

Considering Denise and Adam's Disabilities

Diana Browning Wright

Directions: Check each box that you wish to remember in designing environmental supports for Denise and Adam after reading the description of the problem behavior and the current environment.

Denise has AUTISM

Behavior Support for Individuals with Autism

- need a functional communication system appropriate to developmental level (consider use of a picture exchange for desired objects and activities if non-verbal and developmentally 2 years or older)
- often need task (pacing), time (schedule instruction) space, interaction structuring
- often need adults to structure environments to modulate sensory arousal systems and alter conditions depending on the arousal level of the child at a specific time
- often need physical activity interspersed with other activity
- often requires "functional" curriculum, functional application of learned academic material
- often need help understanding social world
 - social story instruction
 - social script instruction
- often need "time away", access to preferred activity interspersed throughout the day
- often need direct one-on-one instruction for a new skill, then carefully structured follow-through throughout activities of the day to assist with generalization
- often learns rules through visual prompts (icons, words) better than through verbal instruction
- often copies inappropriate behavior readily; needs access to good models

Potential Behaviors Impeding Learning in Individuals with Autism

- Difficulty shifting attention/shifting tasks
- Low understanding of elapsed time
- Resistance to non-preferred tasks
- Poor modulation of sensory input
 - under or over-responds to sight/smell/movement/sounds
- Communicates via behavior--uses no or few words functionally to express needs and words to negotiate
- Restricted range of interests/restricted behavior repertoire
- Upset over changes in environment
 - scheduling changes
 - the way other people act/speak
 - materials
 - changes of routines for performing familiar tasks
- May exhibit fears, cycles of irritability, resistance

Adam has AD/HD

Behavior Support for Individuals with AD/HD

- often need strategies to maintain attention to task, inhibit impulsive responding, organize time, space, and materials
- often need environmental structuring to aid poor goal setting and flexible problem solving
- often missing necessary social skills, need instruction
- often punished by peers, need adult structuring to elicit on-going, appropriate peer reinforcement
- often need frequent reinforcement for rule following
- often need active, hands-on learning opportunities with tasks structured into small units to aid sense of accomplishment

AD/HD Potential Behaviors Impeding Learning to Consider in Support Planning

- Impulsivity
 - not raising hand
 - rushing through work
 - responding inappropriately to adult correction
- Distractibility/low “focused attending” skills
 - difficulty staying on task
 - low work completion rates
 - planning deficits
 - disturbing others
- Poor modulation of arousal system
 - falls asleep
 - struggles to maintain focus
- Poor strategy formation to complete complex tasks
 - poor ability to break up tasks in chunks
 - poor sequencing of actions to meet goal
 - poor selection of behavior alternatives/low flexibility
- Hyperactivity
 - difficulty staying in seat
 - bounces from task to task
 - body movements disturb others
- Feedback deficits
 - failure to take corrective actions/based on input from peers and adults
 - active resistance to rules/changing rules to fit personal desires rather than to enhance group cohesion
- Low frustration tolerance
- Difficulty with delaying gratification
- Low understanding of elapsed time

Adam has a LEARNING DISABILITY

Behavior Support for Individuals with Learning Disabilities

- often need protection from humiliation
- often need self-advocacy training
- often need supportive, rich, frequent reinforcement for real accomplishments
- often need instruction on what is/is NOT impeding academic progress (e.g., You are not “stupid.”)
- often need extensive curriculum accommodations to facilitate “success”
- often respond well to mentoring, unconditional positive regard
- sometimes need social skill instruction

Potential Behaviors Impeding Learning in Individuals with Learning Disabilities

- “Global Deficits” belief system
- Low understanding of specific disability
- Low skills in explaining disability to others
- Low self-advocacy skills
 - resists asking for needed accommodations
- Gives up easily, fails to anticipate success
- Fails to organize materials and time
- Fear of humiliation
- Low time management skills