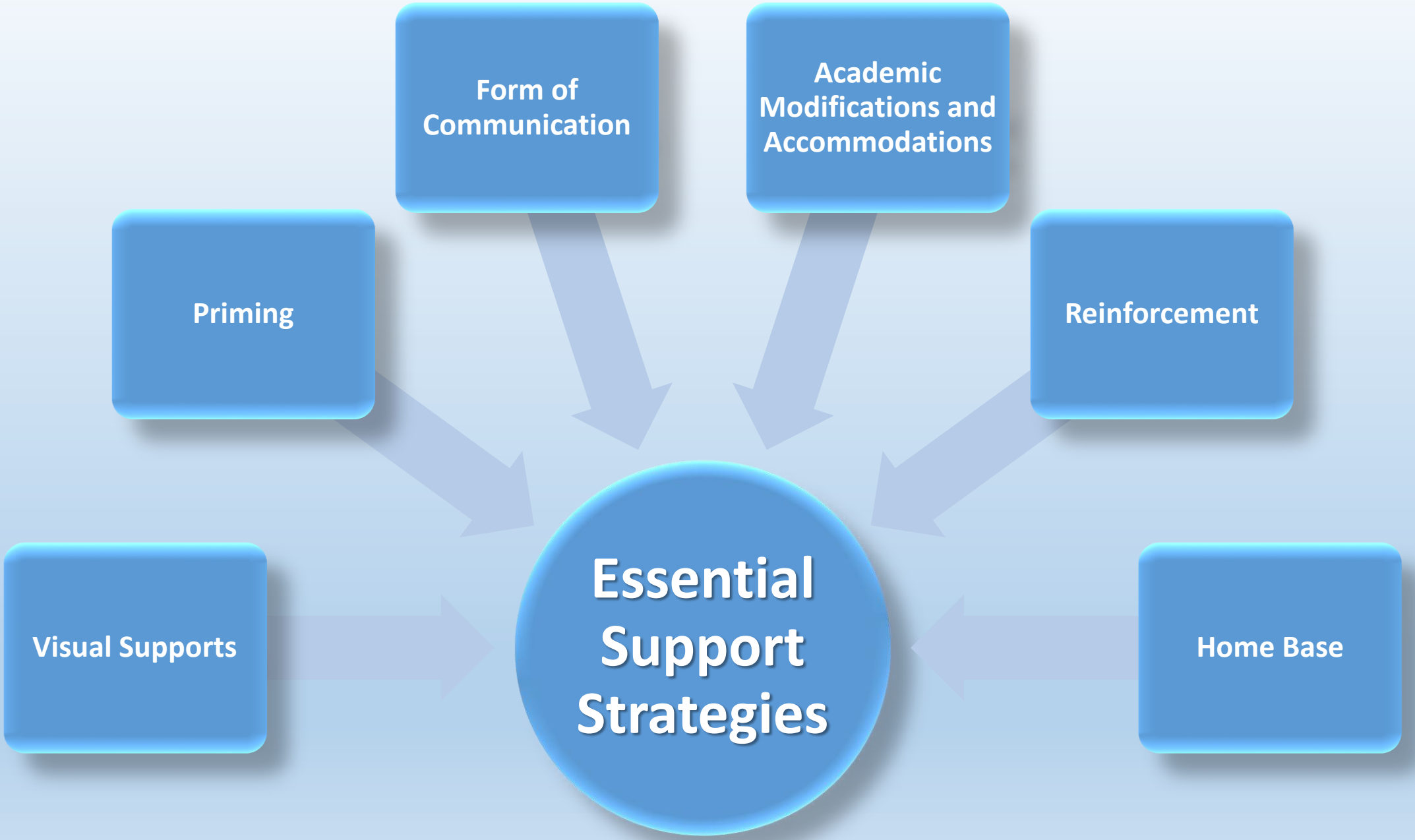
- Characteristics of ASD are not the same across individuals.
- Each student with ASD has different strengths, interests, and dreams.
- Individual first

General Assumptions

Students with ASD are visual learners.

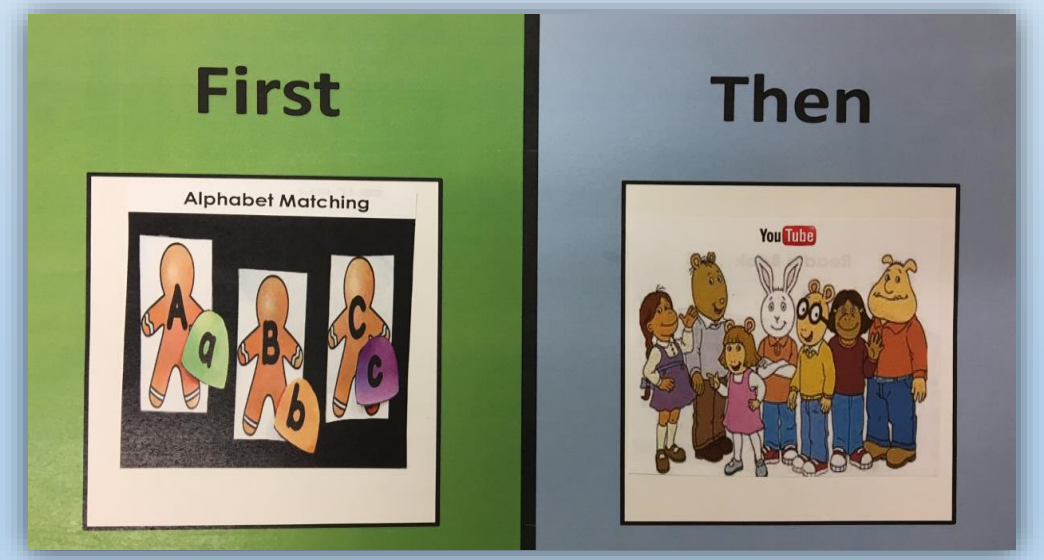
Students with ASD are literal learners.

Students with ASD need consistency and predictability.


Form of Communication
Academic Modifications and Accommodations
Priming
Reinforcement
Visual Supports
Essential Support Strategies
Home Base

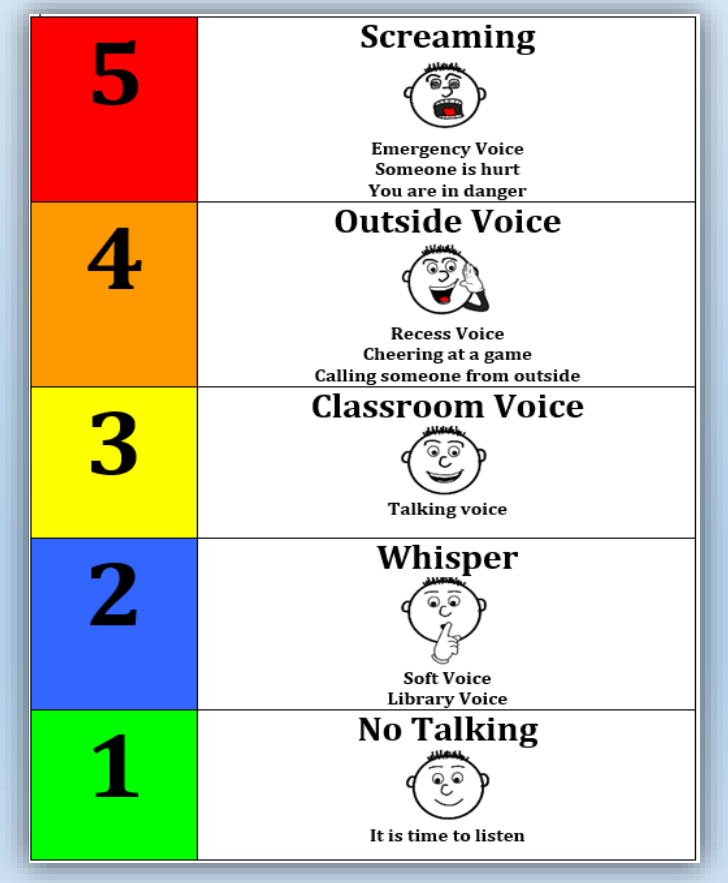
Visual Supports

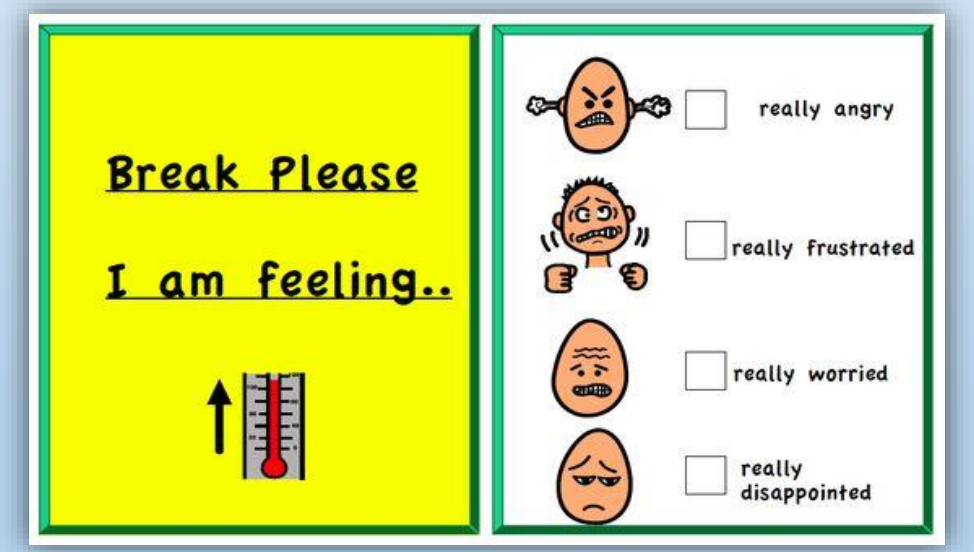
Visual supports are any materials that illustrate important information. This ranges from labels that identify the contents of a drawer or indicate where homework should be placed, to charts that help students track their progress toward completion of a particular assignment.



How do visual supports help?

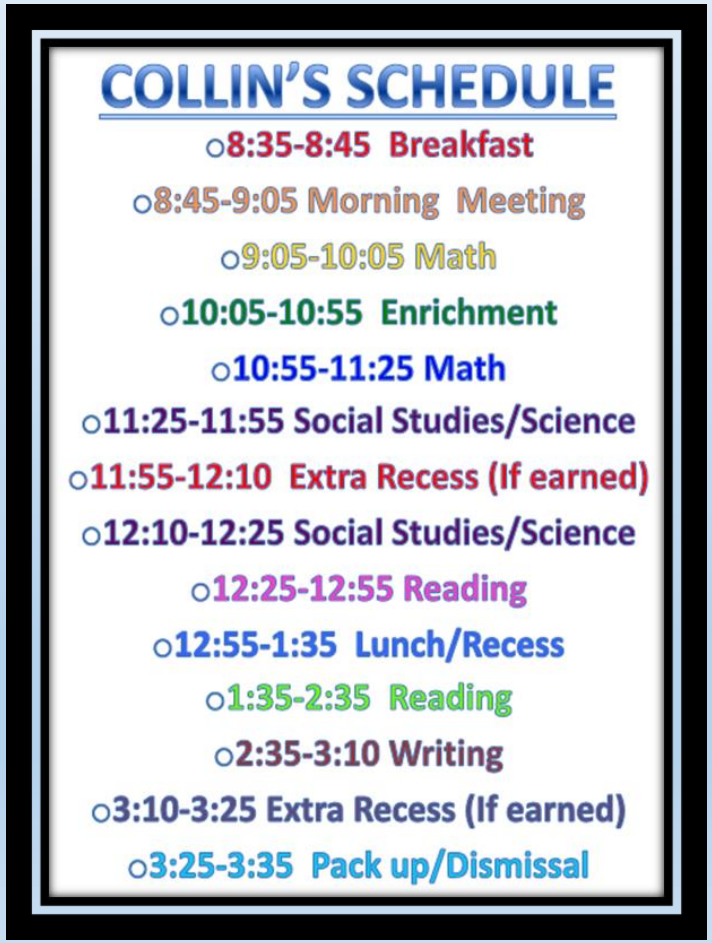
Visual supports help students with ASD stay focused on their schoolwork throughout the day and help streamline the learning process.

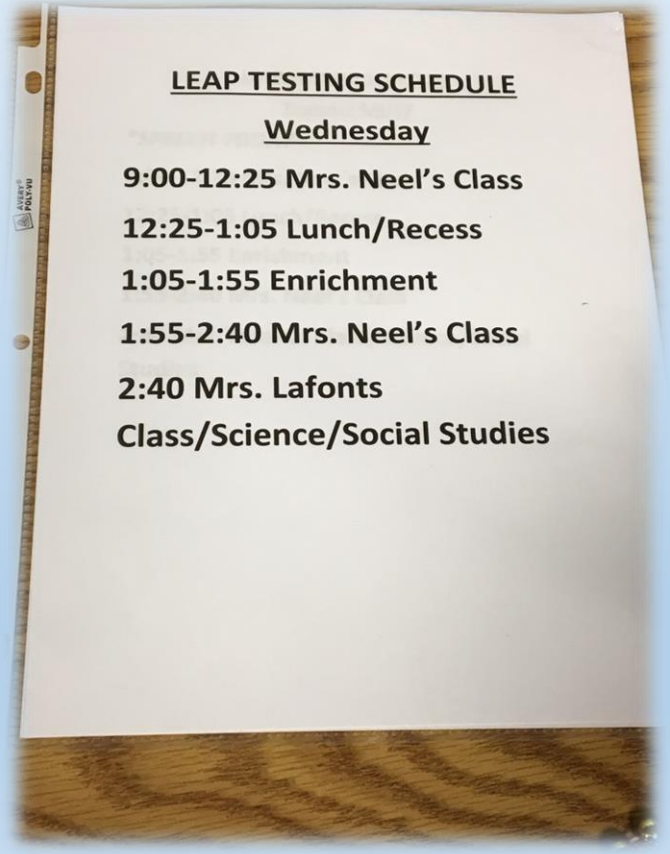


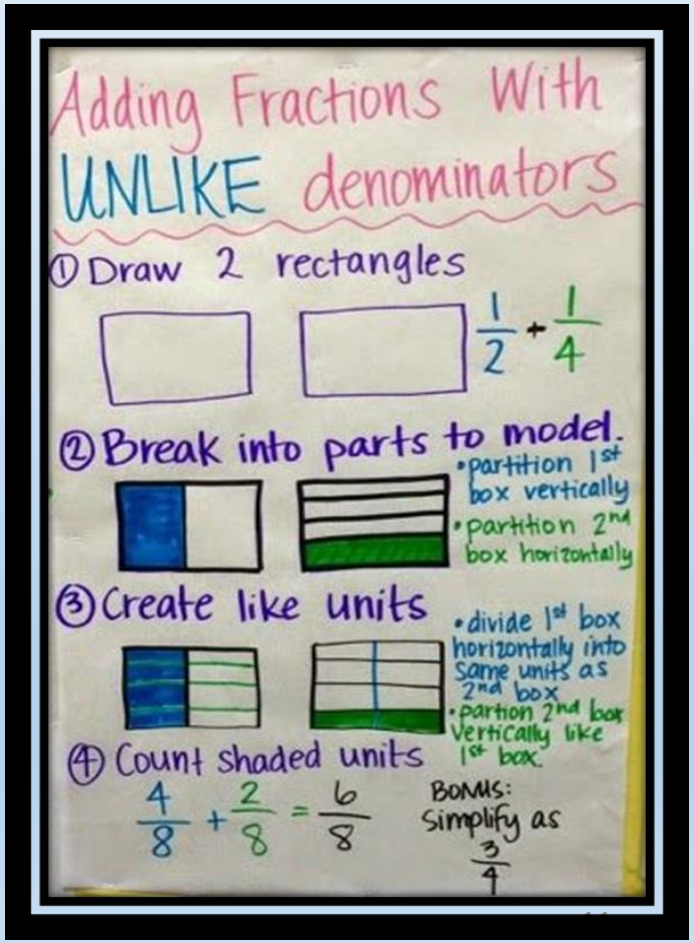


Priming

Priming is exposure to academic course materials or tasks before instruction.







Why should you use priming in your classroom?

- Gives students a chance to become familiar with the materials or skills, and increases the likelihood they will learn and use key concepts
- Remind students of expected behavior prior to an activity

When should you use priming?

- All the time!
- Most effective when built into student's daily routine

Why is communication important?

- ALL people can and do communicate.

- Communication allows people to exercise control over their lives and environments.

- People communicate in many different ways- some more efficient and some more effective than others.

Components of Communication

- Appropriate communication partners
- Form (i.e., a way to send the message)
- Content (i.e., something to talk about)
- Reason or purpose to communicate

Gruenewald, Schroeder, & Yoder (1982)

Form – The way a student expresses thoughts or needs

Could include:
Verbalizations
Sign
Gestures
AAC
Low tech to high tech

Function – The reason or purpose a student communicates.

Request
Reject
Social Interaction
Comment
Social Exchange
Initiate
Sustain
Terminate

Augmentative / Alternative Communication (AAC)

• AAC refers to communication that enhances, augments, or supplements speech and covers a broad range of methods and strategies, from computer-based systems with voice output to teacher-created letter boards.

• Other examples of AAC include writing, drawing, gesturing, facial expressions, and sign language.

• The purpose of AAC is to increase/improve an individual's ability to achieve basic communication functions in the environments and activities in which he/she participates or is expected to participate .

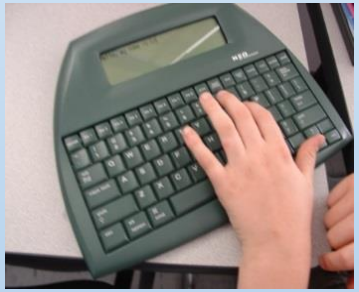
Light, 1989; Reichle, 1997

Low Tech

- Communication boards (objects, symbols, etc.)
- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
- Lanyards
- Eye Gaze Board
- Key Chains
- Wallets

Mid-Tech

- Portable word processor
- Simple, single or multi-message communication devices



High-Tech

Complex augmentative communication devices

Academic Accommodations/ Modifications

Modify Test/Assignments		
Modified tests	☐	☐
Modify assignments as needed	☑	☑
Shorten assignments	☐	☐
Limit amount of work required or length of tests	☐	☐
Modify/repeat/model directions	☑	☑
Alter format of materials on page (type/highlight/spacing)	☐	☐
Limited multiple choice/Reduce answer choices	☐	☐
Provide Word bank/Word assistance	☐	☐
Multiple choice spelling tests, shortened spelling list	☐	☐

TIMING & SCHEDULING		
Extended Time/Increase the amount of time allowed to complete assignments and tests	☑	☑
Pace long term projects	☐	
Extra time-written work	☑	☑
Prior notice of tests	☑	☑
Modify student's schedule	☐	
Allow breaks during work periods, between tasks, during testing	☑	☑

PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATIONS		
Math Read Aloud		
Text to speech	☐	☐
Human reader	☐	☐
Recorded voice	☐	☐
All content areas Read Aloud - except reading comp		
Text to speech	☐	☐
Human reader	☐	☐
Recorded voice	☐	☐

Other Presentation Accommodations		
Answer Masking		
General Administration- Directions Clarified by test administrator		☐
General Masking		
Highlight Tool/Highlighter	☐	☐
Headphones or Noise Buffers	☐◇	☐◇
Magnification/Enlargement Device	☐	☐
Pop-up Glossary		
Redirect Student to the Test		☐
Braille	☐	☐

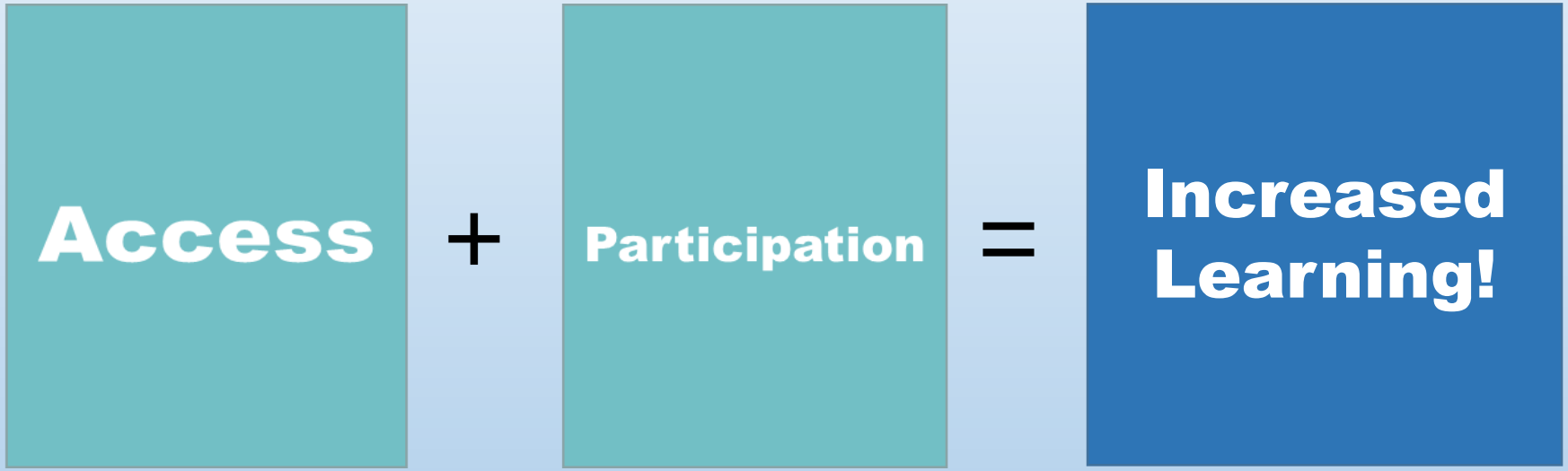
Accommodation vs. Modification

Accommodations are supports and services provided to help a student access the general education curriculum and demonstrate learning. An accommodation does not alter the standard being taught to the students.

Modifications are ***individualized*** changes made to the content and performance expectations for students. It *does* fundamentally alter or lower the standard being taught to the students.

Ferry, 2011

Why Modify the Curriculum?



Modifications provide access to planned activities, interactions, and routines.

Increased access leads to a higher level of participation.

Participating in a meaningful way provides a greater opportunity for learning.

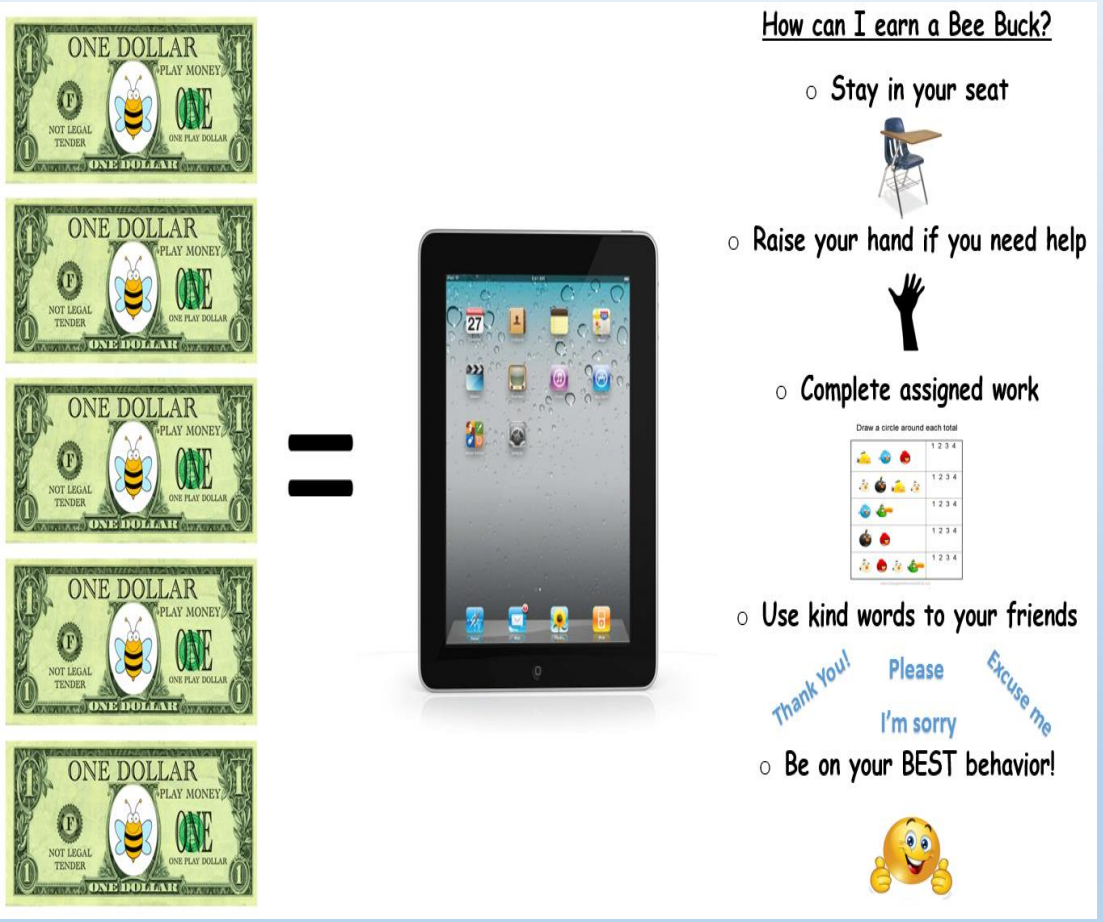
Reinforcement

Reinforcement is rewarding students for behaving in ways that are productive and support their continued personal growth.

Primary Types of Positive Reinforcement

Tangible Reinforcers

- Food items
- Age-appropriate toy or game
- Preferred age-appropriate items such as access to an electronic device

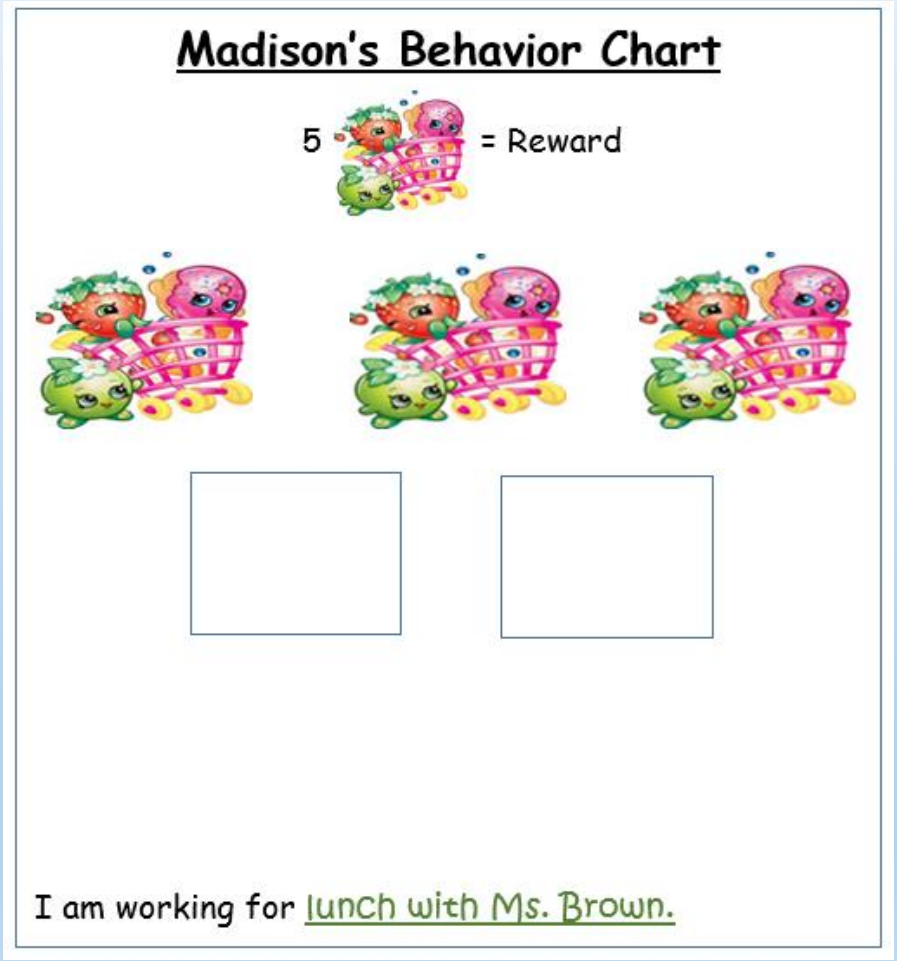


Neitzel (2009); Polloway, Patton, & Serna (2008)

Primary Types of Positive Reinforcement

Social Reinforcers

- **Verbal praise**
- **High 5s**
- **Spending time with a preferred person**

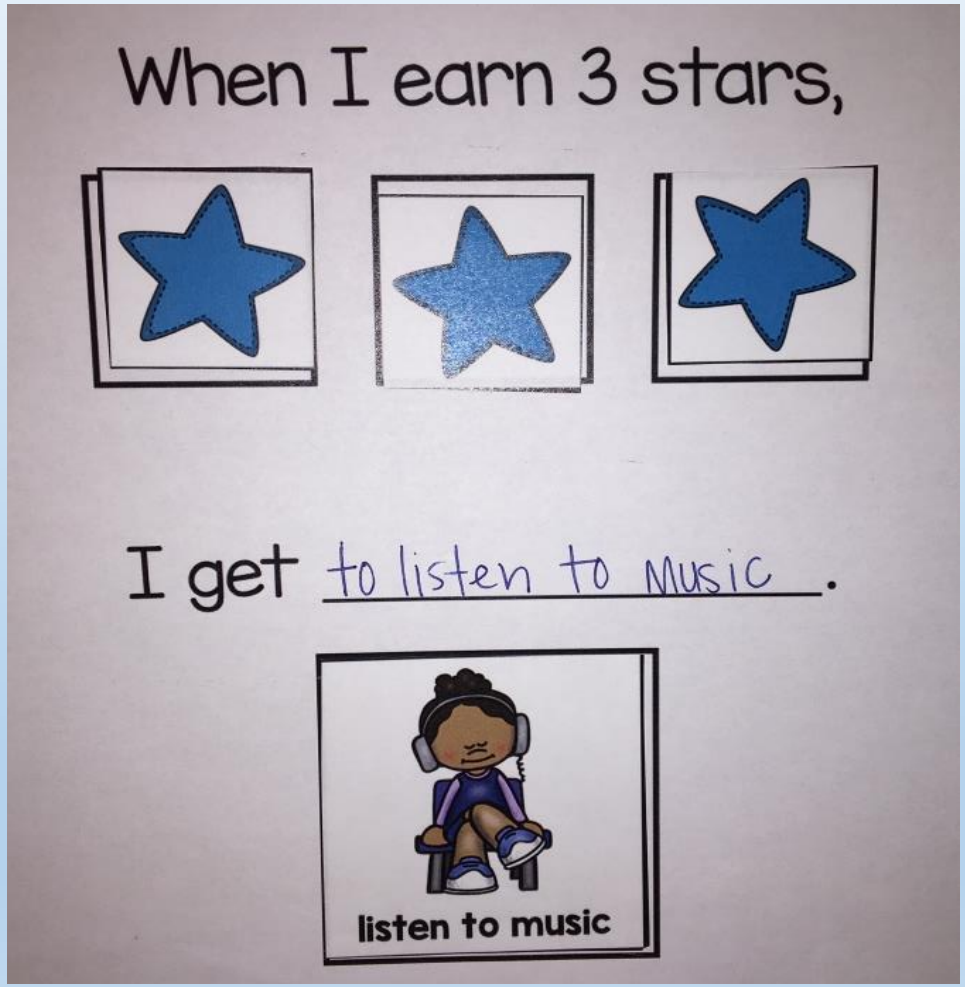


Neitzel (2009); Polloway, Patton, & Serna (2008)

Primary Types of Positive Reinforcement

Activity Reinforcers

- Selecting a game or activity for recess
- Reading to a friend
- Having extra time in a favorite subject
- Going out first to recess



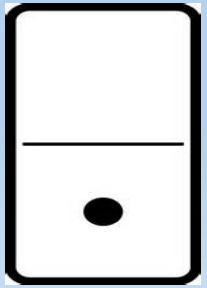
Neitzel (2009); Polloway, Patton, & Serna (2008)

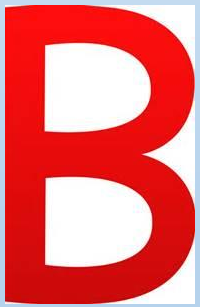
Special Interests!

Owls are the only birds in the world that can see the color blue.

Use special interests when picking reading material, writing topics, math skills, reinforcers, daily instruction, etc.

Special interest ideas: color, character, number, shapes, objects, animal, place, food, letter, etc.



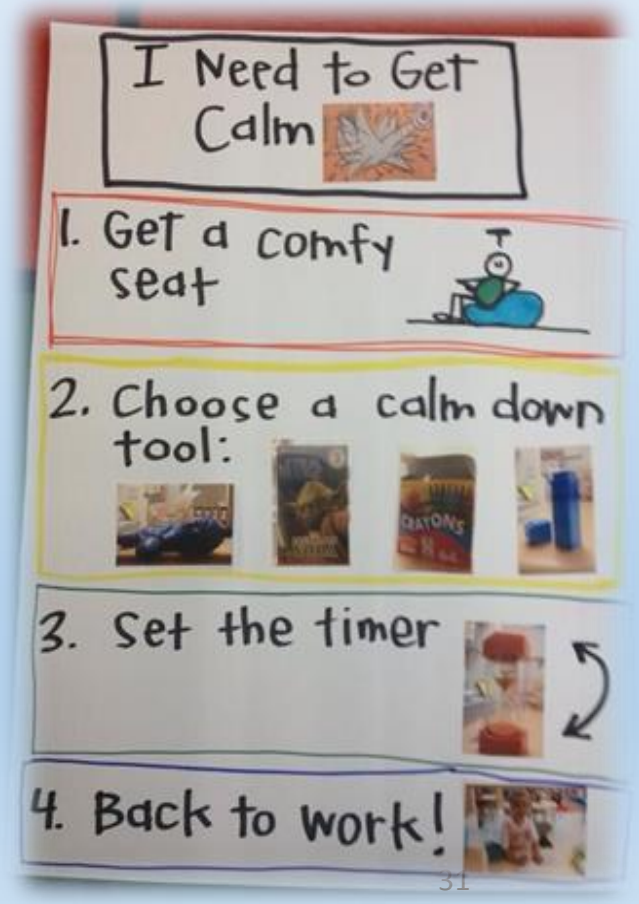


Home Base

Home base is a designated place where a student can go to regain control during times of high anxiety or stress. It should be used as a proactive strategy.

How does home base help?

Home base can help a student cope with a particularly challenging situation without distracting other classmates. The goal is to keep the students in the classroom.



Questions?

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