

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder that affects the way individuals communicate and interact with one another.

Strategies to use at Ooch

Provide Prompting and Visual Supports

- Use a visual schedule to show what the routine is
- Use pictures to enhance communication
- Carry post-it notes to write down simple instructions

Prepare for Transitions

- Give 5, 3, 1 minute notice for the end of an activity
- Start talking about the next activity while still at the first activity
- Provide a visual to prompt the transition

Allow a Break from the Group

- Being in a group is stressful
- Allow for times away from the group to help the camper regulate and destress
- Establish a safe spot for the camper to go when he needs a break **that never functions a disciplinary location**

Facilitate Friendships

- Provide opportunities for this camper to interact with others his/her own age
- Help the camper navigate through different social scenarios (ie. Was that other camper bullying or teasing?)
- Be a safe person for the camper

Manage Expectations

- Establish what a successful day at Ooch is and emphasize this success (a successful day is that everyone in our group had fun vs. getting to the top of the ropes course)
- Remind the camper to be flexible around different situations (it would be great if we get to go on the couch at waterski but it's going to be awesome riding in the boat)

Coach Campers through Difficult Situations

- Provide language around emotions
- Use simple language when the camper is escalated and a visual support
- Find a simple activity that the camper can be successful at to help them rebound from negative emotions

Be the Campers Cheerleader

- Recognize positive behaviour in the moment
- Use positive reinforcement (verbal, high five, ask Marg or Zoe for resources like stickers if necessary)
- Even with difficult behaviour acknowledge the campers successes