

April

BE CLEAR

April is National Autism Awareness Month

Coach Elaine Hall once said, “It takes a village to raise a child. It takes a child with Autism to raise the consciousness of the village.” Each child has something to say. It just may mean we need to listen with more than just our ears. In celebration of this month’s theme, below are 6 simple strategies that encourage us to make every interaction count.

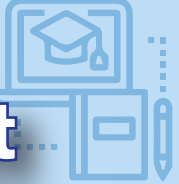


1 Make things **visual**

- Use photographs, drawings, graphics, objects, written words or lists
- Reduce the need for verbal redirection with visuals
- Use visuals to remind about behavior expectations



5 Make your statements **short, direct and concrete**



2 Assume **competence**

- Remember that when a student does not speak, it does not mean that they do not understand
- Check for understanding by asking students to respond non-verbally (ex. holding thumbs up, pointing, eye gazing)



3 Be **aware** that each student’s behavior communicates something

Instead of saying,
“Don’t cry” or
“Don’t be angry”...

Ask yourself,
“Why is the student crying?”
or “Why are they angry?”

4 Provide **structure** and **routine**

- Notify student of changes ahead of time and provide reminders
- Provide consistency and predictability with a visual schedule



6 Provide students the **words they need** to communicate

- Encourage student use of a break card
- Teach gestures for important words (ex. restroom, help, hurt)
- Provide pictures to support comprehension and expression



A visual of strategies that enable students to communicate effectively - from Eden Clark, special education teacher at Wood Elementary School.

Six Simple Strategies

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