INTRODUCTION

The first edition of the SERUpdate 2009 includes a range of information, strategies and resources to assist in successful transitioning for students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, from home to preschool, between schools and year levels of schooling, and from school to post school options.

The first article by Erica Handley, Autism SA, provides a general introduction and specific strategies for making change easier for students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. Robyn Young, Associate Professor Flinders University, suggests in her article that in order to teach the child to be more flexible we should ‘rock the boat’ for the child more frequently.

Staff from DECS and independent preschools/schools, across all levels of schooling, provide articles describing their experiences and tips for successful transition. Regular features of the SERUpdate include Techbits, websites and new SERU resources.

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MAKING CHANGE EASIER FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Teachers or parents/carers of students with an Autism Spectrum disorder (ASD) will know that there are many difficulties facing their students every day. One difficulty which frequently creates enormous stress and resulting anxiety is the student’s great difficulty with understanding change and the need for transition from one activity to another.

These are typical scenarios:
I don’t know what activities I have in class this morning.
I am really enjoying this drawing, I don’t want to stop and do maths.
The holidays were great, now term 2 has started and everything is so different.
Where is my usual teacher? Who is this teacher in my room?
At my last school I knew where the library was; at this school I have no idea…

Change and transition is often difficult for students:
Current research, leading to an improved understanding of brain functioning, assists educators and parents/carers to better understand the reasons behind a student’s resistance to changing from one activity to another. The student with an ASD has different mental processes in the frontal lobes of the brain. ‘…. a vitally important capacity in human psychology – the ability to adjust and adapt to the unpredictable and ongoing changes in the social world, an ability that is
clearly impacted in ASD. The complex group of skills that supports this vital function is referred to collectively as the executive functions’, (Autism Spectrum Quarterly, Winter 2006, Part 1). Students with an ASD experience executive dysfunction, which has a significant impact on their daily life at school. We find that students have difficulties learning from previous experiences, poor problem solving skills (such as asking for help), or the ability to flexibly respond to changing events. They do not know what to expect each day and have difficulty predicting what is expected of them in a new situation.

It is very hard for educators and parents/carers to understand the impact of executive dysfunction on the student's life at school. Just imagine going to school every day, wanting and trying to understand the school world, seeing that other kids seem to learn, socialize and cope with frequent changes so easily, and yet, you can't make sense of it! For some students the result is high anxiety, a short fuse, stubbornness, impulsive behaviour or rigid thinking (I'll play it safe and do things my way).

There are many simple, best practice strategies which will help students at your school cope with daily changes and transition:

A question frequently asked by teachers is this ‘How can I implement these strategies for one student in my class? I have 28 other students who also need my time?’ This is a very reasonable question! However, consider this: These strategies are good teaching strategies and will certainly assist ALL the students in the class.

Be proactive! Remember the 90:10 rule. It is better to spend 90% of time developing strategies/interventions to reduce a known problem behaviour and 10% of time on the behaviour itself, rather than the other way around. If you do not develop strategies to support the student’s needs with change and transition you will probably spend 90% of your time addressing the primary and especially the secondary behaviours which you are likely to get (high anxieties, oppositional behaviour, disruptive behaviour, work avoidance, aggressive or violent behaviour...). Many teachers certainly agree that time spent proactively implementing supports to help the student understand and accept change, does reduce their time spent in reacting to the challenging behaviours later on.

Some golden tips:

Ask for help from the parent/carer who will give you extra insight into their child and their ability to cope with change. Contact the Autism SA Consultant Teacher/ASD Consultant who can work collaboratively with school staff to facilitate successful inclusion for a student. In the Adelaide region Autism SA may be able to provide a Developmental Educator who will provide specialised transition support programmes for a student for an agreed number of sessions (eg 5). Support at key transitions such as starting Reception, or going to High School are a priority for Developmental Educator support. School staff will need to contact their Consultant Teacher/ASD Consultant to find out more about this programme. Alternatively school staff can purchase the Autism SA publication Making Change Easier. This resource assists schools understand and better plan for students who have difficulties with change and transition. This is available at the cost of $33 Non Members or $30 for Members, (65 page resource full of information including examples of transition books, social scripts and planning checklists). Orders can be via Autism SA 83796976 or online www.autismsa.org.au

Planning. The importance of this cannot be underestimated. For students who are known to have difficulties at the start of each school year, make sure that in Term 3, or possibly earlier a meeting is arranged with parents/carers. Use these meetings to set up a detailed plan of transition visits to the new class, and to develop specific supports. Remember that at key transition points such as starting school or moving
school from Year 7 to Year 8, planning may take a year or more.

Know the student! The parent/carer, current and past teachers have a lot of knowledge about how this student copes with change or transition. Identify the key issues and, document this information, and pass it onto the next teacher/school. Some students are more rigid in their thinking and do have more anxiety with change and transition.

Good implementation of recommended strategies will reduce the student’s genuine stress and anxiety about the unpredictability of school life.

Strategies:
This is a very brief list of strategies. More information about how to implement these strategies can be found in the Autism SA publication, Making Change Easier.

Schedule: A visual support such as a schedule shows the student what is coming up next. Use a whole class schedule and an individual one on the student’s desk. It is important to teach the student to refer to it to find out what to do next, and show /point when there will be a change to the schedule. Equally the student needs to know that an activity does finish, so use a timer, peel and post the activity in a ‘finish’ tin or develop a checklist where the student ticks the box. Always give advance warning that an activity will end soon. Knowing that an activity is finished assists the student to refer to the next activity on the schedule.

Develop class routines: Students respond really well to teachers who have routine orientated and predictable teaching environments. At the start of the year spend time teaching the daily routines. Once a routine is learnt, the student with ASD will be unlikely to forget it (so teach it exactly the way you want it). Remember the 90:10 rule!

Social scripts: These help the student to understand the reasons why there is a change, as well as giving the student some strategies to try when there is a change.

Advance warning: It does matter to the student if there is a change, so try to let the student know that there will be a change, and if possible, let the parent/carer know as well. Parents/carers can easily tell if there has been something different at school that day, by the meltdown that night.

Teach for the occasional change: It is always important to remember that schools are very busy places and will have unexpected changes (for example there is a power blackout). An important goal for educators must be to teach coping skills to the student so that when there is a change, the student will be able to cope. This is an important life skill. School staff can teach this skill by presenting a ‘pretend’ change to the schedule by telling and showing the change on the student’s schedule. By using this approach of ‘creating’ simple small changes, a student’s ability to cope with genuine change will certainly improve. Importantly teach the student that change is not a ‘bad’ thing, and that change is OK. In fact, sometimes good things can happen when we change something!

Transition from one year to the next: This is a time when the student will need a lot of extra support. You can make a transition book, or a Book about Changes, fill this with photos taken of the teacher/s, the SSOs, the classroom, the toilets, the yard, where the student can/cannot play and where/who to get help etc. Include 2 pages called, Things which are the same, and Things which are different. Work with the student to create these 2 lists and make sure that the Things which are the same is a longer list for example: teachers, other kids at school, uniform, hats at lunch, bells, lunchbox, work at a desk, Maths… The student will benefit from visits to the next school, staff and parents who know the student best will be able to determine the number of extra visits. At the start of the next year, expect to re-teach the information again. Do not assume that the student has remembered everything he/she saw last year!
Finally, once the student has begun at the next school, expect that anxieties will be higher than normal. Make sure that there are opportunities built into the student’s day for a break, and keep in regular contact with the family to find out how things are going (they may tell you that there are meltdowns at 4pm every day and you thought that things were fine).

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**TRANSITION TRAINING**

The goal of the early intervention model developed at Flinders University is to facilitate the transition of children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) from the “home” environment to the “pre-school” environment. The aim is for the children to have the skills required to make this transition as smooth as possible. Although the focus is on teaching specific skills such as joint attention, social orienting, play and imitation, ironically, one of the biggest difficulties that often impact upon these children, is their ability to “transition” at the more micro-level, that is, their ability to move from one task to another within an environment. We need to be sure the children can tolerate transition at the micro-level as well as working toward larger, more obvious change.

The impact of not teaching a child to be flexible is having an 18 year old yelling out “last drinks” at 8:50 every night and expecting a glass of water to be delivered to his or her room – this may be cute at 4 years of age but frustrating when the child is an adult and their routine is so structured that the family have become “autistic” rather than the child becoming “flexible”.

In order to teach a child to be more “flexible” we need to “rock” the child’s boat. This involves teaching the child that routines can change. We are all creatures of habit and it is only when you start to document the things you do that you appreciate what habits you have. Many of us park in the same car park, sit in the same chair, sleep on the same side of the bed, eat at the same time. This clearly gives us some form of comfort and security. Think of something you do habitually, and how frustrated you become if you are forced to accommodate “change”. Then think how you might feel if you didn’t understand why things have to be changed and you might appreciate the sentiment of the children with whom we are working.

There are two steps to teaching a child to be more flexible.

**Step 1. Forewarning**
The child should be warned as much as can be predicted, that things might not go to routine. For example, a child needs to be warned that their teacher may be away on any given day. Prepare them for the fact that relief teachers may come into the class.

Most children with AD like and respond well to routine – this is not unique to autism. Most preschools accommodate this by developing structured programs. The difficulty with this is that routines often need to be changed and, while most of us learn to deal with change, this is not true for many children with Autistic Disorder. Children with an ASD need to know that routines may change, and that the “sun will still come up tomorrow”. This can be achieved through flexibility training.
Essentially, a child needs to know that changes do happen and some changes may be anticipated and some may not. You can also do this with visual schedules. If you use a visual schedule, try to change it around a bit. For example, warn the child that tomorrow we will have a sleep after lunch rather than before lunch and so forth. This is easily supported through visual cues such as timers to show that change is impending.

Step 2. Tolerance Building
Make things a bit different for the child. If you see habits forming try to redirect to other things. Also make sure you aren’t too routine oriented in your own life. Try to sit in different chairs, park in different parks. Resistance to change can cause significant problems in our lives. Many of the parents I work with have altered their lives. They no longer shop, they vacuum at night, they don’t socialise and so forth. Although many tantrums can be prevented by fore-warning, we cannot predict change or anticipate what will upset the child. Therefore, we need to continually subject the children to change.

These simple strategies are very easily implemented and can minimise the impact of the effect of autism on the children and family members. To use Piagetian terms we need to determine if the child should assimilate or we should accommodate. Often parents are too accommodating because it is easier. However, “rocking the boat” a bit when the child is younger will lead to smoother sailing when the child is older.

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The Briars Special Early Learning Centre is a DECS preschool which provides a specialised program for children who have a diagnosed disability, significant developmental delay and / or severe and multiple disability. The children attend for one or two full days per week as negotiated, and the play-based curriculum is based on the South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework (SACSA). All children require significant support to develop an effective means to communicate and the staff focus on developing positive relations with families and service providers to ensure a consistent approach.

Transition is a critical issue for all young people with complex sensory and communication needs, and a frequent cause of distress for all involved. As teachers and support staff, we need to provide targeted support for transitions within the preschool to ensure children’s opportunities to participate and engage are maximised, and to develop the skills to cope with change successfully throughout their lives.

Transitions at preschool will include: home to preschool; inside to outside; into the bathroom; mealtimes: relaxation: group times and other activities; going home; going out to the local preschool for the Link program.

At The Briars, the following principles guide our practice across the preschool program:
- It is vital that all children feel safe and secure, and make strong connections to their learning environment and we have found that this is best achieved through a sensory-based program.
- To maximise learning, children respond best in an environment that is predictable and makes sense to them.
Establishing a consistent routine builds a sense of belonging, and this is reinforced for children through repetition.

As children develop familiarity, they become more confident and motivated to participate, leading to increased engagement and independence.

The following strategies have been helpful in assisting children to process instructions when transitioning:

- **Use of key words** to reduce the amount of information the children need to process, particularly if the transition is likely to be less motivating (e.g. 'come sit', 'hat on')
- **Staff carry a set of small cue cards to use as visual supports** to transition children from one activity to another – e.g. photos, pictures cards, object cues (nappy at toilet time, etc)
- **Schedule cards** – e.g. 2 or 3 cue cards such as 'inside, sit, eat', with a motivating activity included if possible
- **Allow extra 'wait time'** – very often it is not 'non compliance' that leads to an outburst, but insufficient time to process what is expected next
- **Some children manage best with gentle warnings** that the activity they are engaged in is coming to an end, particularly if it is highly motivating
- **Focus on helping a child feel calm before moving on** – at The Briars a child may be assisted with this by offering **movement based activities** (e.g. swing, trampoline) prior to quieter activities inside because increased calm helps them to manage the transition
- **Provide children with a physical cue** to prepare their bodies for the transition, such as taking a deep breath, applying some deep pressure or modelling how to give themselves a firm body hug
- **Offer a familiar item as a transitional object or fidget toy** that will provide the child with a sense of security as they move between activities and to assist them change their focus (this may be an object that has meaning for the next activity, such as a book or their drink cup)
- **Set the experience up to include choices** where possible (e.g. between 2 story books, or colours at the painting easel), facilitating independence and communication
- **Use music and songs** to gain interest and increase motivation – music is a very positive way to communicate and children respond better to change in rhythm and tempo. Music and song are highly effective as cues for all children and often less intrusive than spoken instructions

Some of the other key points built in to our practice revolve around the importance of **hands on** support for children to learn the routines in the preschool. **Modelling, targeted positive reinforcement** (good listening, great packing away, you’re ready to go) and **rehearsing the transitions** with children are all important steps towards building an understanding of their day at preschool. **Social stories** are an effective way to rehearse the expectations in many situations with children. For example, a recent focus has been on safe walking out to the car park at the end of the day. A **photo book** was made using children and families from the Centre, and a very brief story was written about greeting Mum or Dad, holding hands, walking on the white lines, and getting safely in to the car. A similar photo book about **'A Day at The Briars'** has been written to allow children to share the story of the activities and transitions made through the day. In effect, the expectations are rehearsed with children when they are calm and best able to process and understand, preparing them ahead of time.

**Engineering the environment to reduce sensory overload** will give children a calm and quiet place to focus. Waiting until others...
have moved on, or taking the opportunity to cue a child when a natural break in an activity occurs, are just a couple of positive and proactive strategies we use across the day.

These strategies are aimed at setting children up for success, now and in the future, as they go about learning how to manage transition in their lives.

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**Transition and Autism at Riverdale R-7 Unit**

The class at the Riverdale R-7 Unit consists of students who all have a diagnosis of autism. Individuals with autism experience anxiety and difficulty trying to understanding the world around them and this can potentially make any changes traumatic. Fear and distress can result in aggressive behaviour and emotional meltdowns. At Riverdale the transition of students into and from our classroom is managed by using the following strategies:

- Advanced preparation
- Meetings with parents and other key people
- Prior visits for the students to the transition site, often occurring out of hours initially so they can become familiar with the new place without the strain of lots of new people and noises
- Negotiating as many short transition visits as are needed for each individual student and regularly reviewing the success of these visits to gauge how to proceed.
- Passing on or receiving information about the students preferred items and activities
- Ensuring students understand what they do or need to do to calm themselves
- Reducing demands made upon students until they are comfortable and are able to trust us. Many students with autism take much longer then typical children to trust new people and need a lot of grace, patience and understanding until they feel secure.
- Taking photos of the new site and people to make up social stories. Additional copies are made for parents to have one to share at home
- Producing clear and detailed transition schedules for parents are care givers and staff at both sites to avoid potential confusion
- Using visual schedules to help students comprehend new timetables, routines and expectations
- Care is taken to continue with existing methods of communication and to pass on to new schools our students PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) with details of how they have been using it
- Autism SA provides transition assistance and advice for all their registered clients. They have provided a worker to accompany students on transition visits and to assist in the classroom during the first weeks of a student's attendance at their new school.

Above all, transition is individualised for each student. While each of our students has a diagnosis of autism their responses are diverse and unique.

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Transition from Primary School to Secondary School

For any student the social interaction of school life can be at times confusing and painful, it is a roller coaster of emotions. The onset of puberty; the social, emotional and educational changes make this a challenging time in any young person’s life. Support from family, friends and school is essential for this transition to occur successfully. For students with ASD they already have the associated social and communication problems of their disability to contend with. Most have already experienced difficulties with friendships and they have the added complications of the adolescent culture with its peculiar language, body language, clothing and music. When preparing Year 7 students for transition into Year 8 many students become concerned about the amount and complexity of Year 8 work. However, they also experience anticipation as they outgrow the rules and constraints of primary school and look forward to the independence and freedom of secondary school.

Adreon and Stella (2001) identified the challenges effecting students with ASD as environmental, psychological, social and physiological. The changes associated with these four areas are a great challenge for any neurotypical student; as for students with ASD, their disability adds another dimension.

Environmental changes
Environmental changes include: a larger school, moving from room to room for various classes, specialist subject teachers, assessment procedures based on grades, more homework, timetables, inflexible routines and contact with older students.

Psychological and Social changes
Psychologically students are dealing with increased expectations from teachers and parents. Assessment procedures are usually more structured, with longer assignments and formalized testing; the competition for good grades becomes very intense. It is important that adolescent students with ASD understand the relevance and implications of their NEP. It is important that someone advocates on their behalf and as they become more confident they are encouraged and taught how to advocate for themselves.

In a survey I conducted of Year 8 students the overwhelming area of concern for students was associated with friendships. Many were concerned that in moving to a new school they would lose their existing friends and not make new ones. Being a ‘loner’ at school is a universal fear of adolescents. Burleson (1985), cited in Willey (2003), estimated that 10 to 20 percent of typical school-aged children suffer social rejection by their peers. “We can assume that for children with ASD this statistic will be significantly higher.” (Willey, 2003, p.22).

With increasing numbers of students with ASD, schools need to be proactive and provide programs, which will support all students. Educating and encouraging neurotypical students to be tolerant of ASD students, to support them and understand their disability, is a challenge. If teachers are not confident in educating their students about ASD, Autism SA provides information sessions for students.

The physiological changes of puberty coincide with the transition into secondary school. For some adolescents with ASD the hormonal and emotional changes in addition to their disability make this a very difficult time to cope with. According to Henault (2006), it is generally considered that individuals with ASD physically develop at the same rate as neurotypical adolescents; they have the same sociosexual interests and the same needs as their peers. However, it is the lack of social skills and communication problems that impair the formation of relationships and increase the likelihood of
inappropriate sexualized behaviours.

Socially most students cope, some better than others. Bullying and harassment can become more sophisticated for girls and more physically and verbally aggressive in boys. This can have devastating effects on a significant number of students with ASD transitioning into secondary schools. Their difficulties with executive functioning and social interaction can be compounded when they are in classes where teachers had little or no knowledge of how to implement strategies to engage them in learning programs. It is often observed that the anxiety levels of students were so elevated that very little learning occurred and the relationships between student and teacher, and student and peers, rapidly deteriorated.

For students with ASD, secondary school has a structure and hierarchy which they need help understanding and the guidance and support from a significant adult in the school will significantly minimise misunderstandings.

Strategies for effective transition planning for Secondary School

In transitioning Yr 7 students into Yr 8 the following strategies are useful

- Plan meetings at least two terms before enrolment in the new school
- Plan on-going visits for transitioning students and families to familiarize themselves with the physical layout of the school, bus routines, library, canteen etc. A social story using actual photographs is very effective; a good resource is Jed Baker’s book “Social Skills Picture Book for High School and Beyond”
- It is very useful for the contact person in the secondary school to build a relationship with the student’s Primary school and staff. These people have a vast knowledge and experience with the student
- Contact the relevant support agencies and discuss the NEP. Usually Autism SA is involved, but on occasions Disability SA also provides support for the student and their family
- Curriculum areas need to be considered in relation to the disability profile and alternatives explored. For instance, sensory issues may impact on a student’s participation in PE or Tech. Studies
- Modify the student’s timetable if appropriate. If anxiety builds they may need a rest day or a late start to the day may help if a student becomes anxious and tired
- Modify Student Behaviour Management policies if necessary or implement a Student Behavior support plan (consult with parents, document and inform all staff). Do this before there is an issue so the parents, student and the school have a clear understanding of processes
- Training and Development for all staff and teachers – this can be provided from with the staff, by Autism SA or the DECS Disability Coordinator.
- Consider class placements in relation to known friends, learning styles and teacher’s methodologies.
- Organize a mentor or peer support person.
- Identify a significant adult in the school who can be an advocate and support for the student.
- Identify a “safe place” in the school. Often the library is a refuge where our students with ASD can meet other students who have similar issues.
- If possible finalize plans so that the student knows before the start of school their Home Group teacher, a SSO and classroom location. The complexity of staffing issues sometimes makes this a difficult exercise but successful transition is dependent on reducing anxiety about the “unknown”.
Transition from Primary School to Secondary School

Continuation of the Transition Program in the new school year for Yr 8s

- For some students school is a series of transition points and they need considerable support to successfully access learning and all areas of the curriculum.
- Relationship building is crucial for students with ASD. The identified significant adult needs to establish a trusting relationship starting the year before. Using additional SSO support in the first few weeks of the year helps students with Home Groups, organization, movement between classes, organization of books and homework and support during recess and lunch times.
- Continue to build a relationship with the student’s parents. Regular communication and a meeting within the first few weeks will help with the transition process.
- The Special Needs contact person needs to meet with subject teachers to discuss the NEP, accommodations and modifications to the classroom curriculum and assessment procedures. It is also important to inform all staff of the student’s issues, who to contact if there is an incident and what strategies to employ.
- Consider information sessions for students in Home groups and subject classes conducted by experienced people familiar with students and ASD.
- Remember all students with ASD are different and their needs will differ.

Students with ASD have much to contribute to our world, as teachers we need to understand the nature of ASD, meet their needs, offer support and enjoy their quirky sense of humour.

References
Adreon, D. and Stella, J. (2001). Transition to Middle and High School: Increasing the Success of Students with Asperger Syndrome. Intervention in School and Clinic; May 2001; 36,5; ProQuest Educational Journals pg.266

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By the time students have reached the end of Year 7, although they may be apprehensive about making the transition to secondary school, most are ready for the move. The thought of moving from primary to secondary school for any child can be quite daunting but more so for a child with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Many schools have a range of methods in place to support the smooth transition into secondary school. With the support of agencies like Autism SA and DECS Disabilities Services, appropriate placements of children with ASD are found, often in their local high school. This article outlines some of the processes that have been developed at Aberfoyle High School to assist ASD students in their successful transition into high school.

Aberfoyle Park High School is a mainstream co-educational state high school, enrolling students from years 8 to 12. There are over 1100 students currently attending and of this cohort, 20 students have ASD, predominantly high functioning Aspergers Syndrome. Each year there are approximately 230+ Year 8 students transitioning into the school from local primary schools and recently over 10% have been student with disabilities.

The school has a number of ways all students are introduced to high school including:

- Orientation visits to APHS of clusters of students conducted by the school counsellors and the Assistant Principal
- School staff and students visiting primary schools to showcase different subjects available e.g. music, dance, leadership training and sporting activities
- Whole day transition for all incoming Year 8’s where they experience a ‘typical’ day in secondary school. Students are provided with a detailed transition booklet as a guide.
- Performances at APHS where local primary school students are invited to watch and at times, showcase their skills performing with mixed groups of secondary students.
- Big Brother/ Big Sister program where Year 11 students work alongside staff to ease the new Year 8’s into high school.
- A Year 8 camp, held at the beginning of the year in weeks 2/3. The camps assist students in settling into secondary school in an exciting and challenging way. All Year 8 students attend, along with Big Brother/ Big Sisters and staff. Students do a range of aquatic activities, archery, rock climbing and team games. It’s a great way to get to know other people in home groups and make friends. Special education staff also attend the camps to specifically support students, including those with ASD. This is a wonderful way of getting to know students while doing fun activities. Although initially a student with ASD may feel anxious and possibly out of their depth, these camps usually rate well amongst the highlights of their first year at secondary school.

Towards Transition:

Students with disabilities participate in all of the above activities. However based on our knowledge and experience additional strategies must be put in place, particularly for those with ASD. Obviously there have been a range of meetings, visits, open day/night tours, discussions in relation to choosing an appropriate placement in secondary school.
Once that decision has been made, staff meet with the primary school staff, Autism SA personnel, district disabilities coordinator and parents while the student is still in Year 7. This allows for information to be shared amongst all interested parties and a transition plan to be put in place. Usually at this time decisions are made. These include: whether ASD student will be gradually transitioned into a part time student; what staff need to know in relation to specific academic; health care needs; support structures necessary for successful transition; academic abilities; interests / strengths and ‘triggers’ that effect the students behaviour and emotional state. At this meeting it is also critical for any relevant reports from specialists to be provided so that accurate information can be developed for subject teachers at the high school who will be teaching the child.

Transition Visits:
The next step is to arrange several orientation visits in addition to other transition activities all students undertake. Depending on the individual these visits are overseen by primary school staff, Autism SA Developmental Educators, parents, APHS Learning Support Coordinator or other secondary staff or a combination of these. The length and timing of these visits are negotiated. Occasionally there will be additional funding available to support the transition.

Inclusion:
The focus for ASD students transitioning into the secondary school setting is inclusion. There is an expectation that through individually negotiated learning plans, each child’s needs are met to the best of the school’s ability in the mainstream setting. Students with disabilities are full time in mainstream classes with assistance given through their participation in a subject called Support Studies. This subject is offered to Year 8’s in place of language unless language is an area of strength. This means that ASD students have one less curriculum based subject, so hopefully they don’t become overwhelmed with the tasks and are more able to cope with the course expectations.

By reducing the number of subjects that ASD students undertake and providing them assistance through Support Studies they have a better chance of being able to organise their time, have a break from the larger/ mainstream classroom environments and receive assistance in a routine manner.

Additional strategies to support students with ASD:
- 4 lessons / week in special support unit to assist with work and behaviour
- A positive environment with a supportive system if issues arise and the students need to use their break cards/ cool down cards/ or need to access staff/ resources/ computers for extra help with tasks
- Break Cards/ cool down cards to be used for sensory overload/ stress in lessons
- A library card for a safe, quiet environment at break times
- In-servicing of subject teachers by unit staff and Autism SA
- Access to computers for students with motor planning difficulties
- School Assistants support in some practical subjects depending on funding
- An access card listing strategies to support them in lessons to be carried by students in their diary
- Each subject teacher receives a pack with detailed information about triggers, strategies and also a photo to identify the student, and general information about ASD
- A range of additional materials available on-line for staff to access to assist them in supporting ASD students and other students with disabilities
- A modified curriculum where necessary and acceleration when appropriate
Strategies are established for free time particularly recess and lunch - games club, library, big brother/big sister program support.

Students have also established some of their own clubs: War hammer group/Dungeons & Dragons/Poke Môn etc. These occur once a week and are supervised by adult volunteers.

All these strategies have meant that ASD students are well supported as they transition into school. Through an extremely structured approach with: consultation, negotiation and flexibility students are set up for success!

One of the most critical parts of this transition is building up partnerships between the primary and high schools, students, parents/care givers/staff and agency personnel.

By working together issues can be worked out and there is a clearer understanding of what should be occurring. There will always be hiccups, days where things don't go according to plan, but in most cases with time, sometimes a lot of time, ASD students adapt well to being in the bigger setting of a secondary school.

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“After twelve long years of many trials and tribulations our son, who has Asperger’s Syndrome has graduated from year 12. It has not been an easy journey especially in the beginning but he did come home sailing.” (The Autiser, 2008).

As educators we need to help students with Asperger Disorder to “come home sailing” and finish school successfully. Success will vary from person to person. For some it will be further education, for others open or supported employment. For most it will also involve the ability to live independently, be a contributing member of the community and have friends. Success is achieving personal goals, whatever they may be.

Achieving successful school outcomes requires resilience. Resilience requires the development of resiliency skills or internal protective factors. Due to cognitive deficits in
Theory of Mind, Central Coherence and Executive Functioning, students with Asperger Disorder lack many of the protective factors which help the development of resilience, but, with assistance, they can develop these skills. Whole school and individual initiatives, strategies, programs and practices help develop and maintain resilience in students with Asperger Disorder at all levels of education. However children and adolescents with Asperger Disorder face many more challenges and unique difficulties than neurotypical people. For this reason, individual programs and procedures need to be used proactively to support the development of these resiliency skills.

It is important when working with secondary school students with Asperger Disorder not to assume they have developed and consolidated skills in primary school and thus will “cope” in secondary school. This is not the case. Resilience is developmental and contextual. The needs of students will change over time, and programs and support structures will need to be adapted to fit the school context at the time. The expectations and challenges of secondary school are completely different. Students will need support to develop and maintain the resilience to cope with these challenges. The development of skills which will lead to students accessing successful post school options requires negotiated, collaborative, individual planning, a case manager, informed staff and flexible support structures.

One of the essential skills for success is autonomy or personal independence. Autonomy will only be achieved if a student has developed self esteem, self confidence, self efficacy, persistence and the ability to set realistic achievable goals. To achieve this, students need to develop self awareness. Self awareness, self understanding and self acceptance seem to be closely linked to the resilience and coping skills of the students with Asperger Disorder. The understanding and support of peers and staff is also crucial. Another essential skill to foster is self advocacy. The ability to understand ones own ability and needs empowers students to be able to inform others of them, and ensure their needs are met and their skills respected.

For students with Aperger Disorder, social and emotional support to help manage stress and anxiety, develop social skills and learn self management and self control, as well as to help with the development of self awareness and autonomy, needs to be an integral part of their individual program. Individual plans and programs also need to include the provision of a success orientated, individual curriculum for all subjects, assistance with organisational skills and work skills and provision of necessary resources to support success. Individual or small group programs to develop these skills, SSO support in classes, a flexible timetable which meets the student’s individual needs, a case worker / mentor to whom the student can relate and safe place to withdraw to if stress and anxiety build up are some strategies which may help.

An informal survey with a small group of secondary students with Asperger Disorder identified the following support structures as particularly helpful to them in Years 8 to 12:

- **Access Cards** – These are a way of informing staff of students’ individual needs and how they are best supported. All students have a copy in their diary. They can use this to easily inform new / temporary teachers and those who do not know them of the modifications, accommodations and teaching and assessment strategies which will support their learning. Students are involved in determining the information on these documents. New copies are available on request. Access Cards empower students to self advocate. A graduating student last year, independently chose to take a copy of
Facilitating Successful Pathways—Secondary Students with Asperger Syndrome

this to inform staff of his needs when he enrolled at TAFE. All staff can access this information on a secure part of the school intranet. A copy is kept in the Tutorial Room.

- **Tutorial Room** - This is a study centre used by a range of students. It is open and staffed all day. At recess and lunch time it provides a safe haven if needed, and a place to meet with like minded peers to play computer games, chess etc.

- Academic and emotional support is available from support staff during lesson times. This may be at regularly scheduled times or times negotiated with class / subject teachers.

- It also provides a “withdrawal” area for voluntary time out / cool down etc.

- **Lockers** available a quiet safe place. This was provided in a bank of lockers outside the Tutorial Room.

- **Support staff** available when needed. Staff are based in the Tutorial Room, are known to students and readily available at times of need. Some students have a particular staff member with whom they have worked closely and learned to trust. They know that if this person is not immediately available, other support staff will help them and / or ensure their particular support person is located and informed of their concerns. The case manager who is backed up by other support staff are fully informed of each student’s needs. This alleviates anxiety and stress and minimises “melt downs”.

- **Regular individual or group sessions** or “appointments” for a chat with a trusted staff member, either to develop specific social and self management skills, or just to discuss problems / stressors which arise.

- **Negotiated curriculum and support** – Students are integral to the development of their access card, curriculum, timetable and support. For some PE can be a nightmare. For others subjects requiring fine motor skills add to their anxiety. Within reason, participation in these subjects can be negotiated and necessary support provided in class.

- **Flexibility** was also thought to be important. As needs change, support needs to change to meet those needs.

- **A tutorial / study line** to complete work and get help as needed. This help may be with curriculum content, completion of assignments and / or work and organisational skills. Staff can help to ensure deadlines are known, recorded and met, equipment and lockers are organised etc.

Some strategies mentioned by individuals as helpful to them included:

- being allowed to leave class a few minutes early to avoid moving in crowds

- being allowed to wear sports gear to school and not needing to change

- having an individual behaviour plan and arrangements for completing detentions

- use of a laptop computer when required

- visual cues and reminders

- colour coded timetable in diary and locker

- developing relaxation techniques and being allowed to use stress balls / fidgets

- being allowed to listen to individual music devices at a low level when completing book work.

These are just some strategies which should help students with Asperger Disorder successfully transition to the next stage of their lives. They are all individuals, with their own unique abilities and needs. One plan or set of strategies will not suit all students. The key is flexibility. Those on the Autism Spectrum have difficulty with change, but to successfully support them, educators need to be able to make changes to meet their individual needs.

Resilience is a dynamic process. It “is a life force that flows and connects every living thing, continually prompting regeneration and renewal” (Deveson, 2003, p.267) To help
individuals with Asperger Disorder "come home sailing", we must connect with them, their families, teachers and other support people, and regenerate and renew our plans, programs and strategies to help them develop the resilience and autonomy to be successful.

References:


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Background to Tatachilla Lutheran College
It is always exciting to prepare for new students joining the school community. Interviews are conducted in the preceding year and most parents of students with Asperger syndrome have started doing their 'homework' for many years prior to the commencement of their child in Secondary schooling.

As Learning Support Coordinator (R – 12), I meet with parents on their own to talk openly and frankly about expectations, previous successful strategies at school and home and goals for the immediate year as well as future years at school. Students are then included in the meeting as are other Learning Support Staff who will have the ongoing, daily contact with the student. Special interests are discussed as these can provide a useful resource and ‘reward’ base for the coming year.

The Learning Support Team
Across R – 12 there are four teachers who have a Special Education Degree and practical expertise in working with students with Autism and Asperger syndrome.

A number of years ago a parent of a student with Asperger Syndrome enrolled in the newly created TAFE Course in Autism Spectrum Disorders at Noarlunga. She did her work placement at Tatachilla and was appointed as the second Support Officer in the following year. Each subsequent year a TAFE student works on placement to our Learning Support team. Currently there are three support officers with expertise in working with students with autism.

The TAFE course covers a range of topics, including learning strategies for working with challenging behaviours, legal and ethical issues, the use of visual strategies like Boardmaker and social stories, social integration strategies and language and communication challenges affecting individuals on the Autism Spectrum.

Applying the knowledge gained while studying this course is very useful. The strategy for supporting students with challenging behaviours provides techniques to diffuse potentially stressful situations. Learning that students on the Autism Spectrum can be literal thinkers raises awareness of how instruction and guidance should be given and the best way to interpret teacher instructions. Awareness of sensory needs is useful with students as this can be distracting in a school environment and in some cases, unbearable for the student themselves.
Prior to the Start of the Year

In the regular curriculum, students in Year 10 and 11 can elect to study ‘Community Studies’ in which they choose to investigate an issue they are particularly interested in. One student created a handbook called ‘Welcome to Tatachilla’ which included photos of the school campus where the student with Asperger syndrome would be working, lockers and locks, uniforms and staff members as well as other information of people and their roles. Autism SA also has a range of suggestions for such a handbook. This is then given to students when they come in for an Orientation Day (which is in addition to the 2 other days of orientation for individual year levels). The handbook is again being updated this year by a year 11 student, who is also using her Peer Tutoring Lessons to support a younger student with Aspergers in his classroom.

At the special orientation visit, some students with Aspergers want to learn the layout of the campus, while others want to meet their teachers, the staff they will work with and where the Learning Support Team have their office area. This can be implemented easily without other students around.

Preliminary Groundwork with Staff

Prior to students commencing at the start of the year, the Learning Support Team has met with parents and the student, had contact with previous school staff (if the student had attended school) and met as a faculty. All regular staff are in-serviced and receive a Handbook of Disabilities that has been generated with pages of concise information about disabilities, strategies and ideas for use in the classroom. Five of these pages are devoted to Autism and Aspergers. Staff also receive a confidential summary of the reports from Agencies, including Autism SA so they are aware of their class composition prior to the start of lessons. Teachers directly involved with a student are made aware of specific requirements and considerations.

Adaptations to the Regular Day

The year commences with a second Year Level Orientation Day, predominantly spent with the Home Class teacher. Learning Support staff provide individual support for the first few days or weeks as required to make sure students settle in and know the daily routine. Simple strategies such as colour coding specific lessons on the timetable to match students’ subject folders and books are used. Similarly, reminder lists of the requirements for each lesson are on desks or in a student’s folder or diary. (For example: Technology – apron, folder, pencil case, with a diagram if appropriate for a student).

Within the class, teachers manage groups to provide successful integration with peers for work tasks. A huge variety of other adaptations are tailored to suit each individual to achieve success. These may include wearing PE gear to school to reduce changing clothes hassles, going on walks to the Support Area (for those who require ‘acceptable’ movement) attending camps for daytime activities rather than staying over night, gaining SACE I Community Studies units on areas of interest and an almost limitless range of other options the students or parents negotiate.

A talented parent has also made sensory ‘toys’ including snakes with different textured ‘skin’ and different weighted sections (using rice, dried beans or other fillings) as well as weighted lap ‘sacks’ that look like pencil cases. Through Sue Larkey (www.suelarkey.com), we have acquired a wide range of ‘fidget toys’ that students can select as a reward for on-task behaviour.

Students with a diagnosed disability are offered Tutorial in lieu of LOTE, or in some instances another elective. This then enables them to gain small group support with classwork, research or to learn typing skills through a Touch, Type, Read, Spell computer program or simply to have a less pressured break in their timetable.
This is in addition to regular support in the classroom during subject times (all students are integrated in the regular curriculum).

The Learning Support office area also has a supply of spare stationery items for ‘lost’ or forgotten equipment. To also help with organisation a single zip up folder with divisions may be used instead of numerous separate folders for individual folders.

Technology has enabled close contact with parents through email, especially of assignments which can be lost, as well as alerting us to new strategies, successes and happenings that will influence performance at school or home. It means that inevitable difficulties can be addressed early and individual strategies implemented to ensure a positive learning environment. Of course phone contact and personal meetings also occur.

Through the Year
There is ongoing school community raising awareness, for example with National Autism Week in May being a focus for daily news bulletins and weekly newsletter articles.

An example from the Daily Bulletin Tues 16th May ‘Students with Aspergers have marked difficulties in social skills, difficulties with transitions or change and prefer sameness. They often have obsessive routines and are preoccupied with a particular subject of interest. Be aware of this and give ample warning of changes in the regular routine.’

Also, during the year staff meetings make a focus of inservicing and updating information regarding Autism and include showing of videos, highlighting new resources, books and sharing successes. The school’s aim is to take small steps and to aim for student’s success in creating a lifetime love of learning.

For two lunchtimes per week an activities Club is run by the Learning Support talented team. Called ‘Chill Out!’ it is open to all students but we actively encourage students with Aspergers to attend so that through a huge variety of common activities the students may meet acquaintances who may later develop into a circle of friends.

In Senior Years
If students do not choose academic subjects that attract a TER, Community Studies is an exceptional vehicle for allowing individual research. In 2007 a student gained Merits in five subjects through her investigations. The quality and depth of her work obviously was exceptional! Other students gain SACE points through investigations into their own areas of interest.

Other students are able to enrol at Pre-TAFE courses in Year 10 or 11 which provides them with the ability to expand their skills and give a day a week overview of the possibilities for post school.

Transition Support for a Student with Aspergers: A Parent’s Perspective.
‘Transition to Secondary School is one of many stressful and emotional times in the life of a young child with Aspergers Syndrome. My son missed most of year seven with problems socializing with his peers, and teachers not understanding his ‘different’ behaviors. These problems accelerated into depression and talk of suicide. This resulted yet again in more testing, and eventually a diagnosis of Aspergers Syndrome.

The next eight months were spent researching and absorbing information on Aspergers and inclusion. I then translated this information and applied it to our son’s individual needs and personality. The first steps we made in the effort to ensure a smooth transition to Tatachilla Lutheran College were to alert all staff of any special requirements or adaptations our son required. Secondly we orientated him with the school surroundings, and as many day to day procedures as possible.
This was done prior to any students starting. It really did help to alleviate a little of the first day stresses. Other things to be aware of or to try.

- Be there at the end of the day and listen to all the ‘terrible things’ that they perceive have happened to them throughout the day. Then filter this information into reality or perceived reality.
- The ‘end of day’ explosion is frequently necessary for them to release all the built up emotions that they will not display at school. In reality they have been in an unfamiliar, uncomfortable and probably challenging situation all day where they have to try to conform and contain themselves.
- Try and find that one glimmer of a positive and help them to focus on that. Keep the information they blurt out in context of the day they have had and only react to the points you think need attention.
- Give them the chance to experience challenges and a chance to pick up the pieces for themselves.
- When they get tired (as we all do) give them a break. Kids with Aspergers use so much more energy just to get through the day than we will ever need to use.
- With reluctant attendees, work with specialist staff and NEGOTIATE.
- Trust in the teaching staff (I know as a parent it is hard to let go of the ‘control reins’) who are professionals, trained to work and be with your child for 7 hours a day. Without trust and working together as a team, you are fighting a losing battle.
- Most teachers are willing to listen and try new strategies, but don’t overwhelm them. Finally a note to teachers; all students with Aspergers or any other learning disorder, are individuals so please value them as such. Aspergers syndrome is a very complex disorder so be willing to try a variety of strategies, and keep experimenting with suggestions!

Recommended Resources:

**DVD**—Autism SA *The Asperger Point of View* (2006): a good mix of factual information from experts, with insightful interviews with ‘real’ people who have Asperger’s, talking about their lives.

**DVD**—Intricate Minds II Understanding Elementary School Classmates with Asperger Syndrome

**Books:**

- Haddon, Mark (2004) *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* David Fickling Books(Random House), UK. It is also available in audio format for students who struggle with reading).

**Contact:**

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Learning Support Coordinator R – 12 Tatachilla Lutheran College Telephone: 8323 9588
Because people with Asperger Disorder and High Functioning Autism have a different way of thinking and seeing the world, a different approach to transition planning is essential (Jacobsen, 2005). “The goal of vocational training is to obtain the best “match” between the individual and the work environment, and to identify the support services needed to maintain the individual in that environment” (Singleton, Dalrymple and Dewees, 1986)

Students are encouraged to think about their work options at an earlier age in special schools than students in mainstream schools. This provides a greater opportunity to work with students to develop realistic expectations. Students with Asperger disorder and High Functioning Autism, knowing that they have normal to high intelligence want to pursue career paths that follow their obsessive area of interest. In many cases for Kensington Centre students this is computing or computer programming. Students need to understand what the academic requirements are to get into university and TAFE Certificate courses. Students are daunted not only by the academic work involved but also by the minutiae of tertiary education.

When students understand that they will be responsible for every aspect of their work from getting to lectures on time to taking notes and writing and handing in papers, they realize the enormous difficulties that stand in their way. There are support services they can access but for many students that means acknowledging that they are different from the rest of the students. One counsellor from the TAFE system was concerned that many students with Asperger disorder did not come to see him until they had virtually failed their course. He put this down to an unwillingness to be seen as different, sometimes not realizing until too late that no one was going to chase them for their work.

For students from special schools, business services like Bedford Industries, Orana Incorporated and Phoenix Society provide work experience opportunities. The students with Asperger disorder and High Functioning Autism find the process and packaging work offered boring and repetitive. They are not generally interested in, nor do they have the coordination and strength for metal fabricating or wood work. There are also sensory issues around noise, smells and dust and dirt in these areas (Williams 1996). Business Services are however very forgiving social environments in which to hone the social skills associated with a work place and understanding a work place culture. This is an environment in which to begin perfecting those skills and developing leadership skills. They are also very accommodating in terms of part time work and limited hours per day.

Roger Mayer suggests that the stress of being in a work place and having to think every moment about the unspoken messages conveyed by others is exhausting. He suggests that people with Asperger disorder consider part time employment to begin their working lives until they have developed confidence and their employers and co-workers understand their particular needs (Mayer, 2001).

The State Transition Program is a government funded initiative to give students with disabilities in their last year of schooling an opportunity to find work in open employment. Students receive a ten week training block with one of the employment service providers like Workskill, Personnel Employment or Eastside. This aims to give them practice searching the internet for jobs that interest them, writing applications and interview techniques. They also talk about workplace culture and legislation relevant to the workplace like Occupational Health and Safety, Harassment and Discrimination. Students go to TAFE to complete part of their Certificate 1 in Vocational Skills and work as a group. They do ten weeks specific industry training in the area
of their choice and have two weeks mentored work experience in open employment.

The notion of a lifelong learning process fits well with young people whose developmental levels are erratic for their age and many of whose skills are splintered (Jacobsen, 2005). Ideally students will be able to take all the time they need to develop the essential skills and understandings to access the most challenging options they can find. The process of moving from school to a post school option should be seamless as students move from the guidance of teachers and parents to the support and guidance of professional employment training services or mentored pathways through tertiary study.

References:
Jacobsen, P., (2005), Understanding How Asperger Children Think and Learn, London: Jessica Kingsley

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A PARENT PERSPECTIVE—TRANSITION

Transition: movement, passage, or change from one position, state, stage, subject, concept, etc., to another; change: the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Change is a difficult concept for many people to cope with, with or without a disability. As an educator with many experiences of transitioning children into classes, it is a different experience as a parent of two children with Autism spectrum Disorder. With support from experienced team leaders in the pre-school and school settings, transition has been made easier for my children.

My oldest son, having a very limited vocabulary of about five words, began at a local kindergarten with an extended short visit transition. A few extra visits were negotiated with the kindy prior to him starting and he joined the playgroup to help familiarise him with the new environment. An Early Childhood Worker (ECW) worked with my son to help him negotiate his way through the kindy program at another kindy. Soon after he started we decided to move him to a kindy with a special Speech and Language Program and again he settled quickly into his new environment.

When it came time for my son to start school an extra term at kindy was negotiated through his Negotiated Education Plan (NEP). The school and the kindy staff met prior to him starting school and set up his learning goals and support needs. His transition to school included visits with his friend from kindy; the school also organised School Services Officer (SSO) support for him in the yard. Each year as he progressed through school special consideration was taken to ensure he had at least one friend (familiar face) in his class group and an annual NEP meeting was held to review his progress and adapt his learning goals.

Our younger son was non-verbal and had a diagnosis of PDD-NOS (Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not otherwise Specified). At his first kindy visit he was very distressed. The staff arranged for the District
Disability Support Coordinator to provide assistance on how best to help him begin kindy and she provided support until he was able to stay for the whole session without crying. We also negotiated a gradual transition, and he had the assistance of a support worker (ECW).

After two terms, with the help of the District Disability Support Coordinator, we applied to The Briars for him to attend one day a week, maintaining two of his sessions at the Kindy. He was given a photo book of The Briars for us to show him before he attended his sessions. He adapted quickly and seemed to flourish in his dual environments.

He was then re-assessed by Autism SA, with a change in diagnosis to Autism. He became eligible to join the “play” groups run by Autism SA, another new and unfamiliar environment. For a little boy that liked all things familiar and unchanged, he was learning to adapt quite quickly to all of these new people, places and environments.

When the time came for him to start school we considered the options, and chose to send him to Modbury Special School. He was given a photo book of the school and attended a number of morning transition visits the term prior to him starting school. As each year has progressed the school continues to transition the children at the end of each year to their new classroom and where possible with their new teacher.

During all of these changes I had the support of family, friends and the leaders at each of the sites. At kindy there was a support group of parents formed as a part of the speech and language group. We met for coffee and a chat to share the successes, failures and frustrations; we also had social contact with the children’s speech pathologist and speech and language program teacher which enabled us to get advice as new problems arose. Having a support network of like minded peers is an invaluable strategy when coping with difficulties, new situations and challenges.

I found these to be useful strategies:

- Allowing your child to visit the site a few times before starting
- Using a photo book of the new site, teacher, toilets etc.
- Allowing your child to take a familiar toy/book/chewy tube with them for security
- Establishing a quiet spot before they start if they need help to recover their equilibrium
- Ensuring staff understand any dietary or eating issues that affects your child
- Allowing yourself the opportunity to take time out while your child is at kindy or school. If you are feeling good your child will benefit from having a happy and healthy parent.

Change can be difficult for anyone to cope with, but my children prove to me every day that it can be managed successfully. I credit most of their success to the kindy and school staff and the DECS support personnel, all who have been more than an integral part of my children’s development.

Contact:
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The start of the year is an important time to look at how to create an environment for success. Over the years I have found there are 11 key strategies that are most important to set EVERYONE up for success.

1. **Individual:**
   Everyone with ASD is different and we need to get to know the individual child.

2. **Routines:**
   Creating predictable routines gives students confidence, independence and reduces anxiety.

3. **Schedules:**
   Allow the student to anticipate activities and routines. They are a great tool to develop independence.

4. **Visuals:**
   Use visuals to enrich the learning environment. There are a huge range of visual tools available to support students learning and this can include photos, black and white line drawings, gesture, written word. Visuals can be used in many ways including schedules, calendars, worksheets, social stories.

5. **Communicate Clearly:**
   Do not assume the student understands you. Most people with ASD are visual learners and need time to process speech. Many students find whole class instructions difficult to follow. Communication can be supported by using visuals, sign language, gesture and written word to support verbal language. For example: if you write whole class instructions on the board many students will find them easier to follow.

6. **Limit Choices/Adapt Activities:**
   By adapting activities and reducing choices you will find students with ASD engage more quickly in activities and are more successful. For example if a student is told to choose a book from the shelf to read they may find that overwhelming or keep changing their mind and swapping books. If instead you show them 2 books to choose from, they are more likely to engage in reading - which is the goal.

7. **Create Social Opportunities:**
   Just putting students with ASD around other children will not magically create friendships and social interaction. Most students need assistance in social situations, so creating opportunities that are supported will help interaction. For example a club in the playground where the child can interact with a small group of children in a structured activity.

8. **Prepare Environment for Transitions:**
   Transition times can be the most confusing and stressful time for students with ASD. It is very important to plan ahead and have strategies in place to ensure smooth transitions. This is where routines and schedules are very effective, as they allow the student to anticipate the change and know what is expected. Time Timers are also wonderful as they pre-warn the student how long before a change.

9. **Prepare for Behaviour:**
   Knowing the student and having information on what may upset the student or cause a meltdown is very important. As you can’t anticipate all behaviour and in a busy classroom may miss triggers the MOST important part is to have a strategy to calm the child once you notice their behaviour is escalating. Talk to family, carers, past teachers and find out WHAT strategies work once the student’s behaviour is escalating.

10. **Choose your battles. Prioritise:**
    When you start the year and talk to parents you could end up with an extremely LONG list of goals for the student. Decide the top 2 or 3 goals and work on these first. It is
very important that everyone at home and school is focused on the same goals as this ensures success.

11. Set up for Success / Reward / Motivate:
EVERYONE needs to be motivated and rewarded not just the student. EVEN the smallest successes are worth celebrating.

For more detail on each of these 11 Strategies and as an ideal preparation for the year a 3 x DVD pack is available. This is a live recording of a full day presentation including hundreds of great ideas and explanations. It includes:

Dr Lee Sturgeon: Clinical Psychologist - An introduction to ASD and Anxiety management in ASD with a focus on practical strategies.
Sue Larkey: ASD Educator - 11 Key Strategies for Success
This can be ordered on the Sue Larkey website.

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TECHBITS

Boardmaker Plus

Boardmaker has long been used to create symbol-based print materials. Mayer Johnson has now released Boardmaker Plus. As well as creating print materials, Boardmaker Plus has the ability to talk and play recorded sounds and movies. The program has an interactive multimodal component that allows users to create talking activity boards, worksheets, schedules, books, writing activities, and educational games. Students can engage with these activities at a computer or on an Interactive Whiteboard. Boardmaker Plus also utilizes computer voice engines to read out any text on the screen.

Boardmaker Plus can be used to create computer-based interactive materials, communication displays for AAC users, talking lessons for English language learners, visual schedules and social skills stories for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, books and symbol-supported literacy activities for beginning and pre-readers, song and story boards and general educational and functional living skills activities.

Boardmaker Plus can be purchased from SERU at a discounted price.

Nuance RealSpeak Solo Australian English voices for Boardmaker Plus
Boardmaker Plus utilizes the computer’s voice engines to read aloud any text on the screen. High quality Australian English voices can now be purchased for use with Boardmaker Plus. These are very natural human-sounding voice engines. The RealSpeak Australian English voices give users an expressive, realistic, and highly intelligible speech interface. Two voices are available through Spectronics at $69 each. It is worth noting that these voices are locked to Boardmaker Plus. They can not therefore be utilized by other computer programs with text to voice capabilities. This makes this purchase option rather limiting. For a similar price, a more flexible option is to purchase a new program called WordRead PLUS. It is packaged with both the male and female Australian voices and these voices can be used by other programs that have text to voice capabilities (including Clicker 5 and Boardmaker Plus). More information about the features of WordRead PLUS is outlined below).

WordRead PLUS

WordRead PLUS adds powerful speech features which allow you to listen to any information on your computer screen – documents, emails, web pages and more.
WordRead PLUS incorporates the world-leading RealSpeak text-to-speech voices to provide high quality read back of virtually anything on your PC screen. With RealSpeak speech, the accuracy and human quality of the text read-back is human-like and highly impressive. Adding to the appeal of this program is the fact that all text is read back in a clear, easy-on-the-ear Australian accent. WordRead PLUS will work with any application or software program on your PC.

With WordRead PLUS you have the following extensive range of speech facilities:

- RealSpeak Solo voices for the most natural and realistic sounding human voices (Australian English: ‘Karen’ and ‘Lee’)

- Automatically hear many menu items and objects read by hovering the mouse over the item. Hear button texts and tool tips too.

- Read text back from anywhere within Microsoft Word

- Read and highlight web pages in Internet Explorer

- Make audio files from documents for listening to on your PC or a portable audio player

- Text to Speech Pronunciation Dictionary to modify the way words are pronounced.

WordRead PLUS is available through Spectronics. A single licence copy sells for $150.

Freeware bits
In this issue of SERU Update, two free software programs are highlighted. Google SketchUp and Scratch are quite different programs but both have an interface which appeals to visual/spatial learners.

Google SketchUp and Project Spectrum:
Google SketchUp is a free software program that can be used to create 3D models. These models can be of objects such as small as furniture or as large as a living room, skate park or even a complete city. A program created for architects, SketchUp is proving to be an unexpected hit with children on the Autism spectrum.

Project Spectrum was developed by the SketchUp Team at Google to help people with autism take advantage of their visual and spatial gifts. In partnership with the Autism Society of America and Boulder valley District School, the Google team have developed resources and an online community to support children with autism wishing to utilize Google SketchUp.

The Project Spectrum link is http://www.google.com/educators/spectrum.html

Follow to this link to a Newsweek article which reports on the findings. http://www.newsweek.com/id/179952

Examples of what can be created with Google SketchUp can be found at their 3D Warehouse http://sketchup.google.com/3dwarehouse/

They can be downloaded and edited with SketchUp.
Scratch (freeware):

Scratch is a new programming language that makes it easy to create your own interactive stories, animations, games, music, and art -- and share your creations on the web. Scratch is designed to help children develop 21st century learning skills. As they create and share Scratch projects, young people learn important mathematical and computational ideas, while also learning to think creatively, reason systematically, and work collaboratively.

The really impressive feature of Scratch is the visual drag and drop interface. Children can program interactive creations by simply snapping together graphical blocks, much like LEGO® bricks, without any of the obscure punctuation and syntax of traditional programming languages. These colour coded graphical blocks contain instructional procedures such as movement, colour and sound. Once completed, children can then share their interactive stories and games on the Web, the same way they share videos on YouTube. Engaging with other kids in an online community provides inspiration and feedback.

The web site is http://scratch.mit.edu/

Contact:
Jim Sprialis
Project Officer Learning and Technology
Special Education Resource Unit
Telephone: (08) 82352871
Teachers play an important role in early intervention and increased understanding of autism is critical to enhancing the successful outcomes of teaching and learning programs for these students. This resource is intended to provide the support and links to resources to increase the capacity of teachers to develop effective support plans for early intervention and provide quality programs for students with autism. This resource also emphasises the value of developing early positive partnerships with families, DECS support services and other agencies such as Autism SA and Disability SA to support the learning journey together. The ASD package includes:

1. **ASD Booklet and CD ROM DVD**
   - The ASD booklet as a starting guide for teachers. This booklet has basic information, where to go for help, suggested beginning resources (books, articles and reports), recommended websites and links to services.
   - It includes a recommended **ASD support plan** which can be used to gather useful information for planning as part of the negotiated education planning process (NEP).
   - The CD ROM includes the following:
     - The booklet – on line (links in document should work to directly link to websites and PDF documents)
     - The ASD recommended support plan
     - Two PowerPoints: one of the basic information from the booklet, and a PowerPoint of suggested examples of visual strategies and scheduling from schools.
     - An 8 minute video ‘Resources teachers recommend’

2. **The folder package includes**
   - Autism SA booklet *An introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders* and resource list
   - *The Asperger Point of View* DVD from Autism SA
   - SERU information and link to access online resources, and information about a *Visual Tools Database* CD (requiring the Boardmaker program).
   - Link to book extract: Education Children with Autism (Committee on Educational Interventions for Children with Autism, National Research Council)
   - A sensory toy and other resource information

Limited copies of this resource package, developed by *Statewide Verification and Professional Support* for teachers of new students identified on the autism spectrum, are still available. The package has already been provided to all special class teachers and a copy to all special schools in South Australia via the courier.

Further copies will be available on loan from SERU. The resource is part of an Autism resource website link through the SVPS at [http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/svpst](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/svpst).

**Contact:**

Kathy Meredith
Statewide Verification and Professional Support
Telephone (08) 8226 9906
Email: meredith.kathy@saugov.sa.gov.au
Chess is one of the great games of the world. Its origins stretch back over 1500 years and it is enjoyed by millions of people everywhere for its tactics and strategy, its beauty and fun. It is essentially a game of pattern recognition and is used widely in education to encourage students to concentrate, think logically and to solve problems. There are more books on chess than practically any other subject and any study, even just a little, is often rewarded by spectacular results over the board.

You will find chess being played in parks, libraries, universities and ghettoes, by the very young and the very old, by the very rich and the very poor. It is a universal language and will acquaint you with the world, the players and the places. You will discover players from everywhere, all thinking just like you and it is fascinating to look at games played hundreds of years ago and marvel at the logic displayed even then.

The social element of the game is often underestimated – it is a simple and wonderful way to get to know people. It is amazing how much you can learn about a person without saying a word; when the game is being played half-seriously, you will often discover the true nature of your opponent, whether he or she is careful, exuberant, aggressive, defensive, likes to gamble, has a sense of humour etc. The play does not have to be technically perfect – indeed it is often said, you will always find someone who is stronger or weaker than yourself.

Many parents play chess with their children on a weekly basis and over a quiet game that might go for 30 minutes, they will discuss what's happening in their worlds and discover much about each other.

There was a fear that computers would put an end to chess, but if anything it is the reverse. Computers, and the internet in particular, allow people anywhere to play games with each other regardless of their location and the 'chess servers' are so good that you can have someone, for example in Australia playing someone in Iceland with observers and comments from Thailand and South America. It is also instant and in many cases free. This is a wonderful option for someone with a disability – you can have all the comforts of home and still connect with many people of your own level.

Chess is not difficult but it helps to learn it young – it's a bit like a language. It often has a strong appeal to people with a musical or mathematical bent but that's certainly not always the case – I'm thinking of myself in particular! It is also popular with many with Autism or Asperger's Syndrome – there is much theory that can be learnt and the game can provide a lovely escape into a quiet world of logic and patterns.

Alan Goldsmith—Knights and Bytes
alang@knightsandbytes.com.au
(Alan has been State Champion 3 times and the chess writer for the Sunday Mail for 25 years).
AUTISM WEB SITES—TRANSITION

Sue Larkey
http://www.suelarkey.com/

ASD in the Classroom - Ginny Pyatt

Indiana Resource Center for Autism
http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/irca/fmain1.html

Autism Research Institute
http://www.autism.com/

Access Transition
http://www.ataccess.org/resources/fpic/transition.html

Moving Into the World of Employment
http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/irca/adultoptions/WorldEmployment.html

Work Study and Supported Employment: One School District's Approach
http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/irca/adultoptions/WorkStudy.html

The Puzzle of Lifestyle Planning
http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/irca/adultoptions/puzzle.html

Keys to Successful Independent Living, Employment and a Good Social Life for Individuals with Autism and Asperger's
http://www.autism.com/individuals-successful.htm

Choosing the Right Job for People with Autism or Asperger's Syndrome
http://www.autism.com/individuals/jobs.htm

Making the Transition from the World of School into the World of Work
http://www.autism.com/individuals/transition.htm

Autism and Transition – Dept. of Education - Tasmania


JOURNAL ARTICLES

Surviving the transition to secondary school
Hornery, S.
Link Newsletter
Vol 13 no 4; August 2004 (0775)

Transition to middle and high school: Increasing the success of students with asperger syndrome
Adreon, D. Stella, J.
Intervention in school and clinic
Vol 36 no 5, May 2001, p226-271 (0132)

Teaching transitions techniques for promoting success between lessons
Mcintosh, Kent et al
Teaching Exceptional Children
Vol 37 no 1, September/October 2004 (0825)

Moving from elementary to middle school: supporting a smooth transition for students with severe disabilities
Carter, E; Clark, et al
Teaching Exceptional Children
Vol 37 no 3, Jan/Feb, 2005 (0855)

You can’t put a square peg in a round hole
Henn, J & M
Autism Spectrum Quarterly
Spring 2005 (0903)

Facilitate transitions
Lacava, Paul
Teaching Exceptional Children
Vol 41 no 1, September 2005 (1050)
JOURNAL ARTICLES

Students with special educational needs: transitions from primary to secondary school
Mara, P. Aveling, E.
British Journal of Special Education
Vol 33 no 4, 2006 (1392)

Be prepared - tips for transitioning into early childhood education
Oliver, Laura Ann

Exceptional Parent
Vol 38 issue 9, September 2008 (1658)

20 Ways to…
Enhance access to postsecondary education for students with disabilities
Shaw, S. F. Madaus, Joseph W., Banerjee M.
Intervention in School and Clinic
Vol 44, No.5, January 2009

RESOURCES RELATED TO TRANSITION / AUTISM

This book provides information about why a student has difficulties coping with change. Two chapters discuss the importance of careful transition planning when a learner moves from one year level to the next, or to another school.

This guide provides details on preparing children for transition to school. The Starting School Checklist covers developmental areas and can be completed to indicate what skills may need to be achieved before school is commenced.

This book, containing reproducible worksheets and proforma, is intended as a guide to secondary schooling for teachers and families of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and/or Asperger Syndrome. Contents include: Class Expectations and Creating Rules; Social Understanding; School Carnivals; Specific Curriculum; Assignments; Mind Maps; The Importance of Being Perfect; How to Use the Special Interest; Anxiety; Communication with the family; Transition to Tertiary Study and Post School Options.

Transition Support: Enhancing Transition Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, De Zeeuw, Katie; McMahon, Catherine, 2005. 45-0128-01.
This book is designed to assist schools and teachers working with individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder in secondary schools by providing information on transition from school to post school options. It provides suggestions on preparing individuals for post school options, an outline of alternative pathways available post school, strategies to use to promote positive and proactive behaviours and strategies to assist with challenging behaviours.

Employment for Individuals with Asperger Syndrome or Non Verbal Learning Disability, Fast, Yoona, 2004. 45-0115-01.
Providing practical and technical advice on everything from job hunting to interview techniques, from ‘fitting in’ the workplace to whether or not to disclose a diagnosis, this book guides people with Non-Verbal Learning Disability (NLD) or Asperger Syndrome (AS) through the area of employment.

DVD—Beyond Expectations—experiences of people with a disability in employment, TAFE, NSW. 45-0135-01.
This sub titled DVD produced by TAFE NSW Disability Programs Unit depicts a number of adults with various disabilities involved in a range of jobs. The disabilities depicted include: deaf, psychiatric illness, acquired brain injury, Aspergers syndrome.
This book provides a wide range of information for School Services Officers supporting learners on the Autism Spectrum to engage in education and learning. There are a variety of ideas and strategies plus responses to Frequently Asked Questions. Contents also include: Adapting Curriculum; Using Technology; Behaviour; Build ups - what they look like; Transitions moving between activities and subjects; Transitions to a new class, new teacher, new school.

Quality Educational Practices for Students with Asperger Syndrome, Shearer, J et al. 19-0102-01.
This report of the Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities describes educational practices for students with Asperger syndrome, as observed in South Australian schools. It is also intended as a resource for educators and includes information about Asperger syndrome, its prevalence, the emotional and intellectual characteristics of students, examples of educational practice and profiles of the nine schools involved.

This book, written for parents, teachers and other professionals, endeavours to bring to life the experience of being an adolescent first, and, secondarily, an adolescent with Asperger Syndrome. Contents include: Journeys and Partnerships; Self-regulation and The Four A’s; You Can’t Not Communicate, Memory, Organisation and the Executive Functions; Thinking and Learning; Passions, Preoccupations, and Routines; Emotional Competence; Friendship and Intimacy; The Rules of the (Social) Road; Getting Ready for the Real World.

This curriculum is designed to teach social skills that increase the opportunity for job success. The sequence of social skills are: ordering job responsibilities; understanding directions; making introductions; asking questions; asking permission; asking for help; accepting help; requesting information; taking messages; engaging in conversation; giving directions; receiving compliments; giving compliments; convincing others; apologising; accepting criticism; responding to a complaint.

This book provides two types of lessons—instructional and behavioural. The instructional lessons are intended to teach learners what they need to do or say in social situations, such as: Social Skills—Hallway Crowds, Dress Code, Asking for Help, Waiting for Help, Answering the Teacher; Routine Activities—Taking Notes, Homework, I Finish My Work, The Bathroom; Special Activities—New School, School Vacations, Field Trip, Leaving School Early.
See also: 19-0068-01 Managing Behaviour; 19-0068-02 Vocational; 19-0068-03 Interacting; 19-0068-04 Health and Hygiene; 19-0068-06 Safety.

This booklet, produced in collaboration with Autism SA on behalf of the University of South Australia, aims to provide information and strategies that will assist workers to work effectively with people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder in their pursuit of open employment.
SERUpdate

RESOURCES RELATED TO TRANSITION / AUTISM

Strategies at Hand, Brewer, RD; Mueller, TG. 19-0123-01.
This is a set of strategies for working with students on the Autism Spectrum. The various types of strategies are colour coded: Blue - Learning Environments; Purple - Areas of student needs; Green - Transitions (planned and unplanned); Orange - Alphabetical explanations of strategies; Yellow - Resources and references for further information on a range of topics related to students with autism spectrum disorders. Items highlighted in the resource section are available for loan from the SERU collection.

This book is directed at educators working with students with Asperger Syndrome. The summary of currently available information also covers key issues such as social skills, homework, playground behaviour, assisting with study. Contents include: What signs might a child display? What are some strategies for the classroom? What should the Teacher Aide be focusing on? Who else in the school needs to know? What should happen before the child changes class or school?

I'm Going to School, Tulemans, Anne. 66-1378-01.
This workbook is designed for learners who are beginning pre-school or school. It is designed for the learner to create a visual guide in preparation for the first steps into a new environment.

This book, containing blackline masters, is designed to help teachers, particularly in the upper primary and lower secondary levels, address a number of situations that may involve the lives of some or all of their students. The activities provide a framework for literacy-based discussion and sharing of thoughts and ideas.

The seven major issues addressed are: bullying; peer pressure; death of a friend or relative; drugs; accepting people with differences; transition to secondary school; marriage breakdown.

This book contains practical strategies and solutions for understanding unstated rules in social situations. It is designed to be used to assist individuals with social-cognitive difficulties to make sense of the unspoken rules and expectations that govern everyday interactions with others.

This book, second in the Visual Strategies series (see 17.0158.01.01), provides information on improving communication using visual strategies. The book explores the behaviour - communication - visual strategy link utilising a simple framework. This consists behaviour problems and what causes them and communication and visual strategies that improve communication.

This text provides a framework for defining and planning transition, addresses facilitation and support, and discusses ways to individualise transition service delivery for people with specific types of disabilities.
The Transition series provides practical resources and strategies on a variety of topics that are critical to the process of preparing individuals for adulthood. It includes: Self Determination Strategies for Adolescents in Transition; Planning Curricula and Additional Resources. See also: 45-0110-01 Family Involvement in Transition Planning and Implementation.

Video—You’ve Got the Job: Legal Rights and Responsibilities of Employees, VEA, 2005. 45-0124-01.
This 20 minute video produced in Australia details a program which looks at legal issues relating to employment for young people. It examines an employer’s duties and responsibilities and is a guide for those already employed in part-time or casual work as well as those about to enter the workforce.

This book contains social and emotional development activities for learners with Asperger Syndrome, Autism, Pervasive Development Disorder and Non-Verbal Learning Disability. Designed for younger children, between the ages of two and eight, these activities emphasise foundation skills such as social referencing, regulating behaviour, conversational reciprocity and synchronized actions.

Teach Me To Play CD, Durant, H; Larkey, S, 2007. 19-0112-01.
This CD contains 44 colour schedules and over 500 pictures to create other play schedules and variations designed to teach play skills. It contains a section titled Using Visual Schedules to Promote and Teach Play.

This 25 minute video produced in Australia about work experience presents case studies from a number of students in a variety of work situations. It provides: information about work experience; demonstrates how to get the most out of the opportunity; explores what work experience can be like; examines the benefits it can yield; discusses the ‘do’s’ and ‘don’ts’ when undertaking work experience.

This 20 minute video produced in Australia examines the various signs and sources of conflict and ways of handling it so that reasonable and effective outcomes are achieved.

Making It A Success, Larkey, S. 19-0088-01.
This reference for educators provides easy to follow strategies and photocopiable worksheets that can be used with a range of students with special needs, including students with Autism/Asperger Syndrome and ADHD. The contents include over 500 strategies covering work tasks, communication/language, playground, using schedules, sensory activities, computers and mathematics. It also includes worksheets, teacher notes and explanations of the nature of Autism Spectrum Disorders.

This book aims to share approaches and strategies that have been effective with students with autism. The book is structured around five key areas that often cause the greatest concern when teaching students with autism: cognition and learning; sensory processing; communication; social skills; behaviour.
The Early Years—The Foundations for All Learning, Larkey, S; Von Ess, G. 19-0109-01. This book has been designed as a how to book for parents/caregivers and educators to refer to in regard to managing behaviour, promoting communication, establishing basic attending skills and introducing new activities to young learners with autism spectrum disorders or developmental delays.

DVD—Making It A Success, Larkey, S. 19-0200-01. This pack contains two DVDs that and a 90 page book of practical strategies and worksheets for teaching students with Autism Spectrum Disorder at school and at home. It is devised by Sue Larkey.

The Sixth Sense II. 19-0208-01. This book contains the Sixth Sense lesson plan which shares accurate information about autism spectrum disorder with learners aged 7-12. This lesson uses activities and discussion to replace student theories surrounding puzzling behaviours with accurate information based on autism research. Using the 5 senses as a frame of reference, this lesson introduces learners to their six - or social - sense through these activities and discussion.


DVD—Engineering the Classroom with Visual Strategies, Hodgdon, Linda, 2006, 19-0215-01. This DVD, a summary and explanation of procedures followed to set up a classroom with visual strategies, is subtitled Working with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Related Learning Challenges. These procedures, appropriate for any environment and a range of age groups, are helpful to plan classroom strategies at the beginning of the year or can be implemented any time during the school year. The 30 minute DVD program includes Handouts: an 8 page PowerPoint presentation and an 8 page Assessment Guide.

In the Deep End, Ilott, Gail Anne, 2005. 19-0205-01. This book is sub titled Survival Strategies for beginning teachers of students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and is designed to assist educators and parents new to the experience of working with learners with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. It contains practical strategies and information that have been used in classrooms.

Asperger Syndrome in the Inclusive Classroom, Betts, Stacey et al, 2007. 19-0221-01. This book offers advice and strategies for educators working with learners with Asperger Syndrome (AS). Written by classroom teachers from a teacher’s perspective, the book provides strategies that are designed to support and encourage AS learners in the mainstream classroom. Topics covered include: organisation and time management techniques, adapting curriculum, social situations.

This book is designed to be an awareness raising resource for learners to help them understand their classmate who may have an autism spectrum disorder. The book is presented in three parts: Information for Children about Autism Spectrum Disorder; Notes for Parents; Notes for Teachers. There is also a section on relevant books, websites and other resources.

This book uses primarily a visual strategy to teach social skills. The book assists learners to visualize the positive outcomes of performing a skill and how people think and feel in response to their behaviours. There are approximately 30 social skills demonstrated, including conversation, play, emotion management and empathy. See also: 66-1343-01 The Social Skills Picture Book for High School and Beyond.

This book contains a series of 70 step-by-step skill lessons with accompanying worksheets and activities and general information about social skills training and related issues.

This book is designed to assist the reader to learn more about the characteristics of learners with Asperger Syndrome (AS). The book provides a global perspective on how the various characteristics may overlap with one another and how they may manifest themselves in a variety of situations.

This book is a guide to writing and using targeted social stories to develop the understanding of social interactions.

This book, written by the parent of a boy with autism, utilises the perspective of a child’s voice to assist in developing understanding about the thinking patterns that guide actions, shape environment conducive to learning styles and ways to meaningfully communicate.

The Social Skills Picture Book: for High School and Beyond, Baker, J. 66-1343-01.
This book uses primarily a visual strategy to teach social skills. The book assists learners to visualize the positive outcomes of performing a skill and how people think and feel in response to their behaviours. The social skills demonstrated include peer conflicts, dating, employment and classroom situations.
This book is a communication programming guide. Part 1 provides an overview of autism spectrum disorders; part 2 describes the development of pre linguistc communication and symbolic language and Part 3 consists of ideas for programming and includes how to use augmentative communication.

The purpose of this book is to assist participants to become familiar with how to develop individual transition plans using personal future planning. There are several sample plans for students with a variety of intellectual, physical and behavioural issues. The plans provide for a wide range of different goals from employment and post secondary experiences to safety, financial planning, and recreation.

Adapted Musical Monkey, Learning Journey. 81-1451-01.
This battery operated, switch adapted plastic monkey can be operated with or without a switch. It has a range of options including voice, music, colours etc.

This pack consists of three DVDs covering a seminar presented by Professor Rita Jordan. The contents include: Identifying and Meeting the Educational Needs in Autistic Spectrum Disorders; Models of Provision and Inclusion, Curriculum Access, Transition and Lifelong Learning; and Preventing and Managing Challenging Behaviour.

Sloping Desktop Easywriter Acrylic with Sleeve, Coordinates Therapy Services, 2009. 67-0547-02.
This is a clear acrylic angled writing board with sleeve, clip and handle. It also available without the sleeve—670547-01.

This book, and accompanying CD, is one of six books in the Autism & PDD: Things I Can Say and Do series, which are suitable for learners from K-12. The series provides learners on the autism spectrum and learners with communication disorders with functional and relevant communication and activity webs designed to assist them to break the complex code of the English language. The book is designed to assist learners to develop functional language and vocabulary skills for words and activities they may encounter on a daily basis.

Using a narrative structure based on real life situations, this 18 minute DVD provides a guide for professionals to identify, assess and respond to sexual behaviours that may cause concern in school settings. The accompanying CD contains support material and the fact-sheet outlines details regarding the approach.
New Resources

**Bee Bop Band, Just Add Kids.**
69-0324-01.
This visually appealing and colourful musical instrument set, suitable for learners 2 years and over, has instruments in the shape and style of a range of animals. All of the instruments in this music set can be stored inside the drum.

**Sharing Books and Stories to Promote Language and Literacy, Plural Publishing, 2006.** 36-0261-01.
This book details sharing books and stories in educational and clinical settings and demonstrates how it can be used to support: print knowledge; phonological awareness; vocabulary; inferential, language abilities; grammatical and narrative skills.

Jumpin’ Jellybeans is a collection of songs using the principles of sensory processing theory to create music, songs and rhythmic activities for learners with attention, motor and regulation difficulties.

This revised Auditory Skills Program addresses the needs of range of learners with hearing impairment - learners from kindergarten to upper primary, students in different settings, students with different levels of development with regard to listening, language and speech, and students with a variety of listening devices. The objectives or the program are to develop: auditory language comprehension, intelligible speech, verbal communication.

The science experiments in this book are suitable for learners from 4 to 12 years of age and are designed to stimulate imagination, investigation and an interest in the world and universe.

**Differentiation in Teaching and Learning, O’Brien, T; Guiney, D, 2001.** 34-0373-01.
The authors of this book shows the importance of teachers understanding the principles of differentiated practice through providing new ways of understanding teaching and learning related to practice, with real-world examples from a range of classrooms.

This book provides positive strategies designed to manage and prevent out of control behaviour. The book details a four step model: Managing your own emotions by adjusting your expectations; Learning Strategies to calm a meltdown in the moment; Understanding why a meltdown occurs; Creating plans to prevent future meltdowns.

This CD contains a variety of activity songs related to different parts of the body and includes: Fingers and Toes; Tommy Thumb; Nod, Nod, Nod Your Head; Open Shut Them; Wash Your Dirty Face; Let Everyone Clap Hands.

**Nursery Rhyme Big Book Activity Pack.** 63-2715-01.
This activity pack can be used for reading, reading comprehension, language development, story telling and sociodramatic play activities. The range of materials in the pack provide a variety of ways to explore the theme either as a group or individually.

**Parental Learning Disability and Children’s Needs, Cleaver, H; Nicholson, D, 2007.** 24-0152-01.
This British book examines current social care practice in the area of children in families where one or more parent has a learning disability.
NEW RESOURCES

This picture book provides clear information about self protection in an engaging, positive and interesting story.

The Targeting Grammar series presents detailed information on the grammar of English and its application in spoken and written language. This book covers Nouns, Adjectives, Pronouns, Verbs, Adverbs, Sentences. There are photocopiable pages for learners to develop and explore the technical aspects of grammar and its application and assessment pages for the educator.

Functional Vocabulary for Children—Kira Likes to go to School, Reeve, Christine, 2005. 61-0930-01-01.
This book is one in the Functional Vocabulary for Children series which are designed to assist learners with autism spectrum disorders or delayed language development to use basic vocabulary functional in their everyday lives. See also: 61-0930-02 Functional Vocabulary for Children—Kai Gets Dressed.

Perceptual Motor Lesson Plans Level 1, Capton, J, 2005. 43-0090-01.
This book contains basic and practical lesson plans for Level 1 Perceptual Motor Programs designed for learners in preschool and the first year of junior primary school.

SPECIAL EDUCATION EXPO—6 TO 8 JULY (AND SATURDAY 4 JULY 2009)

The 6 annual Special Education Expo is a major initiative of DECS. It provides workshop presentations and displays to support the education of children and students with learning difficulties and disabilities.
The workshops will:
- Show case good practice in supporting diversity
- Present new initiatives or inquiry research findings
- Highlight programs and projects to ‘make a difference’ in promoting successful learning outcomes for all, Early Years to Post Secondary.

The 2009 Expo will continue to focus on:
- Inclusive Technologies
- Communication
- Behaviour
- Well Being
- Disability
- Pathways/Transition
- Learning Difficulties

Two new focus areas are also included – Hearing Impairment and The Arts across the Curriculum.
The workshops and presentations are 90 minute sessions held across 3 days. Full day workshops are being held on the Saturday.
Participants can choose to attend one session on a single day, several sessions in the one day or a range of sessions over the three days. Some sessions will be broadcast live on the web.
The program will be published on the Expo web site on May 4.
The Expo web site is http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/speced/
Session 1: IntelliKeys—Alternate Access with Powerful Learning Outcomes!

Friday 1 May 2009
9.30 am to 3.30 pm

at the Education Development Centre
Milner Street—Hindmarsh

Go to [http://web.sru.sa.edu.au/workshops.htm](http://web.sru.sa.edu.au/workshops.htm) to download registration form

Session 3: IntelliKeys—Alternate Access with Powerful Learning Outcomes!

Saturday 2 May 2009
9.30 am to 3.30 pm

at the Education Development Centre
Milner Street—Hindmarsh

Go to [http://web.sru.sa.edu.au/workshops.htm](http://web.sru.sa.edu.au/workshops.htm) to download registration form

Session 2: Assistive Technology in the Special Education Classroom—All Day, Every Day

Friday 1 May 2009
9.30 am to 3.30 pm

Session 4: Assistive Technology in the Special Education Classroom—All Day, Every Day

Saturday 2 May 2009
9.30 am to 3.30 pm

Go to [http://web.sru.sa.edu.au/workshops.htm](http://web.sru.sa.edu.au/workshops.htm) to download registration form
Postgraduate Learning for Your Future

The School of Education at Flinders University offers a flexible postgraduate program for busy teachers and school leaders wishing to develop their knowledge & practice in the area of Special Education. Choose from Master of Education or Graduate Certificate in Education and enjoy a range of learning options in terms of delivery, fields of study and learning activities.

Places are available in both Master of Education and Graduate Certificate in Education.

Further details at: www.flinders.edu.au/courses/postgrad/educate.htm
Contact: Ms Jeanette Holt (Tel: 8201 3480) or jeanette.holt@flinders.edu.au

FAST FACTS

- Masters (72 units) - 2 years full-time, or part-time equivalent. GradStart code: 2CM009
- Mode: Internal/External
- Commonwealth supported places available
- Apply through GradStart.

THE MASTER OF EDUCATION AND RELATED SPECIALISATIONS DOES NOT QUALIFY GRADUATE FOR TEACHER REGISTRATION.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Special education is the joint responsibility of special and regular teachers working closely together, with parents, and in multidisciplinary teams with other professionals, such as school psychologists and speech/language pathologists. Education appropriate to each child’s level of development and in the least restrictive environment is a fundamental principle underlying special education.

The Master of Education (Special Education) is a professionally oriented degree program designed to extend the competence of teachers and other professionals to educate and support students with special educational needs in a range of educational settings.

The program provides students with advanced skills and concepts in special education and opportunities to undertake in-depth study and directed research in specialised areas.

The program is open to members of professions other than teaching who wish to expand their professional expertise into the area of special education. It is not designed to be an initial preparation for teaching and may not lead to eligibility for registration as a teacher.

CREDIT

Credit of up to 54 units may be granted for approved prior studies and work experience. The program may be studied full-time or part-time and either on campus or by distance education.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The normal entry requirement is satisfactory completion of a three-year degree in teaching or a related discipline. Students holding a relevant four-year degree normally complete the degree in one to one-and-a-half years full-time or the part-time equivalent.

STUDY MODE

The internal program involves a 2-3 hour lecture/tutorial per topic each week at Flinders University.

Distance students are sent study materials at the beginning of each semester and do not attend classes on campus. There are no residential requirements for distance students.

All assessment requirements can be fulfilled at distance. Students enrolling on a full-time basis are advised to complete their study with a 12-unit coursework project or an 18-unit dissertation.

PROGRAM OF STUDY

Generally, internal topics are offered in alternate years and distance topics are offered each year. However, topic availability is subject to change and will be confirmed in the semester prior to the beginning of each year.

The study program is selected from the following 6 unit topics when available.

Topics marked * are not offered in distance mode.
Topics marked ** are also available to distance students subject to availability of a suitable supervisor.

For more detailed information on the academic program of study and topic descriptions for this course visit: www.flinders.edu.au/rules