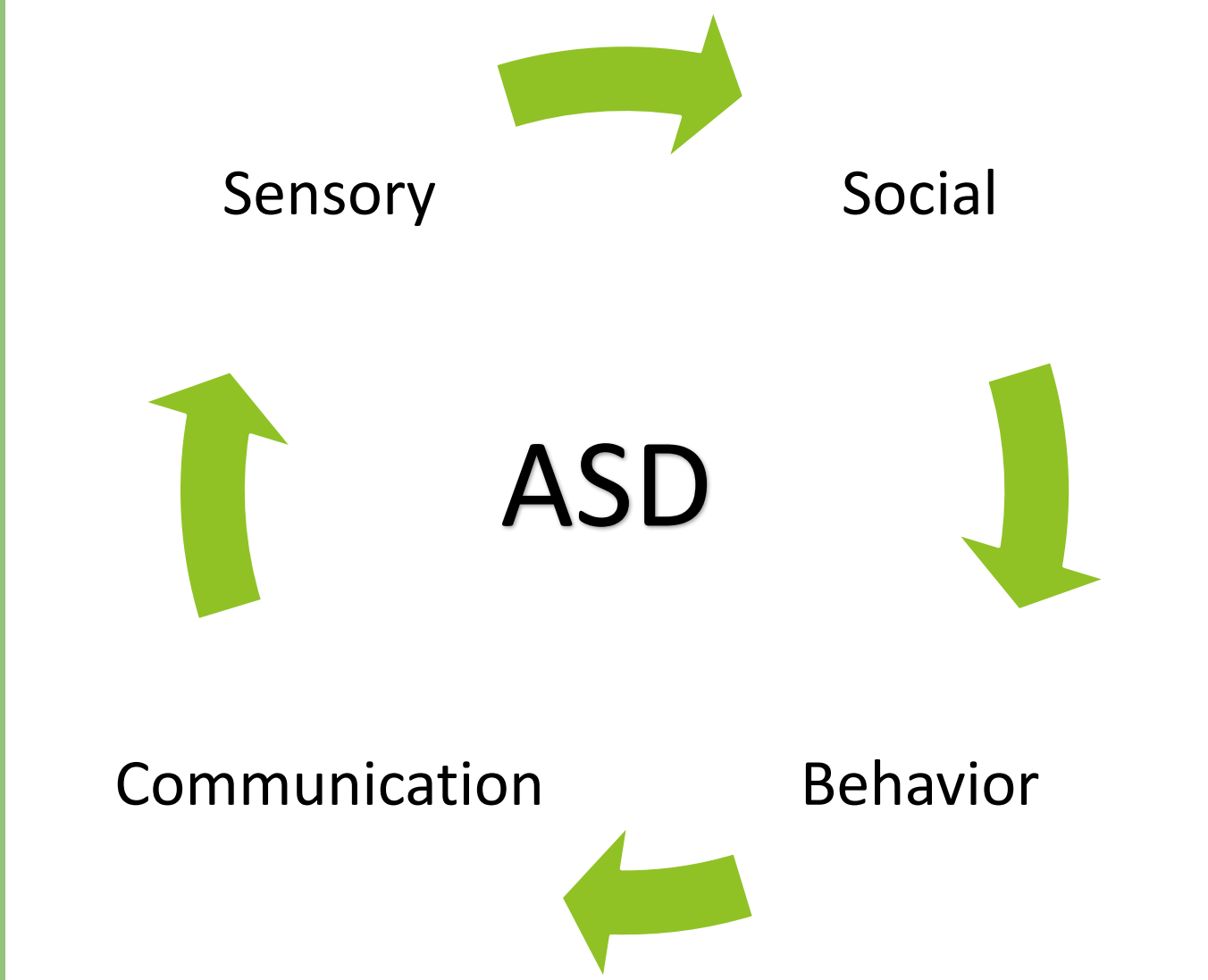


# Autism



# **What is Autism?**

There is no one type of autism...  
but many!

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, autism affects an estimated 1 in 54 children in the United States today.

We know that there is not one autism but many subtypes, most influenced by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Because autism is a spectrum disorder, each person with autism has a distinct set of strengths and challenges.

The ways in which people with autism learn, think and problem-solve can range from highly skilled to severely challenged. Some people with ASD may require significant support in their daily lives, while others may need less support and, in some cases, live entirely independently

# Autism is...

**Neuro**biological disorder of development that causes discrepancies or differences in the way information is processed. The information-processing differences affects the ability in the following areas:

- ▶ language
- ▶ relating to people and the environment
- ▶ sensory stimulation
- ▶ perspective taking

## Strategies to **Improve/Prevent** Behavior

- ▶ Use visual strategies
- ▶ Teach communication skills
- ▶ Change the environment
- ▶ Respond calmly and consistently
- ▶ Be reassuring
- ▶ Make expectations clear
- ▶ Adjust expectations based on behavior
- ▶ Give the student more control

## Visual Strategies for ASD (best practice for all)

- ▶ Build bridges that promote student independence across environments (general ed. Setting, home, work, community).
- ▶ Must be individualized to student need
- ▶ TEACH the student to use it – visual systems **MUST** be explicitly TAUGHT

-- Use **CONSISTENTLY** in every **ENVIRONMENT**





## Why Use Visual Supports?

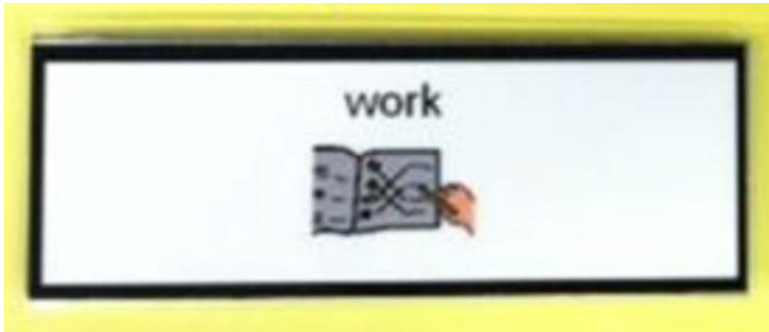
- ▶ Part of everyone's communication system
- ▶ Can attract and hold student's attention
- ▶ Enable student to focus on the message and reduce anxiety... including transitions
- ▶ Make abstract concepts more concrete
- ▶ Help the student express his/her thoughts



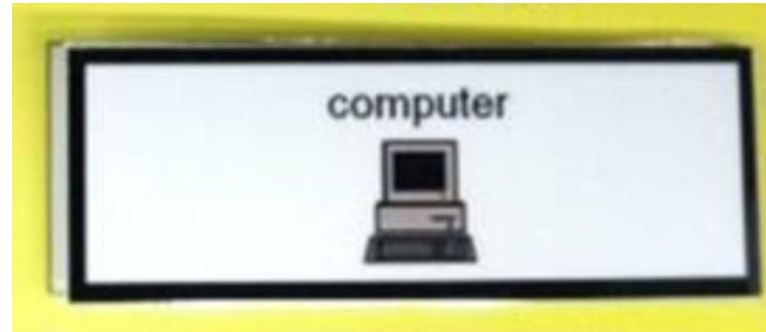
# Example of a Classroom Visual Schedule

Things to Do	All Done
	Math
Centers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class job	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mailbox, book, backpack	<input type="checkbox"/>

**First**



**Then**



# Visual Strategies



- ▶ Schedules
- ▶ Calendars
- ▶ Visual Rules
- ▶ Show what to do
- ▶ Written directions
- ▶ Give social information

# Token Economy System

- ▶ Students don't often comply with our directions or work expectations because they are intrinsically motivated to do so.
- ▶ We work for a paycheck, what do your students work for?
- ▶ Simply a grade that has no tangible value is not enough
- ▶ Develop a Token Economy System for compliance and work production

# Benefits of a Token Board

- ▶ Token economies are an evidence-based practice
- ▶ It is a fun and easy way to reinforce/shape desired behaviors in the classroom
- ▶ It is a simple and visual method of structuring and providing reinforcement
- ▶ When a behavior is reinforced, it is likely to occur again
- ▶ Provides a great visual to the learner of when then reinforcement is available
- ▶ Provides a visual of the reinforcer which reminds the learner of what they are working for
- ▶ Token boards are used to teach, maintain and generalize appropriate behaviors that we want students to exhibit
- ▶ They allow a great deal of flexibility with behavior, reinforcers and schedules and are easily adapted to a child's changing preferences and behavior

## Talk less!

- ▶ Give simple direction  
(paired with visual)
- ▶ Don't scold
- ▶ Don't reprimand
- ▶ Don't explain
- ▶ Don't question
- ▶ BE SILENT!!!



# Stay Calm and Don't Fight Autism

## React:

- ▶ Calmly
- ▶ Consistently
- ▶ Concisely
- ▶ Clearly
- ▶ Reassuringly
- ▶ Give choices
- ▶ Allow space
- ▶ Reduce the audience
- ▶ Limit your talking...

