Autism in the Classroom

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Autism means I miss what others catch, and I catch what others miss.

*We <u>cannot</u> claim to be experts, but we <u>can</u> offer our experience.

A combined 20+ years of experience!

Objectives

➔ **Increase knowledge on Autism in the classroom.**
➔ **Increase knowledge on how to modify an environment/classroom to meet the needs of students.**

Creating a Structured Learning Environment

- Manipulating the environment in which we teach children with Autism is a powerful method used in preventing unwanted behaviors and increasing time on task and an overall positive working environment.
  - Understanding/recognizing triggers
  - Use of space - defined work and sensory areas
  - Direct concrete instructions/language
  - Picture prompts
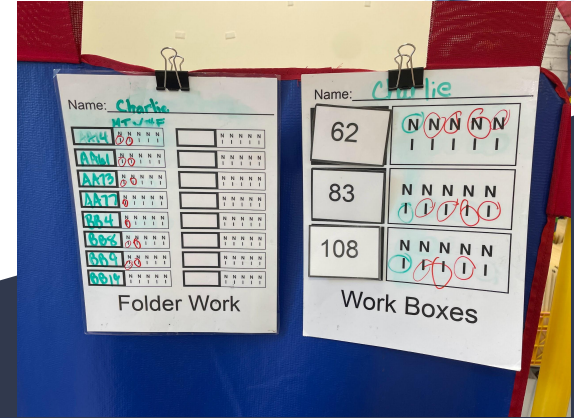 - Sensory/movement breaks
  - ROUTINE!

Elementary School

- **Highly structured**
- **Daily picture schedules**
- **Sit and wait area**
- **Routine and predictability**
- **1:1 direct instruction**
- **Independent work spaces**
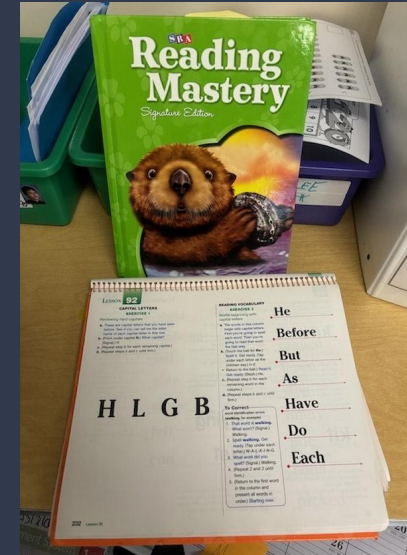- **Manipulated environment**
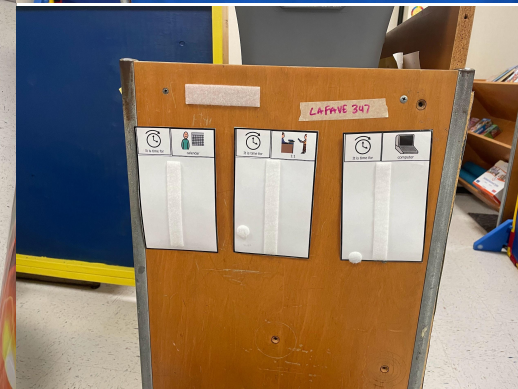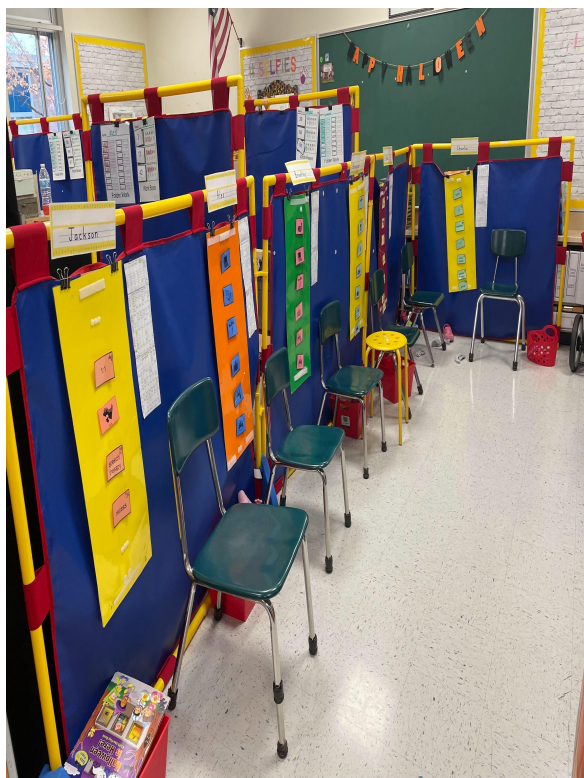
AU classrooms

Scaffolding Skills using independent work areas

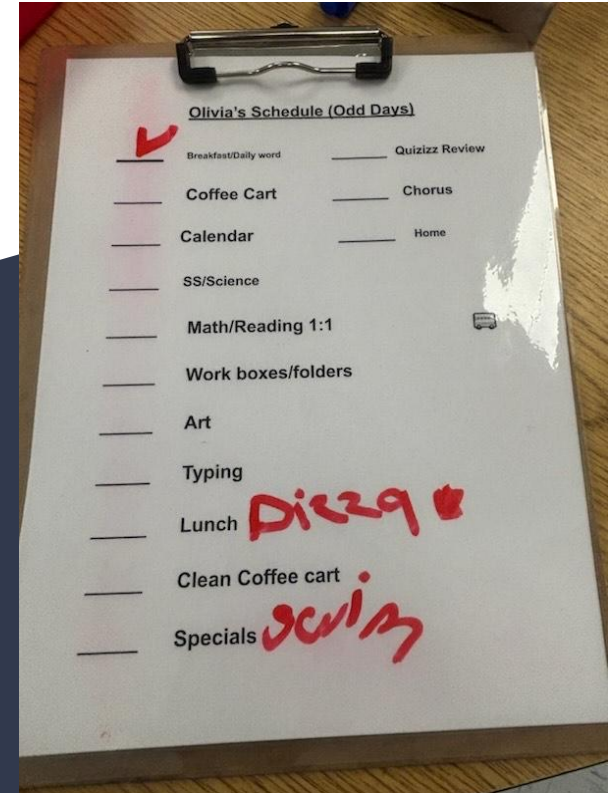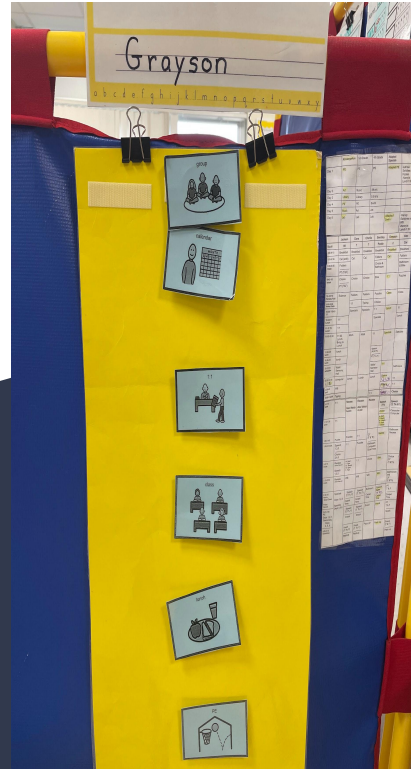# AU Classrooms

- **Academic Instruction**
  - Direct instruction (examples)
    - Reading Mastery
    - Edmark Reading
    - Connecting Math
    - Group lessons

AU Classrooms

- **Predictability and routines are key. Days are consistent and the students know what to Expect.**

- **Photos show the progression of student schedules. -ELEM vs Middle**

Middle School

- **Life Skills Instruction**

  - School store
  - Coffee cart
  - Mail delivery
  - cooking/cleaning
  - Independent work

  - (both life skills and

   academic)

Autism in the classroom

Everyday strategies used within your general education classrooms that can support students with Autism.

➔ Class/daily/period schedules
➔ Objectives - help stay on task
➔ Timer - depending on the student's need
➔ Lesson Structure - Predictability
➔ Turn and Talk - Assign specific students
➔ Modification of work
➔ Modification of the environment
➔ Wait time extended!

Proactive vs. Reactive

Sensory Friendly Environment

Create an environment that meets the needs of the students in your classroom. There are many different needs and each child is unique, so learning each child's needs is key.

➔ Make sure lighting is not too bright or too dark
➔ Make sure sound is not to loud on apps, computers or other devices
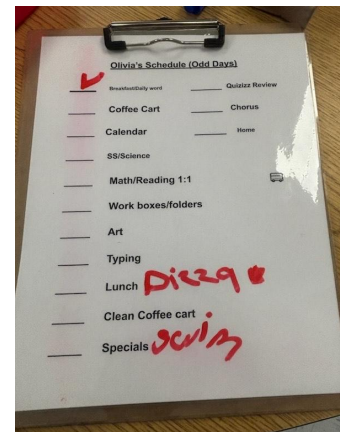➔ Make sure strong smells, like sprays or perfumes are considered.

Visual Supports

Create an environment that meets the needs of the students in your classroom. There are many different needs and each child is unique, so learning each child's needs is key.

➔ Classroom Schedule Posted
➔ Individualized Schedules
➔ Schedules for small groups
➔ Lanyard with visuals
➔ Visuals throughout the classroom to help with understanding of areas

Flexible Seating

Create an environment that meets the needs of the students in your classroom. There are many different needs and each child is unique, so learning each child's needs is key.

➔ Cushions
➔ Different types of chairs
➔ Seating locations (be aware of where and who)
➔ Limit distractions

Quiet Spaces

Create an environment that meets the needs of the students in your classroom. There are many different needs and each child is unique, so learning each child's needs is key.

➜ Create a space for students to go to when they need a break
  - Headphones
  - Books on tape
  - Fidgets
  - Music

Structured Routine

Create an environment that meets the needs of the students in your classroom. There are many different needs and each child is unique, so learning each child's needs is key.

➔ Predictable Daily Routine
➔ Predictable Lessons and Format
➔ Changes in the schedule are planned and discussed (whole class or Individual)

Visual Boundaries

Create an environment that meets the needs of the students in your classroom. There are many different needs and each child is unique, so learning each child's needs is key. Create defined areas that are used for specific activities/purposes.

➔ Use of dividers
➔ Clear markings on the floor
➔ Various parts of the room labeled on the wall.
   ◆ 1 on 1 lessons
   ◆ Group work
   ◆ Independent work stations
   ◆ Play area
   ◆ Sit and wait

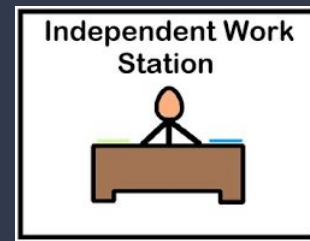# Individualized Learning Stations

Independent Work Station

Create an environment that meets the needs of the students in your classroom. There are many different needs and each child is unique, so learning each child's needs is key.

Create a defined work area for independent work.

➔ These areas should be neat and organized.
➔ Students will have clear expectations of what is expected within the specific work areas.

Technology

Create an environment that meets the needs of the students in your classroom. There are many different needs and each child is unique, so learning each child's needs is key.

Students with Autism are often very fluent with technology. Teachers can use this to their benefit by creating lessons or review activities that involve the use of technology. Some useful resources may include:

➔ Nearpod
➔ Quizizz
➔ Kahoot
➔ Gimkit
➔ Epic
➔ ABCYA
➔ Edpuzzle
➔ Blooket
➔ Quizlet

Communication Supports

Create an environment that meets the needs of the students in your classroom. There are many different needs and each child is unique, so learning each child's needs is key.

Create and/or use alternate forms of communication.

➔ Visual charts/rules
➔ Use picture symbols
➔ Augmentative Communication
➔ Picture prompts/reminders

Support Staff

Create an environment that meets the needs of the students in your classroom. There are many different needs and each child is unique, so learning each child's needs is key.

➔ Support staff need specific and concrete directions and schedules.
➔ It is important to set clear expectations and communicate clearly with support staff within the classroom.
➔ It's essential the staff understands that each student will require different levels of support and have varying needs.
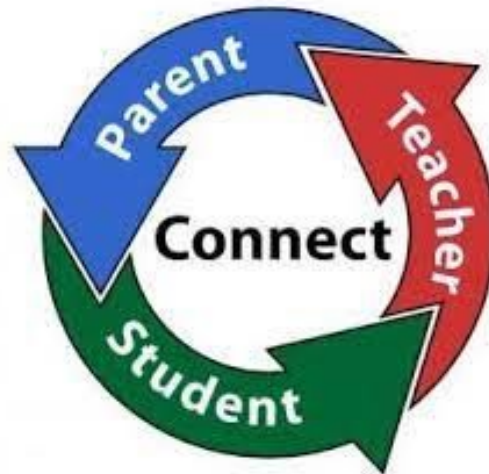
Parent Involvement

Create an environment that meets the needs of the students in your classroom. There are many different needs and each child is unique, so learning each child's needs is key.

Frequent communication and open line[s] extremely important.

➔ Class Dojo
➔ Email
➔ Communication logs

If you've met one person with Autism, you've met one person with Autism

- Stephen Shore

Review Objectives

➔ Increase knowledge on Autism in the classroom.
➔ Increase knowledge on how to modify an environment/classroom to meet the needs of students.