

Dynamic Communication



COMMUNICATION IS MORE THAN TALKING OR WORDS. HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP DEVELOP MEANINGFUL, RECIPROCAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR CHILD.

CHILDREN WITH AUTISM CAN BE TOO DEPENDENT ON STATIC COMMUNICATION, ESPECIALLY IF ALL THEY HAVE BEEN TAUGHT ARE SCRIPTED ANSWERS. THE COMMUNICATION WILL ALWAYS STRUGGLE UNLESS DYNAMIC COMMUNICATION BECOMES A PRIORITY IN TREATMENT.

ASD a New Perspective

Eliminate the Focus on Eye Contact: If you are at all interested in understanding the thinking and attention of your child, the first thing you must do is stop teaching eye contact. The more you prompt eye contact, the more you are taking away your database that gives you clues into your child's thinking. Instead, learn to observe where she is placing her gaze, which will give you a sense for what she feels is important in the moment. Forcing eye contact disconnects a child's gaze from his thoughts and essentially just teaches him how to stare without any meaning behind the action.

Encourage Thoughtful Dialogue: If your child is verbal, you cannot assume that when you tell her something that she is interpreting it in the way you meant. Autism is a cognitive disorder that can create a disconnect between language and meaning. Communication needs to avoid lecture and rapid-fire questioning in order to encourage thoughtful dialogue.

Model and Reinforce Thinking Before Speaking: When in a conversation, most people think about what they will say before speaking and then think about what the other person says before responding. This self dialogue take place entirely in our heads, but people with autism have no idea this self dialogue is going on and so, we must model this cognitive process. Try sharing out loud what you are thinking and processing before you respond in order to give you a basis for teaching your student how to do this in the future. Otherwise language just becomes empty and disconnected from thought.

Reward Thoughtful Communication over Quantity, Speed or Right Answers: You don't want to be putting people with autism in positions where they think the point is to give the right or wrong answer. This is what they are often already good at and they don't need more neurological development in this part of their brain! Instead, we want thoughtful communication. One way to do this is to ask questions where there is more than one right answer.

Spotlight Multiple Channels: Your child doesn't have the neural connectivity to see all of the communication channels as one package yet. So to model your cognitive process, take what you do intuitively through gesture, voice and facial expressions and do it more deliberately. In this way, your student is able to learn and strengthen each of those channels/pathways separately.

Eliminate Direct Prompts as Much as Possible: Direct prompts are when you do the thinking and mental engagement for your child by providing all of the information about a situation, so that your child only has to respond. Obviously, there are times when direct prompts are necessary, but in many cases this has become the primary mode of communication and hinders thinking.

Communicate Primarily through Experience Sharing: In a MindGuiding relationship, teaching is primarily sharing the way you operate, the way you think, and what you are observing. Giving instructions has its place, but primarily your communication should be providing opportunities for your child to see how you think and solve problems.

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