

Supporting Students with Autism

Practical Strategies for Success





Hello! I'm...
Shaunita Grase
District Behavior Coach
Special Services
Lexington County School District One



One Word About Autism

Question: What's the first word that comes to mind when you think of autism?

- Take a moment to think of one word that represents autism to you.
- **Turn and Talk:** Share with a partner.
- Let's see the diversity of perspectives in the room!





Session Objectives

By the end of this session, you will be able to:



Implement
inclusive
classroom
strategies



Enhance
communication
with students
with autism



Apply effective
behavior
management
techniques





112,172

**Total Number Children/Students with Disabilities, Ages 3-21,
Enrolled in South Carolina School Districts with an
Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

Source: South Carolina Department of Education, State Child Count Summary SY22-23

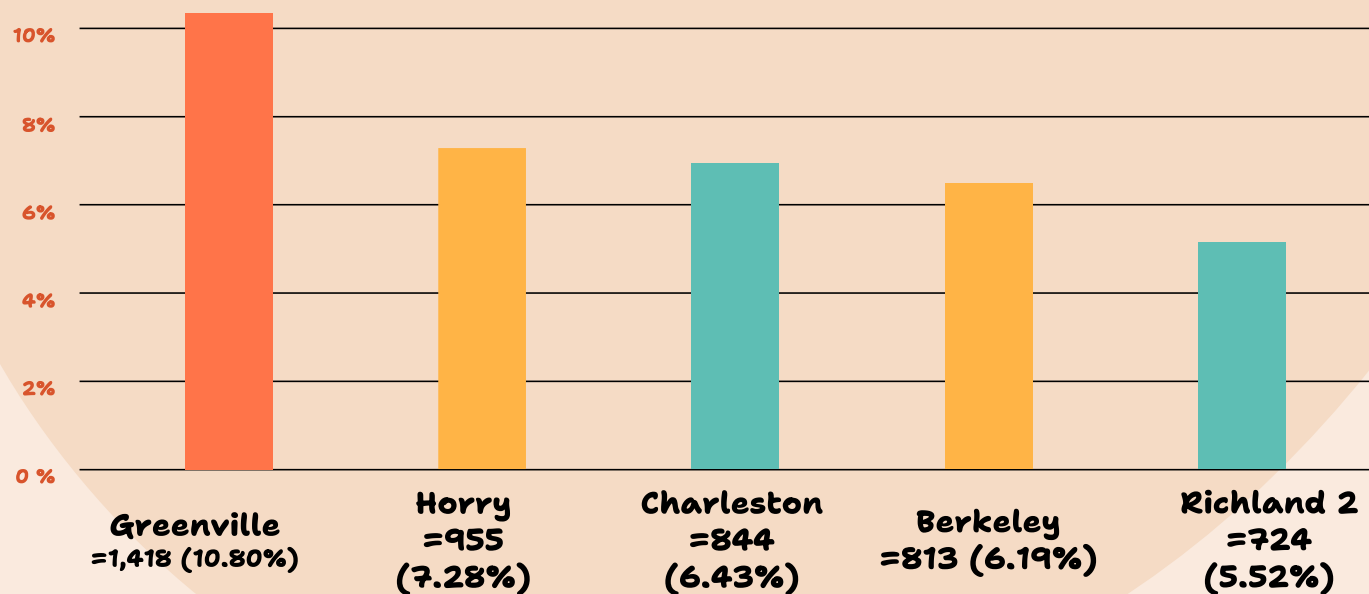


19,928

Children/Students with Autism, Ages 3-21, Enrolled in South Carolina School Districts with an Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Source: South Carolina Department of Education, State Child Count Summary SY22-23

Top 5 Districts: Students with ASD



Source: South Carolina Department of Education, State Child Count Summary SY22-23



Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition characterized by challenges in communication, social interaction, and behavior regulation. No two students with autism are alike, and understanding their strengths and needs is key to inclusion.





Key Characteristics of Autism in the Classroom

- Difficulty with verbal and non-verbal communication
- Sensory sensitivities (e.g., noise, lights, textures)
- Rigid routines and transitions
- Strengths in pattern recognition and detail-oriented tasks





Creating an Inclusive Classroom Environment

Visual Supports

Use schedules, charts, and social stories

Predictability & Routine

Maintain consistency and prepare for changes

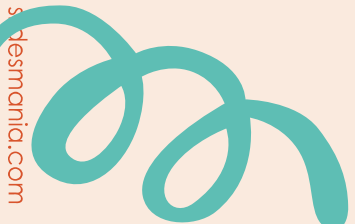



Flexible Seating

Offer options based on sensory needs

Sensory-Friendly Spaces

Create quiet zones for self-regulation





Interactive Activity

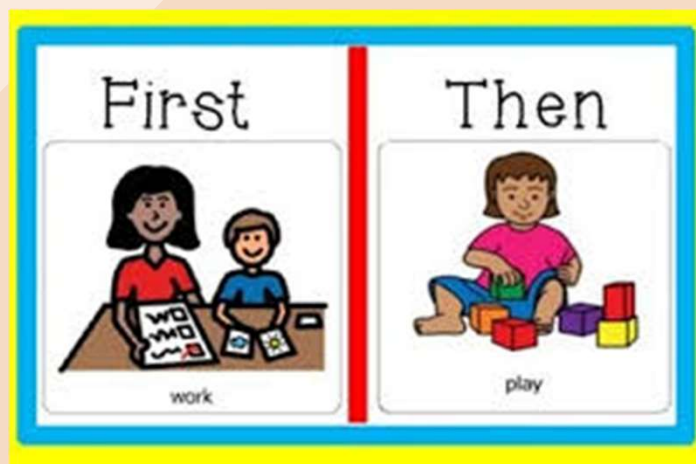
Small group discussion: How do you currently support students with autism in your classroom? Share strategies.



Enhancing Communication

- **Use Clear, Concise Language:** Avoid figurative speech
- **Visual Aids:** PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), first-then charts
- **Give Processing Time:** Allow extra time for responses
- **Encourage Alternative Communication:** AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) devices

Enhancing Communication



Examples of "First and Then" Visual Supports

Enhancing Communication



**Examples of PECS Visual Supports
(Picture Exchange Communication System)**

Enhancing Communication



Examples of AAC Supports
(Augmentative and Alternative Communication)



Interactive Activity

Role-play using a visual schedule to help a student transition between activities.



Behavior Management Strategies

Understand Triggers

Identify what
causes distress

Offer Choices
Empower students
with options



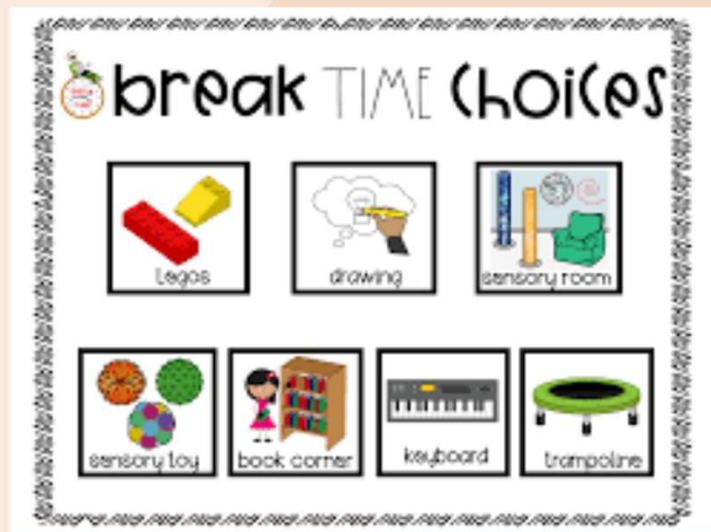
Use Positive Reinforcement

Reinforce desired
behaviors

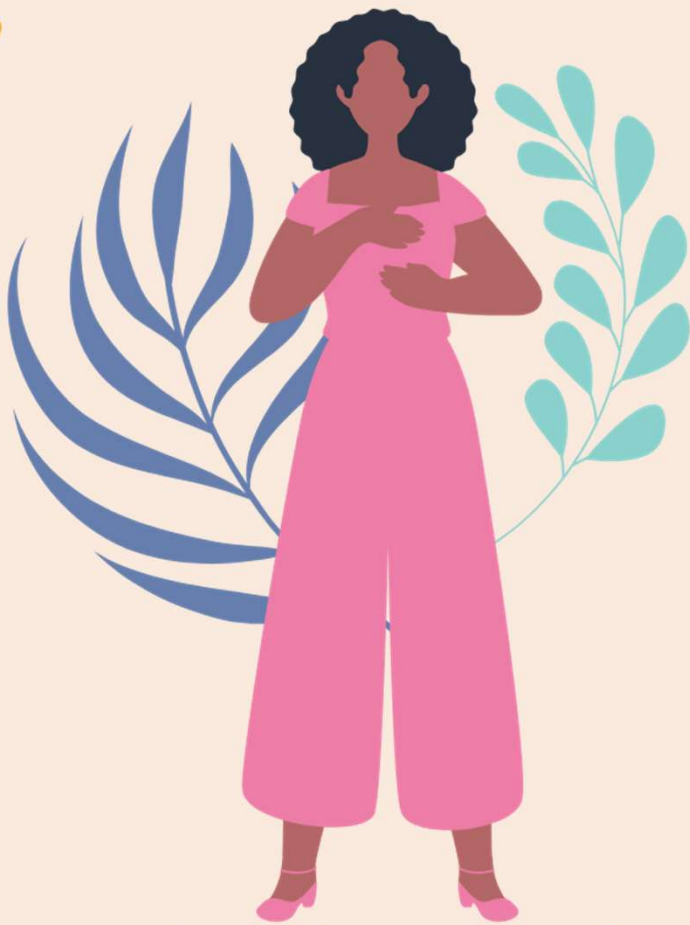
**Teach Self-
Regulation**
Use calming
strategies like
breathing exercises



Behavior Management Strategies



Examples of Choice Boards



Interactive Activity

Discussion—How would you respond to a student experiencing sensory overload?



Partnering with Parents & Support Staff

Collaboration is key!

Communicate regularly with parents, therapists, and special education staff.

Establish Consistent Communication Channels

Use daily logs, emails, or apps to keep parents informed about progress and concerns.

Encourage Parent Involvement

Parents provide valuable insights into their child's needs and strengths, making them essential partners in the educational process.



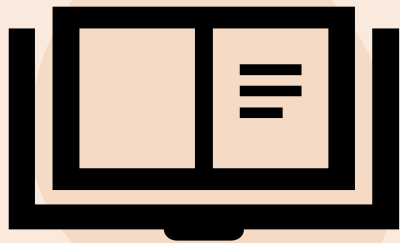


Interactive Activity

Brainstorm strategies to improve home-school communication for students with autism.

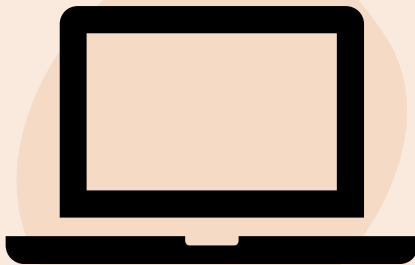


Resources & Next Steps



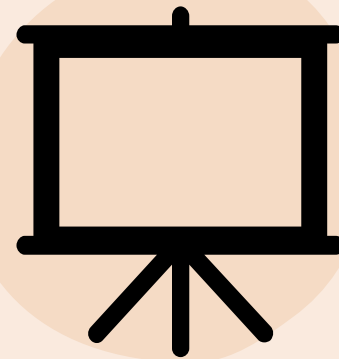
Books

"The Reason I Jump"
by Naoki Higashida



Websites


Autism Speaks National
Autism Center



Professional Development

Consider training in
Applied Behavior
Analysis (ABA)





Think of one strategy from today's session that you will implement in your classroom.

Write it down on a sticky note and think how you plan to apply it.

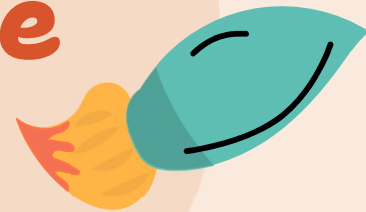
Commitment to Action





“

"It takes a village to raise a child. It takes a child with autism to raise the consciousness of the village."




— Coach Elaine Hall



Thank you!

Do you have any questions?

sgrase@lexington1.net

 @CoachGrase

 @ABAwithCoachGrase

