



PSIA-AASI National Adaptive Academy

Hosted by The Hartford Ski Spectacular
December 8-12, 2025

Clinic Reminders

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

1. Basic foundational information on numerous and various diagnoses of developmental/intellectual disabilities is needed for working in this population. Gain insight into how each diagnosis may have combinations of physical/intellectual/behavioral approaches in lesson planning. Seek out reputable references and websites.
2. Consider the wide range of symptoms, skills, and levels of ability in functioning associated with each diagnosis and each individual with that diagnosis. Every lesson and every guest will be different.
3. The CAP Model is a guideline for determining a person's ability and potential within a specific age group. With our adaptive guests, chronological age may be less relevant than in a neurotypical lesson. Appropriately engage guests without compromising dignity. Thoroughly assess each area of CAP to ensure success in your lessons. (Refer to PSIA's Children's Instruction Manual- 2nd Edition.)
 - Cognitive (how people think)
 - Affective (how people feel)
 - Physical (how people move)
4. What's in your Toolbox/Bag? Create a tool bag of sensory games; flash cards; toys; communicators to assist with any lesson to provide fun, focus, change of direction, as needed.
5. **All Behavior is Communication** – Learn to recognize signs/triggers that your guests may exhibit and take fast action to remove the stimuli that may escalate to crisis.
6. Apply behavior management strategies when teaching guests with a cognitive diagnosis who have a behavioral component involved. Ask caregivers and/or our guest which strategies seem to be most effective for them.
7. Understand and review the Learning Connection, Learning Partnership and Teaching/Learning Cycle to set yourself up for successful lessons. (refer to PSIA Teaching Snowsports Manual).
8. The severity of someone diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can vary greatly and is based on the degree to which social communication, insistence on structure and surroundings, and repetitive patterns of behavior affect the daily functioning of the individual. Remember that "spectrum" refers to the wide range of symptoms, skills, and levels of ability in functioning. Every lesson and every student

will be different.

9. Do the best you can to make environments predictable. Prepare, well in advance, for transitions or change for those students who need it.
10. Arm yourself with knowledge on topics that your high functioning ASD students focus on, to build into successful lessons. For example – if your student knows A LOT about trains – talk to him/her about trains and make your skill drills use train language and concepts! If you do not know much about that topic, what a great opportunity you will have to learn about it from the student!
11. In 1997, an amendment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) included the language, “Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports,” which described methods used to identify and support desired behaviors in the school setting. The educational research community has been developing and studying Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) ever since. PBIS seeks to reduce or eliminate poor behavior schoolwide through the encouragement of positive behaviors. There are other systems for behavioral changes as well as PBIS, but not as widely used.

Resources:

1. TEDx Talk- ‘How much do you know about intellectual disabilities?’ (Matthew Williams): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BURbLmQL1BE>.
2. TEDx Talk- ‘The Disability Conversation’ (Ben Myers): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cclAqPjwKcY>
3. TEDx Talk- ‘Autism- what we know (and what we don’t know yet)’ (Wendy Chung): https://www.ted.com/talks/wendy_chung_autism_what_we_know_and_what_we_don_t_know_yet?language=en
4. ‘Inside Autism’ Educational Dramatic Film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbNGy2NtsOA>
5. The Reason I Jump, (Naoki Higashida, 2005)- written by then 13-year-old Higashida, a non-verbal boy with autism.
6. Temple Grandin, renowned author, speaker, and professor at Colorado State University has autism and her life story can be seen in the 2010 movie *Temple Grandin*. Her books about autism are fabulous resources and these are a few of her works: *The Girl Who Thought in Pictures*; *I am Temple Grandin*; *The Stories I tell My Friends*; *Thinking in Pictures: My Life with Autism*
7. Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports (PBIS) website: <https://www.pbis.org/>.
8. PSIA-AASI Education Materials: thesnowpros.org
 - b. PSIA-AASI Adaptive Alpine Manual
 - c. PSIA-AASI Adaptive Snowboard Manual
 - d. PSIA-AASI Teaching Snowsports Manual
 - e. PSIA-AASI Core Concepts for Snowsports Instructors
 - f. PSIA-AASI Children’s Instruction Manual