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Toolkit Introduction

This toolkit is intended to be used as an aide in classroom and after school program environments. Within the toolkit there are many resources such as; strategies for behavior modification, reduction, and management, visual aids in the form of schedules, choice boards, and first then boards, sample social stories, feedback forms and tips for managing feedback with stakeholders in children's lives, and assessment tools for classroom/program environments.

All materials contained in the toolkit should be reviewed in advance of program starting when possible. Materials may and should be copied, cut out, laminated, given to students/participants and mounted in program spaces when appropriate. A small number of strategies found within may reference use of a piece of adaptive equipment or assistive technology. Again please review the toolkit ahead of time ensure that if any purchasing must be done in order to allow for the effective use of a resource, the appropriate amount of time is given to make the purchase and receive item.

The main function of this toolkit is to provide a classroom/program with unified and streamlined methods for managing program and the students/participants that are attending/enrolled. **It is important that all strategies are utilized and reinforced by all staff members working in the program.** Failure to utilize these resources in a unified manner by the classroom/program staff can result in staff favoritism, refusal to work with certain staff members, confusion for the students/participants, and a net negative experience for both staff and students/participants.

Resources found within the toolkit should be utilized consistently in the program, meaning that utilizing a resource only to manage a behavior i.e. only using a choice board when someone is escalated and you are attempting to redirect them by providing choice is not the intended purpose of the resource/toolkit. Inconsistent toolkit/resource usage can result in associating the toolkit/resources with negative behaviors or experiences and lead to a reluctance to participate/utilize the resource/strategy being attempted.

Let this toolkit and the resources within serve as a springboard for your program! Do not be afraid to create new choices/selections for visual aids, or to slightly modify templates to better suit your needs/environment. Any change big or small should be discussed with your site director and if necessary, an appropriate professional or agency to ensure it is appropriate for the child, the environment, and the staff that will be utilizing the resource.

Behavior Prevention and Behavior Reduction

Directions for use: When a behavior is expected or to prevent unforeseen behaviors, use the left column of this sheet. This list provides ideas and strategies for preventing behaviors that may impact a student's ability to participate in and gain positive impact from activities. The right side of the document shows various tools for reduction of behaviors.

What? This document provides ideas for both preventing and reducing behaviors.

Why? All behaviors have a cause. Reduction of behaviors can help a student rejoin a group or activity more readily following a behavior.

Who? This resource can benefit all students and helps the adults to maintain structure during activities.

When/Where? It's recommended that this resource is read ahead of time by adults in order to help set students up for success in their environment.

How? Read ahead of time, this resource can provide ideas to establish structure and expectations for students.

Behavior Prevention

- Give warnings before transitions
- Be aware of surrounding environment
 - Visuals on walls
 - Clutter on tables or floor
 - Organization of items
 - Noise levels
 - Strong scents or smells
 - Brightness in the room
- Allow time to play with fidgets
- Provide movement breaks
- Use calm voices, avoid yelling
- Ask parent, guardian, or child the strategies they use to calm their body
- Allow for choices when possible
- Become familiar with the child's triggers
- Create a calm down corner
- Follow a visual schedule or routine
- Make sure a consequence matches the behavior/activity
- Establish ground rules and expectations
- Provide a reason for why you are asking the child to do a task
- Send home positive notes

Behavior Reduction

- Keep the child and others safe
 - Remove potentially harmful items
 - Reduce clutter that can cause falls
 - Block the exits to prevent elopement
 - Remove child if necessary to ensure safety
- Facilitate calming strategies
 - Use a choice board to allow for autonomy
- Use a calming voice, yelling may have the opposite effect
- Ask the participant how you can help or what they want to do
- Observe the child to determine their reactions to what you are offering
- Limit your frustrations with the child
 - If you are too frustrated, ask for help
 - Know your own strengths
- Provide sensory input through food, sensory bins, smells, etc.
- Encourage self-regulation
- Validate the child's feelings

Calming Strategies for the Mind and Body

Directions for use: When individual students or a group of students are displaying behaviors, it is helpful to employ calming strategies that engage them both physically and mentally. There are multiple ways to reengage students displaying behaviors. Some strategies include the adult whispering to encourage a quiet room, announcing the beginning of a fun group or individual activity, and providing calming strategy choices for the students.

What? This document provides calming strategies for the mind and body for when students are having difficulty maintaining focus, engaging in group or individual activities, and/or displaying appropriate behavior for the setting.

Why? A student who is displaying behaviors can utilize calming strategies in order to calm down and reengage with the group.

Who? This resource can benefit any student displaying behaviors or who may be overstimulated.

When/Where? This document can be implemented ahead of time or in the moment.

How? A student can be presented with this document and given the direction to choose a calming activity that is appropriate in the current environment.

CALMING STRATEGIES

FOR THE MIND AND BODY



TAKE DEEP BREATHS



STRETCH



PLAY WITH FIDGETS



GO FOR A WALK



LISTEN TO MUSIC



MEDITATE



EAT A SNACK



READ A BOOK



COLOR OR PAINT



CARRY A HEAVY BACKPACK



CHAIR PUSH UPS



DO A PUZZLE



BLOW BUBBLES

Calming Strategies PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)

Directions for use: This document can be utilized as a whole or in parts. If the student is not overwhelmed by the amount of choices and all choices are available, the entire page can be used as a choice board. If a student would be overwhelmed by the number of choices or not all choices are available, this resource can be cut into individual squares which can then be laminated. Lay out a small field of two to five options (depending upon the student) and allow the student to choose a calming strategy.

What? This resource provides a visual communication system that allows a student to make choices and develop calming strategies when overwhelmed or overstimulated.

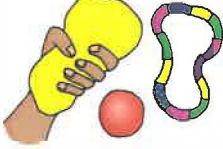
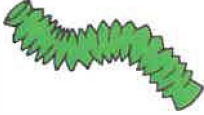
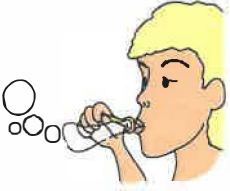
Why? All behaviors have a cause. Students who are provided with resources are more likely to succeed in managing their behaviors.

Who? Any student can benefit from utilizing this resource, though it's especially helpful for those who have difficulty expressing their needs.

When/Where? When students are displaying behaviors or are in need of a break or calming strategy in any environment, this tool is helpful.

How? In order to implement this tool, utilize the entire sheet or cut into squares and laminate. Create a field of options and allow the student to choose.

Calming Strategies

			
Deep Breaths	Movement Break	Stretch	Sensory Toys
			
Pop Tube	Stress Ball	Fidget Spinner	Bearwalk
			
Crabwalk	Duck Walk	Go for a Walk	Listen to Music
			
Meditate	Eat a Snack	Go to Calm Down Corner	Read a Book
			
Carry Heavy Books	Push a Box	Carry a Heavy Backpack	Color
			
Paint	Blow Bubbles	Work on a Puzzle	Jumping Jack

My Choice Board (a smaller field of calming activities)

Directions for use: This resource can be used to allow a student to choose a calming strategy that works best for the individual.

What? This resource provides a visual communication system that allows a student to make choices and develop calming strategies when overwhelmed or overstimulated.

Why? All behaviors have a cause. Students who are provided with resources are more likely to succeed in managing their behaviors.

Who? Any student can benefit from utilizing this resource, though it's especially helpful for those who have difficulty expressing their needs.

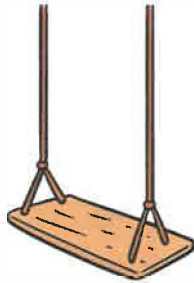
When/Where? When students are displaying behaviors or are in need of a break or calming strategy in any environment, this tool is helpful.

How? In order to implement this tool, utilize the entire sheet or cut into squares and laminate. Create a field of options and allow the student to choose.

My Choice Board



Craft



Swing



Squeeze/hug



Take a walk



Do an activity



**Taste
something**



Use fidget



**Movement
break**



**Smell
something**

My Choice Board



Listen to music



**Movement
break**



Screen time



Homework



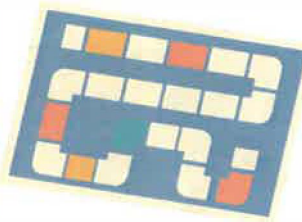
Take a walk



**Classroom
chores**



Use fidget



Play a game



Snack

Movement and Brain Breaks

Directions for use: When the listed resources are available and a group of students are high energy or beginning to struggle to remain on task, this sheet can be implemented. This tool can help to reengage students and provide opportunity for them to interact with one another in a positive and supervised way.

What? This document provides ideas for movement breaks for all students, especially those who are having difficulty with focus and behaviors.

Why? All behaviors have a cause. Students who are provided with resources are more likely to succeed in managing their behaviors.

Who? Any student can benefit from utilizing this resource.

When/Where? When students are displaying behaviors or are in need of a break or calming strategy in any environment, this tool is helpful.

How? Utilize this tool when students are expressing or showing need for a movement or brain break. Many of the resources listed can be accessed on a computer.

MOVEMENT & BRAIN BREAKS

Dance It Out



Gonoodle Games



Playground or Gym Games



Exercise



Would You Rather Video



Scavenger Hunt

Simon Says



Building Blocks or Legos

De-escalation Strategies – Trouble with Transitioning, Refusal to Participate, Elopement, Task Avoidance

Directions for use: These tools are useful if a student is known to have difficulty transitioning from one activity or situation to another, refusing to participate, avoiding tasks, or eloping. This resource is most helpful when read ahead of time and implemented over a period of time.

What? De-escalation strategies are helpful for students who have difficulty with the tasks or display the behaviors listed above.

Why? All behaviors have a cause and it is helpful to understand how to work towards preventing them in order to support the student most effectively and allow for them to participate fully.

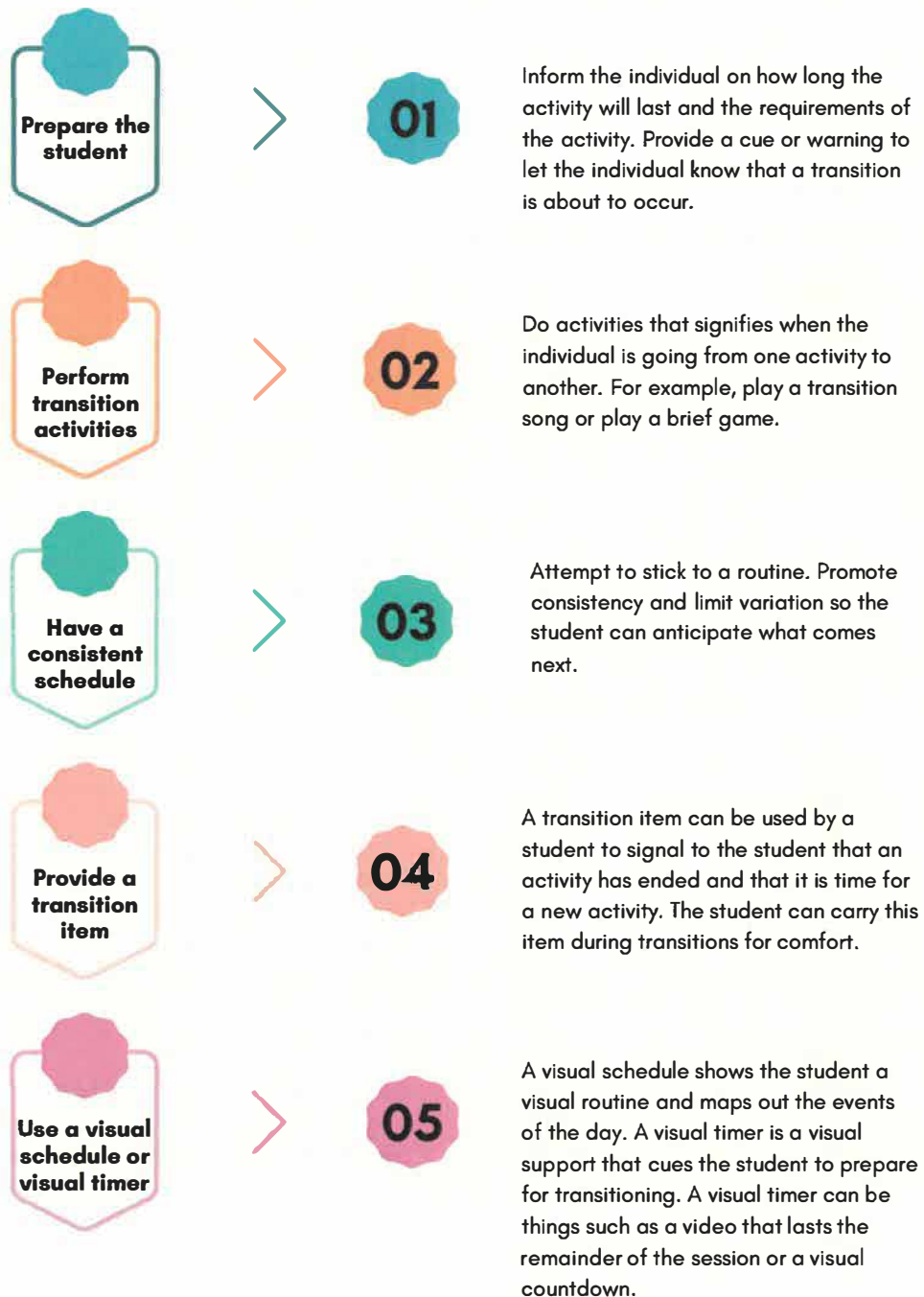
Who? These resources are most effective when read ahead of time by the adults providing service and support. All students can benefit from these strategies.

When/Where? When students are displaying behaviors or are in need of a break or calming strategy in any environment, this tool is helpful.

How? Read ahead of time and implement over time.

De-escalation Strategies

Trouble with Transitioning



De-escalation Strategies

Refusal to Participate



**Create
opportunity
for
engagement**



01

Gradually increase number of peer interactions; starting with one other student then increasing to more students. Organize small groups (organized games, group paintings, assigning partners).



**Identify
preferred
activities**



02

Recognize which activities the student enjoys participating in. Implement these activities into the schedule as needed.



**Teach
social skills**



03

Teach the student how to appropriately participate in the classroom. For example, taking turns, actively listening to teachers and classmates, social rules, etc.



**Do not force
student to
participate**



04

If the student does not want to participate in an activity or with peers, do not respond with statements such as "You have to." Instead, try prompting, enthusiasm about the activity, and encouragement.



**Become
familiar with
the student**

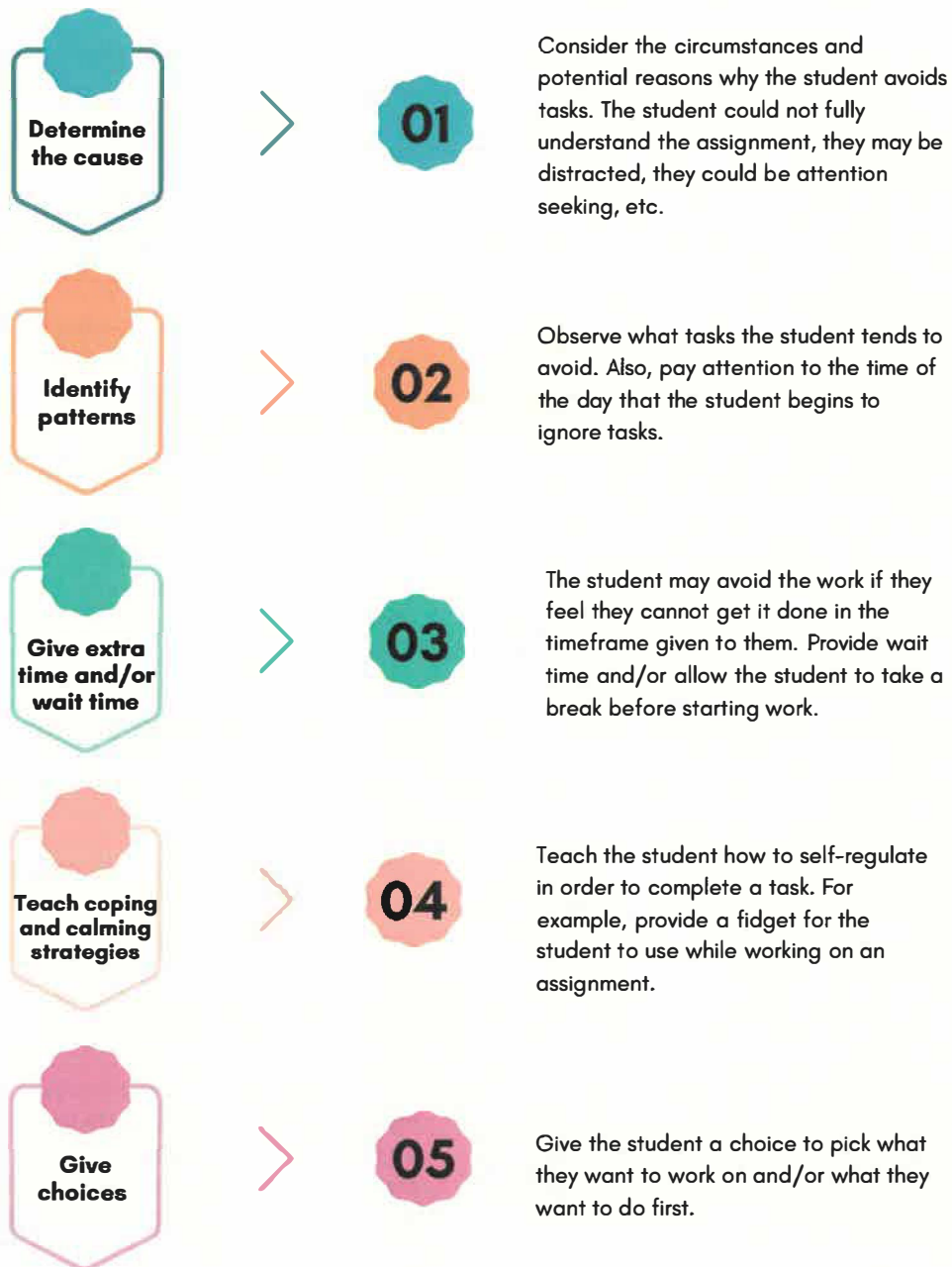


05

Become aware of the student's body language and any indications that the student is uncomfortable during an activity.

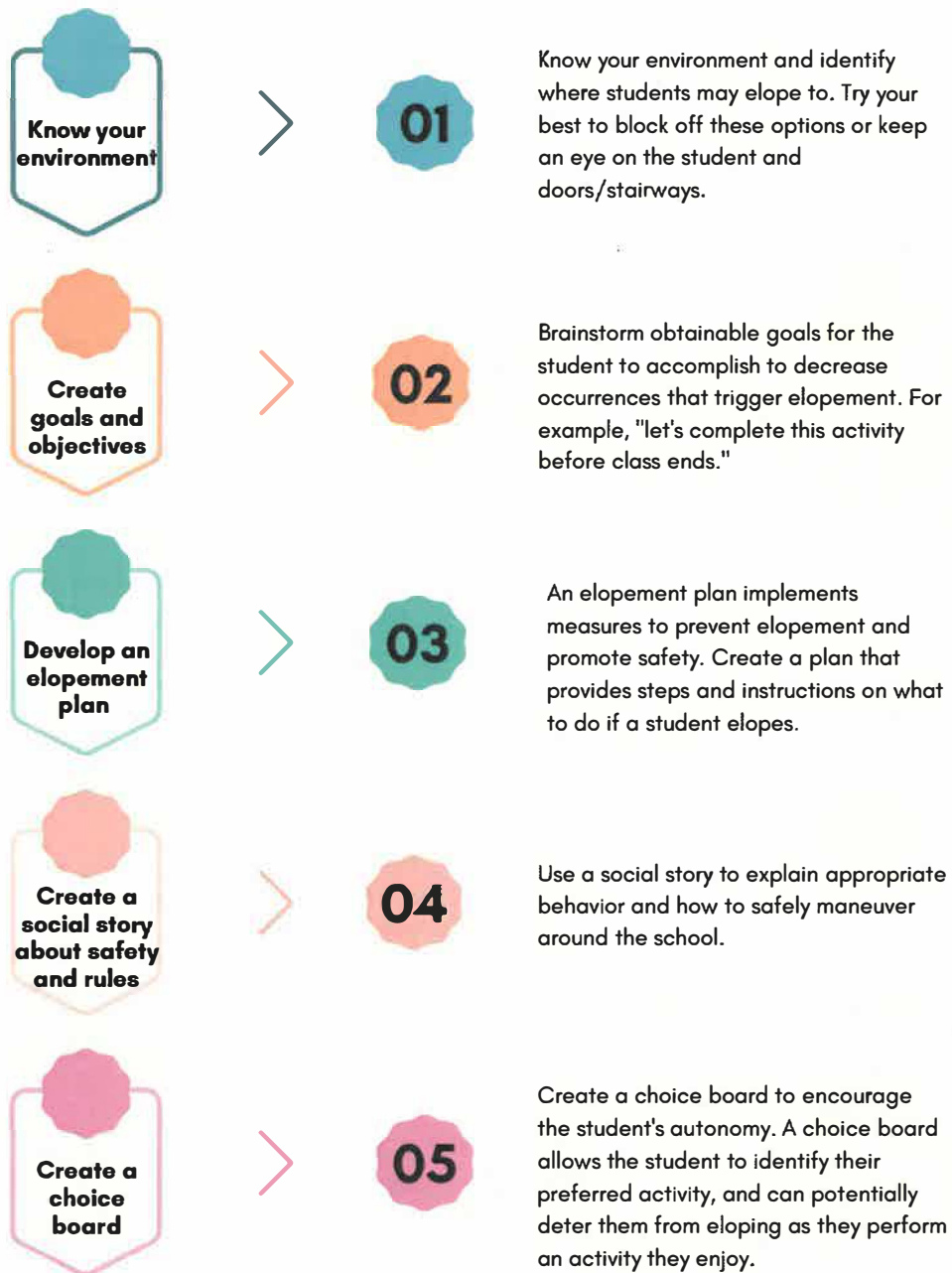
De-escalation Strategies

Task Avoidance



De-escalation Strategies

Elopement



When I Feel Big Emotions, I Should and I Should Not...

Directions for use: This visual provides a tool for students to explore calming strategies when feeling “big” emotions. It also shows actions that are considered “should not.” Utilize this when a participant is expected to or is showing big emotions.

What? This visual provides a tool for students to explore calming strategies when feeling “big” emotions. It also shows actions that are considered “should not.”

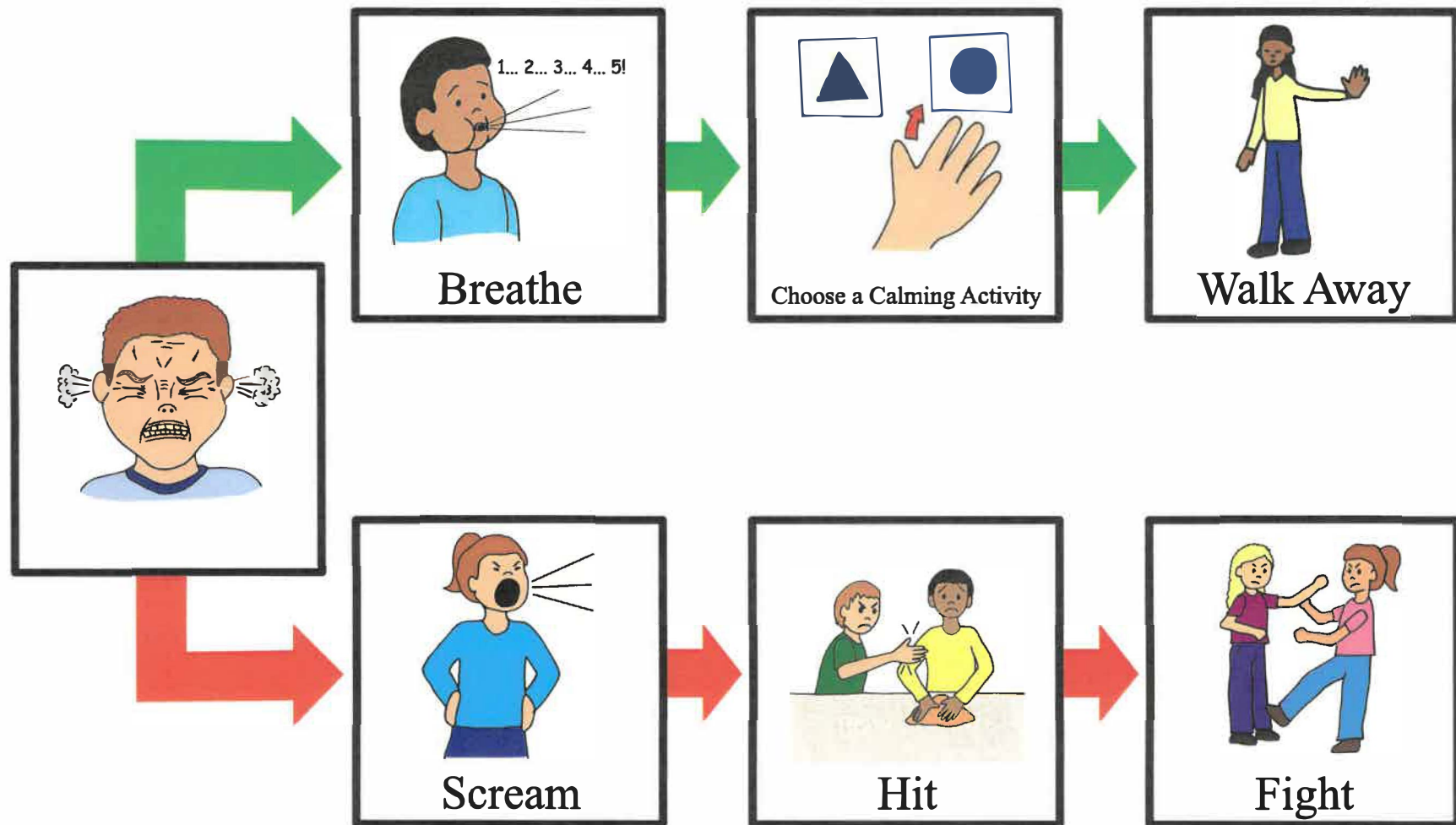
Why? Providing students with resources to express emotions is helpful for them and for those working with them.

Who? Any student, especially those who have difficulty expressing and managing emotions, will benefit from this resource.

When/Where? Can be used both ahead of time and in the moment.

How? An adult can provide a student with this chart to show appropriate and inappropriate coping strategies. It is important to discuss the positive behaviors that are expected.

When I Feel Big Emotions I Should and I Should Not



Guides to Use a Visual Schedule, Choice Board, and First Then Board

Visual schedule:

Visual schedules are visual tools that can be used to prepare a student on the sequence of events that will be occurring throughout their day. A visual schedule informs the student on what event occurred, is currently occurring and what will be happening next. Visual schedules provide organization and structure for the student and give them the opportunity to anticipate transitions between activities. The student should eventually be able to utilize the visual schedule independently without cueing and prompting (assistance from) of teachers/adults.

- Visual schedules can either be kept in the classroom or can be transportable with the student in their backpack, in a folder, on a ring, etc. If making a visual schedule that will remain in the classroom, consider the student's environment and locate an area in the classroom that would be the best area for the student to refer to the schedule.
 - Consider the target audience, are you making one for a whole group or an individual participant?
- Consider the student's perception about activities along with their school schedule when creating the visual schedule to know what is necessary to add to the schedule. For example, would the student need to prepare to transition for a bathroom break or is this something they are already comfortable transitioning to do? If they are already used to having bathroom breaks incorporated into their schedule, this may not be necessary to add to the schedule to avoid cluttering the visual.
- Consider the length of the visual schedule. Determine how many activities are realistic and easy for the student to follow along with throughout the day.
- Determine the formatting of the visual schedule. For example, will you be using icons, symbols, actual pictures of the student/environment, words, etc.
 - Try not to make the visual schedule overstimulating or overcrowded, keep the design simple and easy to follow
 - If doing this for an individual student, ask for their opinion of the format. Giving them a voice in creation of a visual schedule could be more motivating for them to follow it and/or respond to it being used
- Have pictures and icons look as similar as possible to what the student is familiar with.
- Organize and sequence the student's events clearly and accurately. For example, know exactly what activity will precede and follow each activity on that particular day.
- Review the schedule with the student prior to their routine so they are aware of upcoming activities.
- Encourage the student to refer to their schedule when they are concerned with transition.
- Consider how the student will know that one activity is complete and which activity is next. I.e. will you use a checkmark or velcroed icons to mark an activity as complete?
- Provide positive reinforcement and praise after each transition is completed.
 - "Good job transitioning"
 - "I like how you followed directions and cleaned up the activity"

Choice board:

Choice boards are visual organizers that provide a variety of options for a student to choose from in order to promote engagement and participation in chosen activities or in adult directed activities. Choice boards are used to give students the autonomy to choose and communicate what it is that they want or need to do. Students can use choice boards to choose materials, places, activities, reinforcers, people, food, etc. Choice boards can be motivating and empowering as the student can acknowledge their preferences and organize their day in ways that work best for them.

- Choice boards can either be kept in the classroom or can be transportable with the student in their backpack, in a folder, on a ring, etc. When making a choice board, consider the student's environment and locate an area in the classroom that would be the best area for the student to refer to the board.
- A choice board should be focused on varying goals and expectations for the student to choose from.
- Identify the student's interests or goals that the student needs to achieve to develop the concept of the choice board.
- Cater to different needs and input such as auditory, visual, tactile, vestibular, kinesthetic, etc.
- Determine the formatting of the choice board. For example, will you be using icons, symbols, actual pictures of the student/environment, words, etc.
- Determine how many choices you want on the board that would be beneficial for the student's success; Nine choices is the typical standard.
- If academic-based, choice boards can have different levels of complexity and specificity. You may have these choices organized in an increasing order based on difficulty or you can place these choices in random order across the choice board. Choices can also have a consistent level of difficulty.
- Give choices that are actually obtainable and permits to the student's schedule. For example, cover the choice of going for a walk if it is raining heavily outside, as this is not an option at that particular time.
 - Give some choices that the student would actually utilize or participate in, for example don't put playdough as a choice if the student does not like to play with playdough.
- Prompt the student to choose an option on the choice board. The way that the student shows you their choice will depend on their communication and/or motor skills. The student can verbalize a choice, point to a choice, or use gestures to make a choice such as a head nod after a choice is pointed to or read aloud by another person.
- Become familiar with knowing when to provide the choice. If the choice is being used as a reward or reinforcer, the choice will not be provided immediately after the student chooses it. For example, if the student chooses to have a piece of candy after they finish their homework, then the choice will be provided following

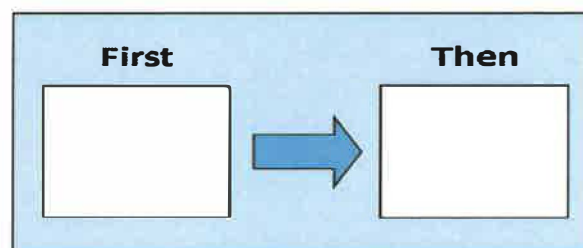
completion of the task. If the student needs to take a walk or a sip of water to calm down, this would be a case where the choice is provided immediately.

- Choice boards can be adapted. The font, contrast, sizing of the choice boxes, etc. can all be adjusted as needed. Another adaptation is prompting more than once choice to be chosen at a single time to challenge the student. The number of choices on a choice can also be increased or decreased depending on the student's needs.

First Then Board:

A first then board is a visual tool that demonstrates what is expected of a student or participant, as they typically will have to first complete a non-preferred activity and then engage in a preferred activity. A student or participant can have autonomy when choosing an activity for the “then” section. First Then boards can give structure to the afternoon schedule, allowing the organization to complete what they need while still allowing the student or participant the opportunity to do what they want. These boards can be motivating and help break down some barriers that may exist such as language and behavior needs.

- When making a first then board, consider what activities or tasks the students may be required to do in order to fulfill organizational goals or needs. These activities will become those that fill the “first” section. Examples include homework time, reading, group activity, math, etc.
- Determine who you are going to use the board with. This will help to determine activity ideas to fill the “then” section. Does the individual love to listen to music, play legos, go outside, go to the gym, etc.?
 - If you need ideas, talk to the student about their preferences and the parent/guardian to determine what can be motivating for the student and what activities are possible given the resources you have.
- Determine the formatting of the activities, will you be using icons, words, actual pictures of items you have at your location?
 - Try your best to make the pictures age appropriate, for example if working with a 12 year old you are most likely not going to use cartoons unless it is showing something that is motivating to the individual.
- Determine when you are going to use the board. Will it be right as the student arrives? After the student has a snack? As soon as you determine this, try your best to use it at the same time every day. A delay in use or change in routine can be disruptive for the student or participant.
- Only put out icons that are feasible for the day, don’t put outside as an option if the student or participant is unable to go outside.
- Allow the student or participant to look through the options to determine the “then” activity.
- First Then Boards are clear and should be easy to follow, as you are encouraging the student to be independent in following it. An example is seen here:



Visual Schedule utilizing PECS

Directions for use: Students often require visual schedules in order to know what to expect next. When beginning a task, place the related PECS square/piece on the First→Then board and read it through with the student. If the student is able, have the student repeat the steps – example: “First I will _____, then I will _____.” When the task is finished, remove the initial “first” task, place the former “then” task into the “first” section, and add the new “then” task. Repeat as necessary.

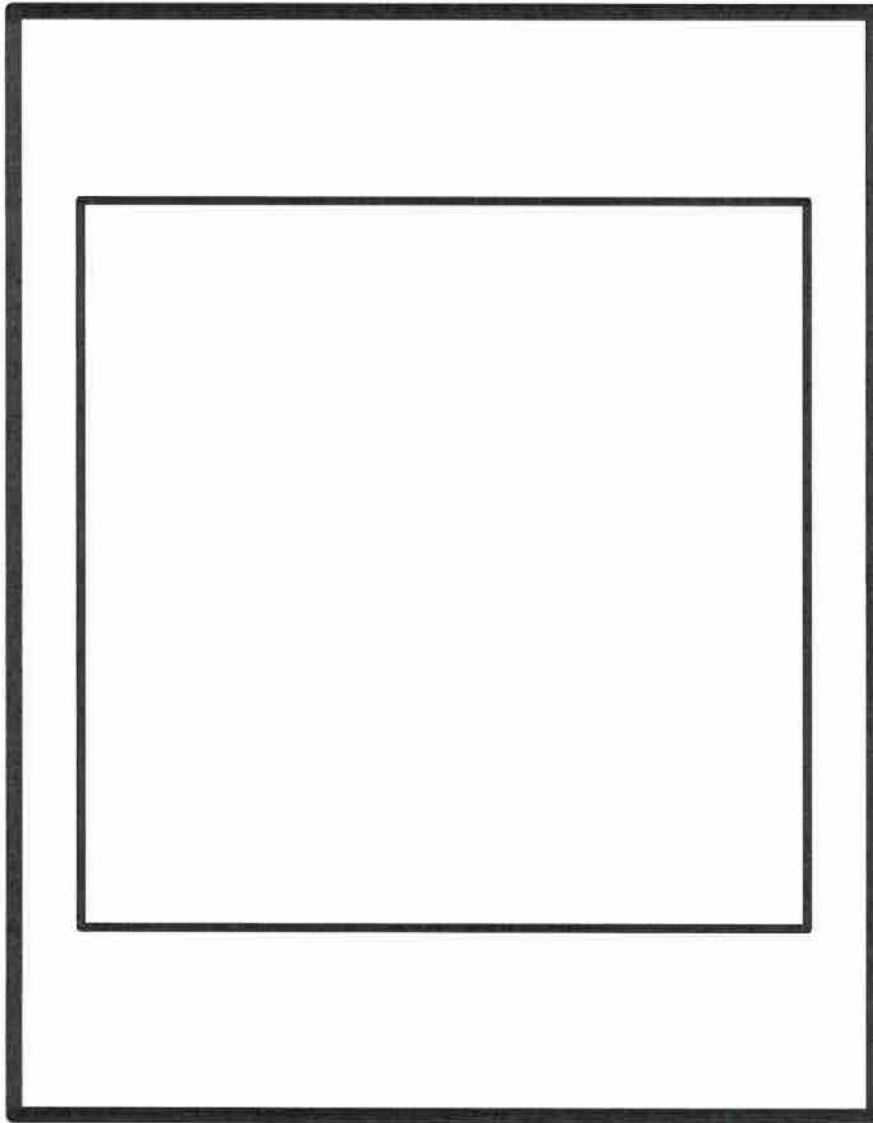
What? Visual schedules allow students to preview their upcoming activities and lay out expectations.

Why? Students benefit from having a visual aid in order to preview and understand expectations.

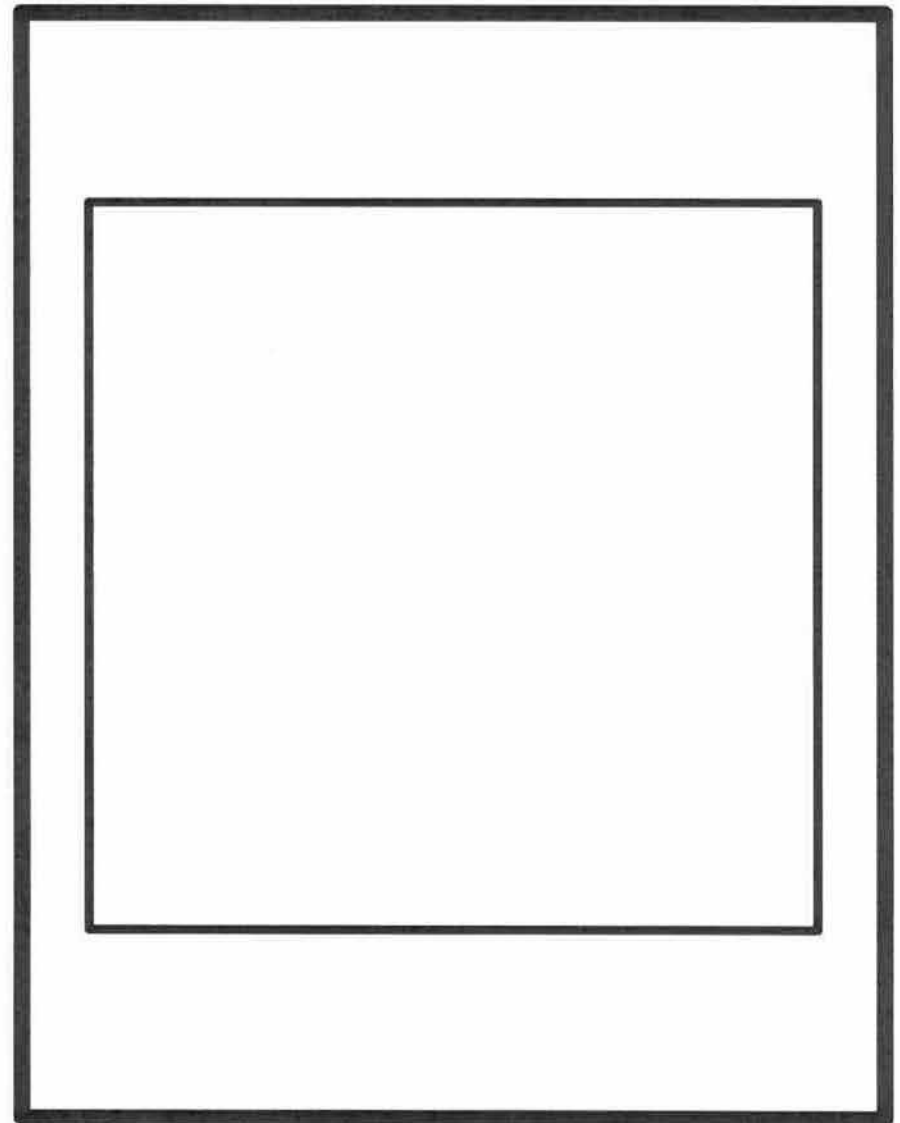
Who? This may benefit all students, but is especially helpful for those who have difficulty with transitioning.

When/Where/How? When beginning a task, place the related PECS square/piece on the First→Then board and read it through with the student. If the student is able, have the student repeat the steps – example: “First I will _____, then I will _____.” When the task is finished, remove the initial “first” task, place the former “then” task into the “first” section, and add the new “then” task. Repeat as necessary.

First



Then





Throw Away



Snack



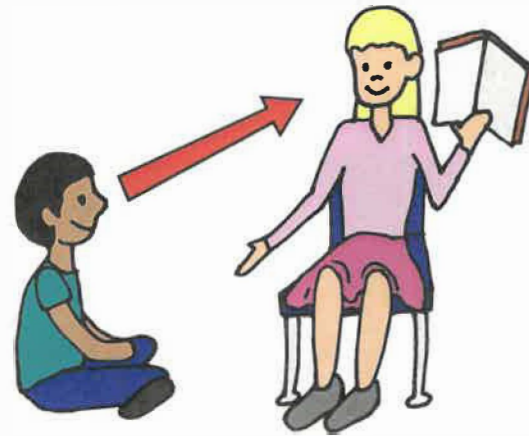
Fidget Toy



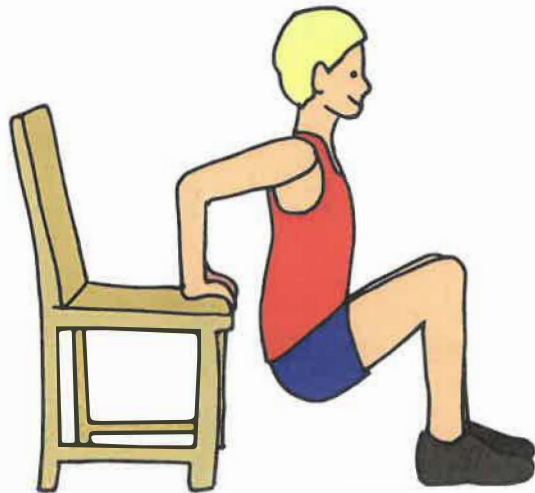
Wash Hands



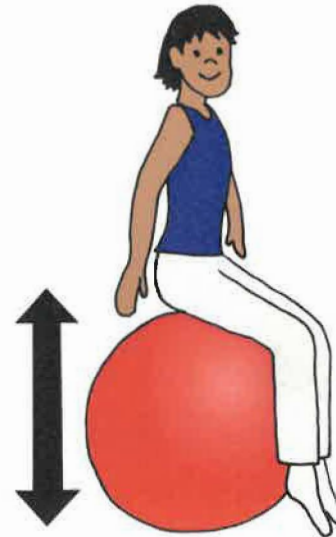
Art



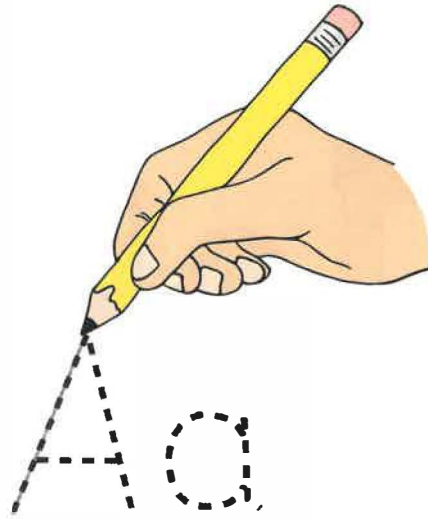
Look At The Teacher



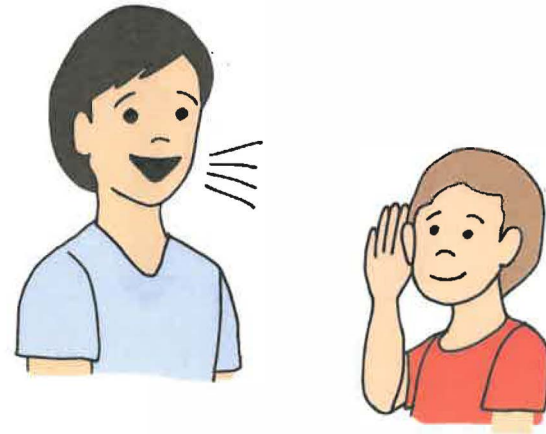
Chair Push-Ups



Bounce



Trace



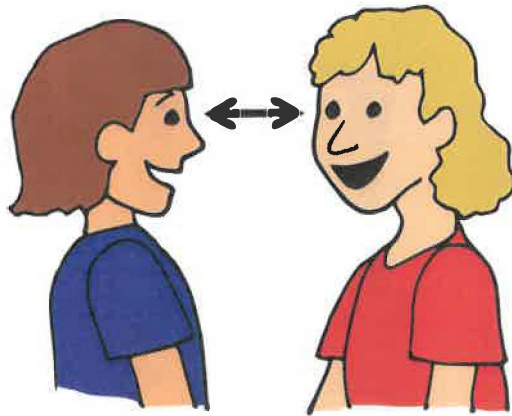
Listen



Talk



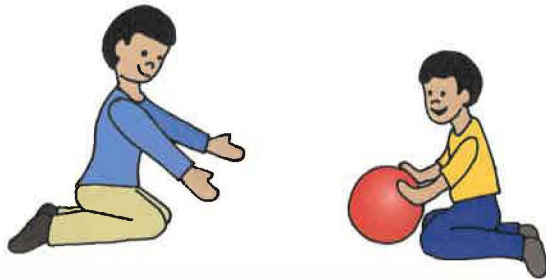
Share



Eye Contact



Listen to Music



Roll Ball



Swing



Blow Bubbles



Cut



Dance



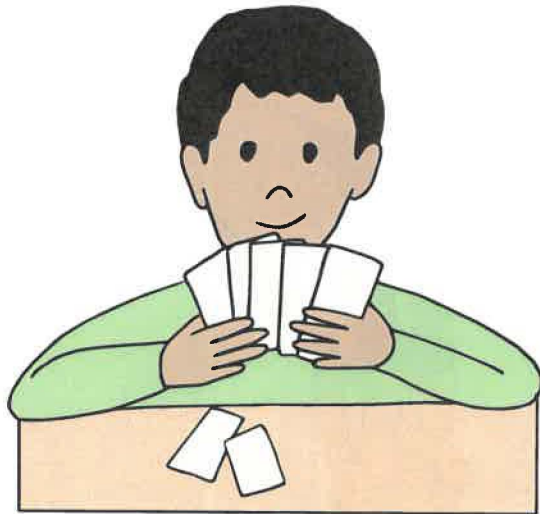
Color



Playdough



Playground



Cards



Animal Walks



Sweep Floor



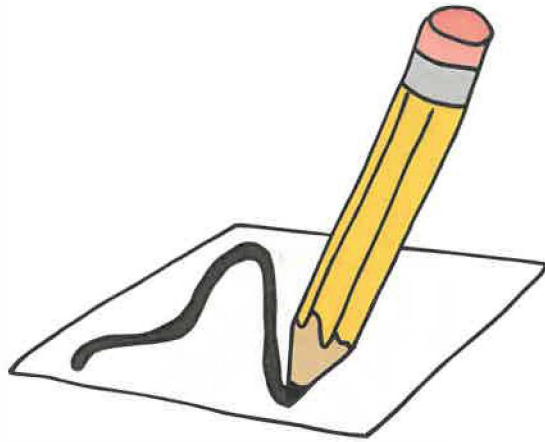
Clean Up



Game



Invite Friend



Writing



Computer



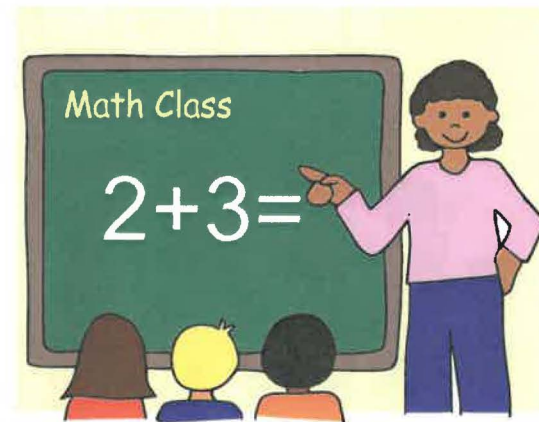
Typing



Circle Time



Reading



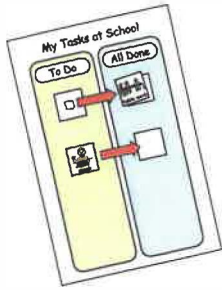
Math



Science



Activity



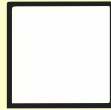
Cut out picture cards and velcro to "To Do" schedule. Move when "all done".



Daily Schedule

To Do

All Done





Arrival



Snack



Free play



Circle time



Special activity



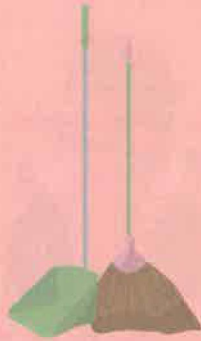
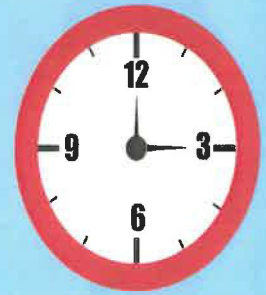
Movement break



Clean up



Dismissal

**Arrival****Snack****Craft time****Homework****Special jobs****Clean up
time****Pack-up****Home time**

Visual Schedules for middle/high schoolers

Directions for use: If appropriate, a visual schedule can be developed and shown as a large field. For older students, this is more useful because it may be more developmentally appropriate.

What? Visual schedules allow students to preview their upcoming activities and lay out expectations.

Why? Students benefit from having a visual aid in order to preview and understand expectations.

Who? This may benefit all students, but is especially helpful for those who have difficulty with transitioning.

When/Where/How? This tool should be implemented before and throughout time in classroom/programming.

AFTER SCHOOL SCHEDULE

FIRST I WILL PUT MY
BELONGINGS AWAY



I AM HUNGRY. LET
ME EAT A SNACK



HOMEWORK TIME



TIME TO
LEAVE

GROUP
ACTIVITY



PROGRAM JOBS



Daily Schedule – Velcro Board

Directions for use: This tool is useful for all students who would benefit from an engaging “to do” list. Directions for use are on the left side of the page.

What? Visual schedules allow students to preview their upcoming activities and lay out expectations.

Why? Students benefit from having a visual aid in order to preview and understand expectations.

Who? This may benefit all students, but is especially helpful for those who have difficulty with transitioning.

When/Where/How? This tool should be implemented before and throughout time in classroom/programming.

Daily Schedule

☐

Put Backpack Away

☐

Eat a Snack

☐

Calm Activity

☐

Homework

☐

Movement Break

☐

Group Activity

☐

Job or Chores

☐

Free Choice

☐

Go Home

What Do You Want to Do?

Directions for use: Similar to the PECS “first/then” board, this tool provides a layout for a choice board on which a student can place desired and non-preferred tasks. The student may then choose the next task. If the adult would like the participant to choose between non-preferred tasks, provide only those options.

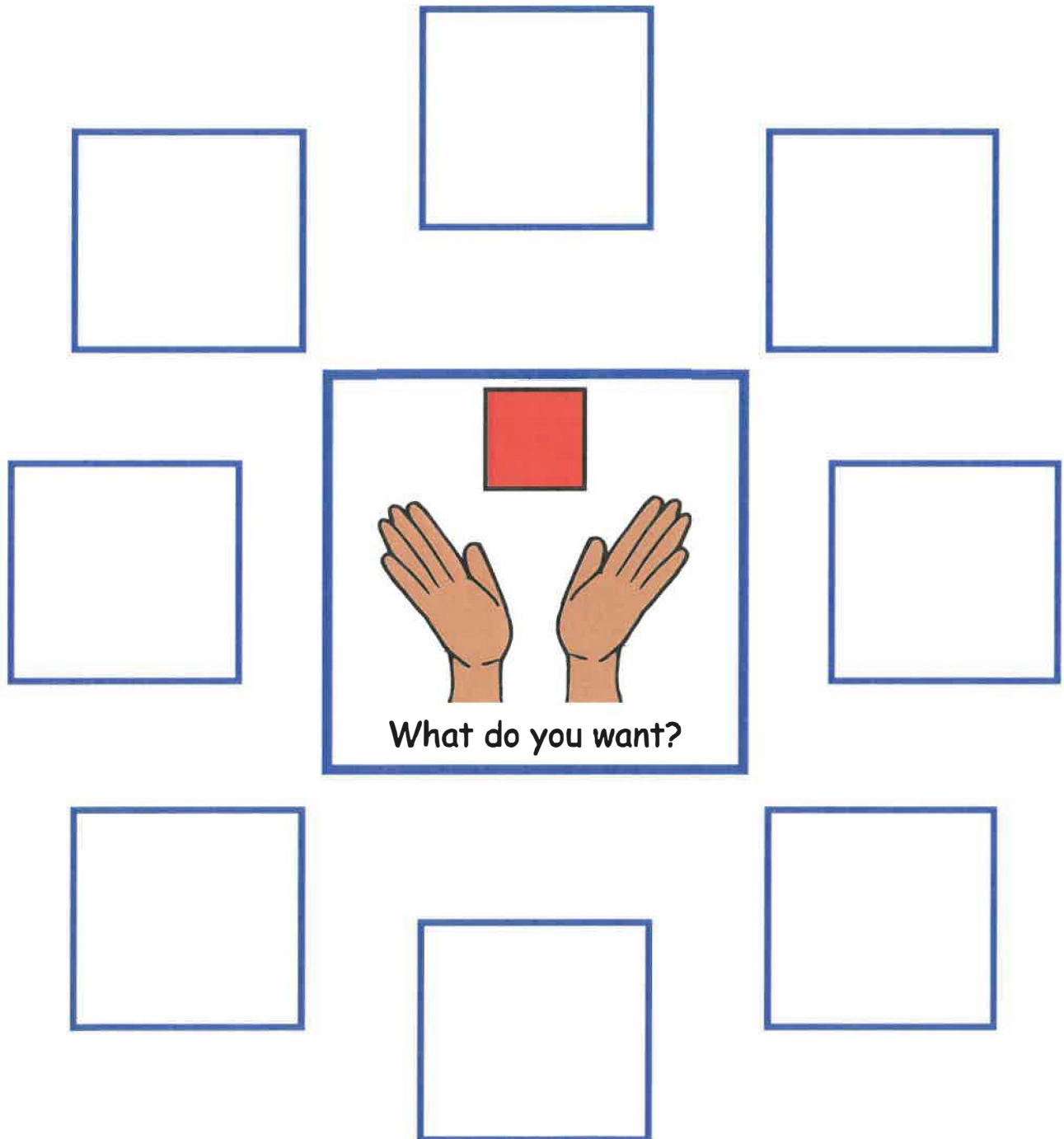
What? Similar to the PECS “first/then” board, this tool provides a layout for a choice board on which a student can place desired and non-preferred tasks.

Why? Students who are given options are more likely to participate in non-preferred activities. This gives them autonomy over their choices.

Who? This could benefit a student who has difficulty with transitioning and decision-making.

When/Where/How? This can be implemented before activities begin and throughout in the classroom/programming environment.

What do you want to do?



Social Stories

Directions for use: Social stories benefit students who have difficulty with consistently occurring behaviors and transitions. The stories included were developed for elopement and shyness/anxiety in group situations, but can be developed for any behavior, activity, and emotion. Social stories are most helpful when read daily and before the situation or activity that typically triggers the student or causes them stress/anxiety occurs.

What? Social stories benefit students who have difficulty with consistently occurring behaviors and transitions.

Why? Social stories help students visualize and connect to a situation, behavior, or activity. They have help students learn coping skills, functional skills, and social skills through a story format.

Who? Social stories benefit students who have difficulty with consistently occurring behaviors and transitions. Oftentimes, the story is personalized with the student's own name and picture if possible.

When/Where/How? Social stories are most helpful when read daily and before the situation or activity that typically triggers the student or causes them stress/anxiety occurs.

When I Want to Run Away in School



Social Story



**Sometimes I feel frustrated or upset at
school.**



When I feel this way, I do not want to stay in class and I run out of the classroom.



**I should not leave the classroom
without permission.**



**Running away is not safe and I can get
in trouble or get hurt.**



**If I need help or am frustrated, I can
tell my teacher or an adult.**



A teacher or adult will help me feel better.



**Once I feel better, I can stay in class
and learn!**

This is Mark. He is funny, nice, and sometimes shy.



Mark loves his after-school program, but sometimes he has trouble talking to others. He gets so excited that sometimes people do not want to talk to him.



This can make Mark feel scared and nervous.



When Mark is unsure about how to talk to others, his teacher helps him talk to his friends.



Mark and his friend take turns listening to each other and talking about what they want to do.



First, his teacher goes with him to say “hi” to his friend. Then his teacher reminds Mark to listen to what his friend is saying. When his friend stops talking, his teacher tells Mark that it is his turn to talk.



After they are done talking, Mark is no longer scared. He now knows how to talk and listen to others.



Instructions

Please fill out the following feedback form to inform parents/guardians on their child's daily performance. Ask the child to discuss how they felt about programming on that day. The child can specify if they did not like programming, liked programming, or loved programming. Prompt the child to circle one of the three options. In the case that the child cannot circle an option, you may circle it for them after they choose an option. After observing the child, circle one of the five corresponding numbers that best depicts their performance in that area. 1 is the lowest score, indicating that this area needed improvement. 5 is the highest score, indicating that the child's performance was excellent in this area.

We use this scale to update you on your child's performance.
Feel free to reach out for any additional information.

Overall attitude about programming is subjective and
documented via self report from your child.

Overall attitude about programming:
Per child report

Did not like it Liked it Loved it

1
(Needs improvement)

5
(Excellent)

On task behavior

1 2 3 4 5

Participation

1 2 3 4 5

Social skills

1 2 3 4 5

Instructions

Please fill out the following feedback form to inform parents/guardians on their child's daily performance. Draw a smiley face, neutral face, or sad face in the corresponding category to indicate how the child's day went. A smiley face indicates that their performance was great in this area. A neutral face indicates that their performance was okay/satisfactory in this area. A sad face indicates that their performance could be improved in this area. The overall mood category is subjective and self report, which means that the child will explain how they felt that day. The child may draw a face their self within the overall mood category or you may draw it for them after they say how they felt. You may also list any additional details and/or observations within each category.



Date:

_____ 's Day

Behavior

Social Skills

Overall Mood
(Self report)

Additional Comments



Classroom Culture Assessment Tool

Every classroom has a culture -- a set of group expectations, behavioral norms, and social customs that governs what goes on and how it is interpreted. Some aspects of a classroom culture reflect the priorities and style of the teaching, while other aspects develop among the school and are not directly associated with the production aspects of the role. Some aspects are written down, others are more informal and may even be done without conscious awareness. Learning the classroom culture is an important aspect of socialization for new students. Following key elements of the culture is one of the ways students come to feel that they “belong,” and largely what people mean when they speak of someone being “included” at a school. The sense of “fitting-in” is central to student adjustment and satisfaction.

While every classroom has a culture, some cultures are “stronger” and may extend to more aspects of the setting, involve students more fully, and offer more support. Certain cultures offer more possibilities for inclusion.

This **Classroom Culture Tool** helps you assess whether a new student (your client) is taking full advantage of social inclusion opportunities at his / her school.

Use the following chart to note your observations. Also talk with the student and other students or professionals to gather info during in-person visits to the school.

Then summarize your experience per instructions at the end of this assignment.

IES Trainee's Name: _____

Student's Initials: _____

School Program: _____

Date of visit(s): _____

Details / Comment:

Strategies to increase inclusion:

1. Do the students have the opportunity to change and choose classroom jobs? If not, are they assigned roles and how long do they assume the job?	no yes		
2. Have most of the students been in the same class for more than a year? If yes, are the students accepting of new students?	no yes		

3. Are there classroom jobs that require more than one student to complete? If yes, how is the job split up?	no yes		
4. Is there a uniform way to let the students know they are meeting classroom expectations such as rule charts, behavior scales, daily reports, and/or zones of regulation?	no yes	If yes, describe:	

5. Is there a time during the day when students are more likely to: - talk socially? - participate in group work or activities? - help one another with assignments?	no yes		
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Details / Comments:

Strategies to increase inclusion:

6. Is there a set classroom schedule?	no yes	If yes, Start _____ End _____	
7. Are the students expected to stay quiet during transitions? If yes, what happens if they start talking?	no yes	If yes, describe:	

8. Is social participation facilitated by teachers? What happens when a student is quiet and does not want to talk?	no yes	Describe:	
9. Is nonverbal used and understood in the school?	no yes	If yes, describe:	
10. Are alternative expressive communication devices used and understood in the school?	no yes	If yes, describe:	
11. Are the students taught nonverbal communication? If yes, do they	no yes	If yes, describe:	

get the opportunity to practice interpreting nonverbal communication?			
12. Do students eat lunch in the cafeteria? If yes, are seats assigned?	no yes	If yes, describe:	

	Details / Comments:		Strategies to increase inclusion:
13. Did student(s) receive help last week to: -initiate a task? -complete a task? -share and communicate feelings effectively? -problem solve?	no yes no yes no yes no yes	If yes, describe:	
14. Do students have the opportunity to help one another? If yes, what is the general attitude and feelings towards a student who needs help?	no yes	If yes, describe:	
15. Do students recognize or celebrate any special occasions, such as birthdays? If yes, does the student get to pick from a prize	no yes	If yes, describe:	

bin or receive a birthday hat?			
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	Details / Comments:		Strategies to increase inclusion:
16. How do students build strong, positive relationships with classmates?	Describe:		
17. How do students get to know one another?	Describe:		
18. Do students have the opportunity to share about their culture?	no yes	If yes, describe:	

19. When learning about other cultures, how do the students respond?	Describe:		
20. Is the classroom community talked about? If yes, do students understand that they are all responsible for creating and maintaining the classroom culture?	no yes	If yes, describe:	
21. What kind of language do the students use with each other?	Describe:		

22. Do the students understand what the rules are and why they should follow them?	no yes		
23. What happens when a student does not follow the rules?	Describe:		

		Details / Comments:	Strategies to increase inclusion:
24. Is there a reward system in place?	no yes	If yes, describe:	
25. Are after school programs available to the student?	no yes	If yes, list:	

26. Do the students have the opportunity to make recommendations for clubs or programs? If yes, how can they give their input?	no yes	If yes, describe:	
27. Does the school sponsor any social activities like an annual ice cream social or pizza party?	no yes	If yes, describe:	

28. Does the school assist with: - school lunch programs? - special awards or incentives? - wellness or fitness program? - after school programs? - other supportive programs?	no yes	If yes, describe:	
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29. Are the students given the opportunity to play/interact with students not in their classroom?	no yes	If yes, describe:	

Details / Comments:
Strategies to increase inclusion:

30. How often are students given the opportunity to play?	Describe:		
31. Is there a buddy or mentor system set up in the school where older students are paired with younger students?	no yes	If yes, describe:	
32. Are the students given opportunities to pursue their interests?	no yes	If yes, describe:	
33. Overall, do the students feel that they are capable of achieving their dreams?	no yes		

34. Overall, do the students feel that they are in a safe and comfortable space?	no yes		
35. Overall, do students feel that they are respected, belong, and valued?	no yes		

Summarize how the student can take advantage of your findings in this assessment. Which areas strike you as most powerful? Where are there gaps, or important opportunities missing? What are some concrete steps you can take to maximize the inclusion potential for this individual?

Classroom Culture Assessment Tool

Every classroom has a culture -- a set of group expectations, behavioral norms, and social customs that governs what goes on and how it is interpreted. Some aspects of a classroom culture reflect the priorities and style of the teaching, while other aspects develop among the school and are not directly associated with the production aspects of the role. Some aspects are written down, others are more informal and may even be done without conscious awareness. Learning the classroom culture is an important aspect of socialization for new students. Following key elements of the culture is one of the ways students come to feel that they “belong,” and largely what people mean when they speak of someone being “included” at a school. The sense of “fitting-in” is central to student adjustment and satisfaction.

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This **Classroom Culture Tool** helps you assess whether a new student (your client) is taking full advantage of social inclusion opportunities at his / her school.

Use the following chart to note your observations. Also talk with the student and other students or professionals to gather info during in-person visits to the school.

Then summarize your experience per instructions at the end of this assignment.

IES Trainee's Name: _____

Student's Initials: _____

School Program: _____

Date of visit(s): _____

		Details / Comment:	Strategies to increase inclusion:
1. Does the classroom have student jobs? If yes, what are the jobs and do the students choose them?	no yes	If yes, describe:	
2. Have most of the students been in the same school for more than a year? If yes, are the students accepting of new students?	no yes		

3. Is there a uniform way to let the students know they are meeting classroom expectations such as progress reports, rule charts, or behavior scales?	no yes	If yes, describe:	
4. Is there a time during the day when students are more likely to: - talk socially? - participate in group work or activities? - help one another with assignments?	no yes	If yes, describe:	

Details / Comments:

Strategies to increase inclusion:

5. Is there a set classroom schedule?	no yes	If yes, Start _____ End _____	
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6. Are the students expected to stay quiet during transitions? If yes, what happens if they start talking?	no yes	If yes, describe:	
7. Is social participation facilitated by teachers? What happens when a student is quiet and does not want to talk?	no yes	Describe:	
8. Is nonverbal used and understood in the school?	no yes	If yes, describe:	
9. Are alternative expressive communication	no yes	If yes, describe:	

devices used and understood in the school?			
10. How well do students interpret nonverbal communication? Please describe.	Describe:		
11. Do students eat lunch in the cafeteria with other classes? If yes, do students have the option to choose where they sit?	no yes	If yes, describe:	

	Details / Comments:		Strategies to increase inclusion:
12. Did student(s) receive help last week to: -initiate a task? -complete a task? -share and communicate feelings effectively? -problem solve?	no yes no yes no yes no yes	If yes, describe:	
13. Do students have the opportunity to help one another? If yes, what is the general attitude and feelings towards a student who needs help?	no yes	If yes, describe:	

Details / Comments:

Strategies to increase inclusion:

15. What are the relationships like between students? Are they overall positive or are some negative?	Describe:		
15. Do most students know one another? Do most students interact with everyone or do they stick to the same group of individuals?	no yes	Describe:	
16. When learning about other cultures, how do the students respond?	Describe:		
17. Is the classroom community talked about? If yes, do students understand that	no yes	If yes, describe:	

they are all responsible for creating and maintaining the classroom culture?			
18. What kind of language do the students use with each other?	Describe:		

	Details / Comments:		Strategies to increase inclusion:
19. Does the classroom or school have certificates or honors that students can work towards receiving?	no yes	If yes, describe:	
20. Are after school programs or clubs available to the student?	no yes	If yes, list:	

21. Do the students have the opportunity to make recommendations for clubs or programs? If yes, how can they give their input?	no yes	If yes, describe:	
22. Does the school sponsor any social activities like school dances or talent shows?	no yes	If yes, describe:	

23. Does the school assist with: - school lunch programs? - wellness or fitness program? - after school programs? - other supportive programs?	no yes	If yes, describe:	
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	no yes	Details / Comments:	Strategies to increase inclusion:
24. Are the students given the opportunity to interact with students outside of the classroom?		If yes, describe:	
25. How often are students given the opportunity to socialize?	Describe:		

26. Is there a mentor system set up in the school where older students are paired with younger students?	no yes	If yes, describe:	
27. Are the students given opportunities to pursue their interests?	no yes	If yes, describe:	
28. Overall, do the students feel that they are capable of achieving their dreams?	no yes		
29. Overall, do the students feel that they are in a safe and comfortable space?	no yes		

30. Overall, do students feel that they are respected, belong, and valued?	no yes		
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Summarize how the student can take advantage of your findings in this assessment. Which areas strike you as most powerful? Where are there gaps, or important opportunities missing? What are some concrete steps you can take to maximize the inclusion potential for this individual?