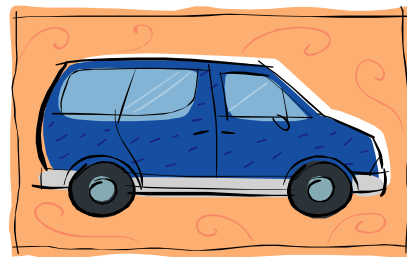


Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder Training for Transportation Staff



Objectives

- Gain knowledge of the general characteristics specific to individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Identify techniques to support students with ASD during transport to and from school



Autism Spectrum Disorder Overview

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurological brain disorder that effects how an individual thinks, communicates and interacts with others.
- While individuals with autism have similar characteristics, no two individuals with autism will appear the same.

Common Characteristics

- Communication challenges
- Social deficits
- Restricted patterns of behavior, interests and activities
- Sensory differences
- Cognitive differences
- Motor differences
- Emotional vulnerability
- Medical factors



Transporting Students with Autism

- *Everyday Challenges*
 - Time of day
 - Duration of ride
 - Destination not always preferred
 - Vehicle itself (crowded, loud, restricted movement)
 - Communication deficits
- *Unexpected Challenges*
 - Traffic
 - Weather conditions
 - Construction
 - Change in staff
 - Detours
 - Illness or injury



Tools for Success

1. Be a part of the team.

a. Learn about the student:

- Likes, dislikes
- Method of communication
- Triggers
- Medical concerns
- Sensory needs
- Behavior plan



b. Create a Student Profile that travels with the student

c. Open communication with the parents

d. Open communication with the school

- Schedule and attend meetings to discuss challenges during transport
- Brainstorm strategies



Tools for Success

2. Keep the student busy.

- a. Identify activities that the student enjoys
 - Safe activities during transport
 - Solo vs. Group activities
 - Participate in activity only during transport
 - Schedule or rotate activities during the ride



3. Create a soothing environment.

- a. Stay calm! Students pick up on your emotions
- b. Identify activities that are calming:
 - Preferred or relaxing music
 - Audiobooks
 - Fidget toys
 - Pillows and blankets
 - Limit excessive talking
 - Offer headphones



Tools for Success

4. Develop a routine.

- a. Create order to the ride
 - Communicate schedule of activities visually (picture schedule, text)
 - Review schedule during transport
 - Keep it consistent
 - Use timers



5. Set the rules and positively reinforce them.

- a. Identify positive, safe actions for riding in the vehicle
- b. Communicate the rules visually and verbally
- c. Post the rules in the van
- d. Review them daily
- e. Positively reinforce student for following the rules
 - Verbal praise
 - Access to highly preferred items
 - Tokens



Tools for Success

6. Have a “Plan B.”

a. Identify possible challenges and the special supports that can help

- Social stories
- Specialized safety equipment
- Increase positive reinforcement
- Novel activity or item
- Pre-determined crisis plan

