Preparing Staff and Students

Prepare Staff

1. Begin the collaborative team process
   - Include elements of the case management system
   - No one person wants to be or should be a team all by himself or herself

2. Introduce the staff to autism
   - Schedule in-services and share reading and videotape materials
   - Share the IEP with special area teachers and discuss how they can help meet those objectives

3. Plan regular meetings to share information
   - Meetings may occur often in the beginning, then on a regular or as-needed basis later
   - Things that can be beneficial to share, but are not part of a crisis, will be more easily shared if there is a time when team members must get together

Prepare Students

1. Remember the student’s rights to confidentiality
   - Do not share personal information without permission from parents

2. Introduce the students to autism
   - Check out students’ books and videotapes on autism available through CISE (see Resource 38, Autism Library Resources)
     - LP 2003, Circle of Friends: Developing Friendships for Children with Challenging Needs (video)
     - LP 2271, Joey and Sam
     - LP 2290, Russell is Extra Special: A Book About Autism for Children
     - LP 2333, Autism: Being Friends (video)
   - Discuss how people are the same and different, emphasizing sameness and that differences are okay. Compare physical characteristics of objects (long vs. short, etc.) and characteristics of two people (e.g., jobs, likes and dislikes, abilities and disabilities, etc.)

3. Establish a routine for discussing new questions and concerns (e.g., biweekly or monthly visits to the classroom by the special educator, counselor, or speech pathologist to answer questions)

4. Be honest about reasons for special types and schedules of reinforcement (e.g., how to react to the student and when to stop helping)