



PROJECT ACCESS FACT SHEET #24



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ALTERNATIVES TO REPEATED SUSPENSIONS OF STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

First: Think about the reasons to keep your student in school!

- Sending the student home is not productive!
- Some students may manage to get suspended on purpose to avoid work or some other aspect of school.
- Suspensions are not effective for those students who do not see it as a significant consequence.
- Providing alternatives to suspensions can be more effective in producing behavior change
- There are many alternatives that motivate students better than suspension

Second: Think about your IEP!

- Is there a workable behavior plan?
- Are all staff following it with fidelity?
- Is it based on perceived function(s) of challenging behavior?
- Does the IEP include goals to teach alternate appropriate behaviors to replace the challenging behavior?

Third: Think about your classroom structure and expectations!

- Is the physical environment in your classroom designed to prevent a sensory overload for students?
- Does the classroom environment offer structure and predictability to reduce anxiety and stress levels?
- Do you provide sufficient instructional flexibility to accommodate for the social, communication and academic needs of your students including modification of tasks, offering preferred choices for some of the activities, provision of breaks?
- Do you provide appropriate supports to increase students' active participation, including visual supports, work systems, and social stories?

- Do you provide students with ASD an Activity Schedule to bring predictability and structure to their day and to assist with transitions?
- Do you prepare your students in advance for transitions between activities and settings?
- Do you assist your student in coping with any unanticipated changes?
- Do you try to stay ahead of the meltdown by watching for precursor behaviors?
- Do you provide a way for the student to take a break and to calm down if he appears to be approaching a meltdown?
- Do you have a place in your classroom where a student can take a break?
- Have you thought of using calming techniques to assist your student? Music? Physical exercise? Yoga?
- Do you have de-escalation procedures in mind, so you can avoid having to restrain, seclude, or suspend?
- Do you keep safety in mind and strictly adhere to safety guideline when dealing with your student?

Fourth? Have you thought about alternatives to suspension?

- In-school suspension
- Community or school service
- Provision of a mini course on appropriate behavior
- Behavior monitoring, especially if the student monitors his own behavior
- Restitution
- Behavior contract
- Teaching of problem solving skills
- Loss of privileges
- Time out
- Before or after school detention
- Mentoring with a staff member before or after school

Some suggestions were modified from an article: *Alternatives to Suspension from PBISWorld.com Tier 2 Behavior Intervention and Support of Alternatives to Suspension*
<http://www.pbisworld.com/tier-2/alternatives-to-suspension/>

Other suggestions were gleaned from: Positive Behavioral Intervention for Students with Autism: A Practical Guide to Avoiding the Legal Risks of Seclusion and Restraint by Padmaja Sarathy and published by LRP Publications, 2009