



Ski Spectacular Instructor Academy

**Hosted by The Hartford Ski Spectacular
December 4-7, 2023**

Clinic Summary Notes

Clinic Topic: A Spectrum of Possibilities: Teaching Guests with ASD

1. Students with Autism are as unique as each snowflake on the hill – find out as much information as you can about your student from a student profile, anyone who may have worked with them in the past, and most especially from the student and their caregiver if possible.
2. Students with Autism have varying social needs and may struggle with social cues and norms, have difficulty with communication, dislike direct eye contact, and more. Be mindful of how you can create a safe space for your student to build trust.
3. Students with Autism have varying emotional needs – they may get overwhelmed easily in the mountain environment, they may be prone to emotional outbursts, they may not know how to or be able to express their emotional situation to you – be prepared to create a learning environment that is supportive of your student and to deal with outbursts and overwhelm should they happen out on the mountain. Have a plan in place to get them off the hill if needed.
4. Students with Autism have varying physical needs – they may dislike physical touch, they may display stemming behaviors when they are anxious or overwhelmed, they may have a number of sensory issues that you need to be aware of – be prepared to work with a student who you may not be able to touch during the course of the lesson, or students that need to wear dark tinted goggles or ear plugs to accommodate sensitivity to light and noise. Have a plan in place for how to maneuver your student through lift lines or busy intersections on the hill.
5. Try to incorporate the learning support tools your students are using at home/school in your lesson to increase your probability of success.
6. Try to find out what your student likes and enjoys such as movies, books, music, etc., and incorporate it into your lesson where possible. Get creative!!
7. To learn more about ASD check out <https://www.autismspeaks.org/>.