







# All About Small Group Instruction

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## Agenda

-  Why Small Group Instruction is Beneficial
-  Considerations for Grouping
-  Scheduling
-  Organization
-  Best Practices for Running a Small Group Lesson
-  Wrapping Up: The Environment as a Tool Not an Obstacle

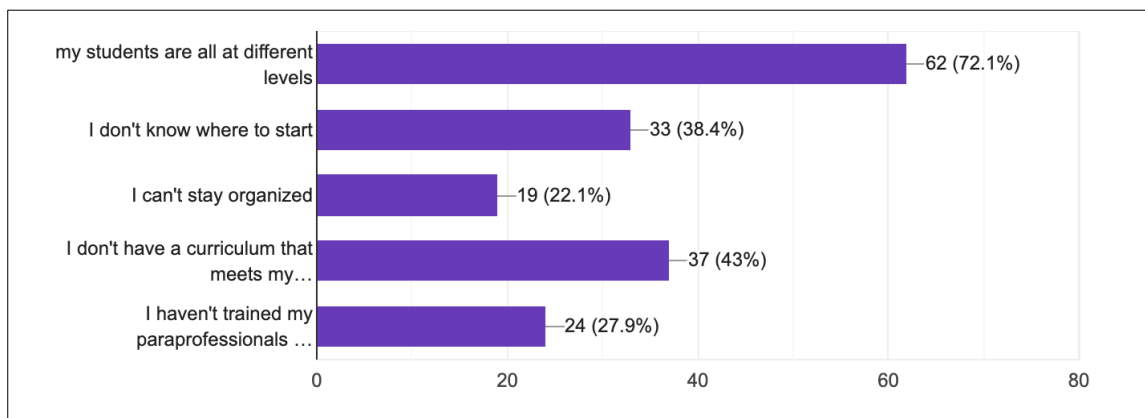


# Why small group instruction is beneficial..

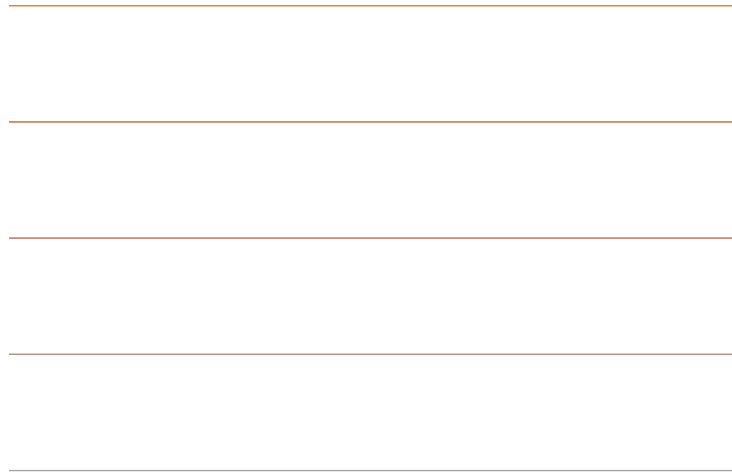
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## What is your biggest challenge with academic instruction?

1. students are at different levels
2. don't have an appropriate curriculum
3. don't know where to start



**You Big  
Question  
May be  
HOW?**



**The answer is...**

structured environment and  
small group instruction

## **Structured Environment & Small Group Instruction**

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setup your environment in a way that is structured, predictable, and routine based

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implement small group instruction where small groups of learners are working together and rotating between centers

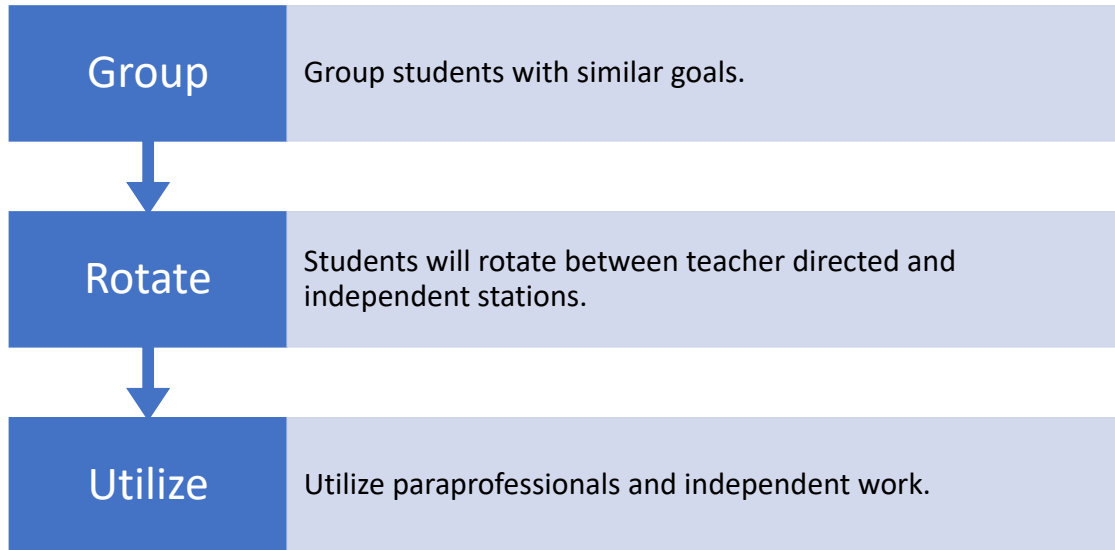
## **Structured Environment**

Is essential to give you success during small group instruction.

Need clear expectations and as much student independence as possible.

Will touch on this at the end of the session

## Small Group Instruction



## Why Small Group Instruction over full group?



## Small group instruction is beneficial because:



- ✓ targets individualized skills
- ✓ more efficient
- ✓ better able to assess students
- ✓ can handle behavioral issues more easily
- ✓ provide appropriate interventions and accommodations



## When you have a varied group...

plan instruction to  
the middle



too easy = boredom  
**being bored =  
off task  
behaviors**  
too hard = boredom





## Small Group Instruction...



allows you to provide individualized, on-level instruction



keeps student engagement



# Considerations for Grouping

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## Group Students

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- Group students with similar academic or IEP goals





**consider behavior**



**consider age/grade**



**consider schedule**



**consider staffing**



## Create Your List of Centers/Stations

- Consider needs of your students, number of student groups, and number of staff members.
- Balance of teacher-run centers and independent centers



## Teacher Run Centers

Circle Time/Morning Meeting

Direct Instruction

Guided Reading Groups

Guided Math Groups

Science

Social Studies

Social Skills



## Independent Centers

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break

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computer

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independent work

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quiet reading

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leisure activities: art, puzzles, games

## Who is helping you run teacher-run centers?

- Your paraprofessionals!
- Utilize your paraprofessionals as educators.
- Plan and structure the activities.
- Monitor progress.



## Detour on Staff Training



## Obstacles of Staff Training

time

mindset

what content to put in a training



## Finding Time for Staff Training

- Find time for staff training DURING the school day
- Give other students independent work or break time to work one on one or with all of your staff at once



## Mindset for Staff Training

*My staff members won't ever be able to help teach literacy.*

*It feels awkward and weird to tell my staff what to do.*

*I tried this before and it didn't work.*



## Role of Your Team Members

- Your paraprofessionals are educators
- Roles they can take during academic instruction
  - running direct instruction
  - running the fluency center
  - monitor independent work
  - monitor break time



## Behavior Skills Training

- evidence based practice
- teaches someone to do what you do
- increase buy in and follow through



## #1 Explain

- first step is to explain what you are doing and why
- explain why the group is set up that way
- explain how to collect data
- explain how to run the group



## #2 Model

- have them watch you run the group
- no multi-tasking: their only responsibility is to observe you





## #3 Rehearse

- watch them run the group
- you can both collect data and see if it matches



## #4 Feedback

- provide feedback
- LOTS of praise
- correct missteps or miscommunications now



**How long to do this?**  
**until it works!**



**Behavior Skills Training**  
how to teach someone to do what you do

<b>Instruction</b>	provide description of skill, importance or rationale, and when to use the skill
<b>Modeling</b>	show how to do the skill
<b>Rehearsal</b>	watch someone do the skill
<b>Feedback</b>	give positive feedback and corrective statements about the rehearsal of the skill

wash, rinse, repeat: continue until success

The Autism Helper logo, featuring a circular icon with a person silhouette and the text "The Autism Helper" around it.

# Scheduling

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**Effective  
Scheduling is  
KEY to Small  
Group  
Instruction**

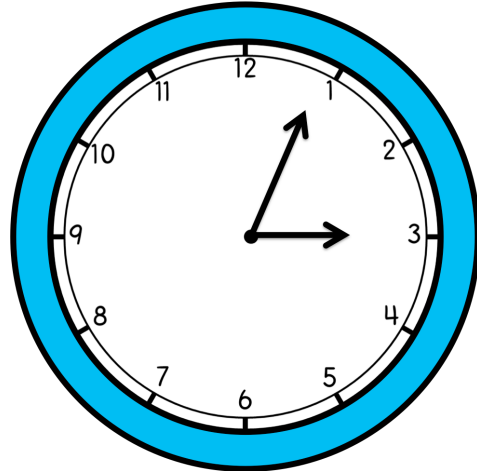
need a schedule  
that allows multiple  
groups to be  
running at one time

need to utilize your  
paraprofessionals  
for instruction



## Scheduling

- Decide how long each center will be
  - needs of our students
  - schedule



## Two Ways for Small Group Instruction

1. uninterrupted blocks

2. embedded across the school day



# Sample Schedule: Uninterrupted Block

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1		John	Amy	Alice	Kevin	Sam	Marcus	Stephon	Kayla	Victor
2	8:00 - 8:15									
3	8:15 - 8:30									
4	8:30 - 8:45									
5	8:45 - 9:00	specials	specials	specials	specials	specials	specials	specials	specials	specials
6	9:00 - 9:15									
7	9:15 - 9:30									
8	9:30 - 9:45	break	break	break	fluency	fluency	fluency	reading	reading	direct instruction
9	9:45 - 10:00	fluency	fluency	fluency	reading	reading	reading	direct instruction	direct instruction	break
10	10:00 - 10:15	reading	reading	reading	direct instruction	direct instruction	direct instruction	break	break	fluency
11	10:15 - 10:30	direct instruction	direct instruction	direct instruction	break	break	break	fluency	fluency	reading
12	10:30 - 10:45									
13	10:45 - 11:00									
14	11:00 - 11:15	recess	recess	recess	recess	recess	recess	recess	recess	recess
15	11:15 - 11:30									
16	11:30 - 11:45	lunch	lunch	lunch	lunch	lunch	lunch	lunch	lunch	lunch
17	11:45 - 12:00									
18	12:00 - 12:15									



# Sample Schedule: Uninterrupted Block

4 group Reading Schedule (sample)

Time	Teacher - Guided Reading Groups	Paraprofessional - Direct Instruction	Paraprofessional - Fluency Instruction	Quiet Reading Independent Reading Center
9:00 - 9:20	group 1: John, Alex, and Mary	group 2: Kim and Henry	group 3: Peter, Alan, Maddux, and Sophia	group 4: Tim and Evelyn
9:20 - 9:40	group 4: Tim and Evelyn	group 1: John, Alex, and Mary	group 2: Kim and Henry	group 3: Peter, Alan, Maddux, and Sophia
9:40 - 10:00	group 3: Peter, Alan, Maddux, and Sophia	group 4: Tim and Evelyn	group 1: John, Alex, and Mary	group 2: Kim and Henry
10:00 - 10:20	group 2: Kim and Henry	group 3: Peter, Alan, Maddux, and Sophia	group 4: Tim and Evelyn	group 1: John, Alex, and Mary



	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
9:00 – 9:30	direct instruction	fluency instruction	guided reading group
9:30 – 10:00	Speech	direct instruction	fluency instruction
10:00 – 10:30	guided reading group		Inclusion
10:30 – 11:00	fluency instruction	guided reading group	direct instruction
11:00 – 11:30	lunch	lunch	
11:30 – 12:00	recess	recess	lunch
12:30 – 1:00		Speech	recess
1:00 – 1:30			Speech



## Sample Schedule: Embed Across Day

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
9:00 – 9:30	direct instruction		
9:30 – 10:00	Speech	direct instruction	
10:00 – 10:30	guided reading group		Inclusion
10:30 – 11:00		recess	direct instruction
11:00 – 11:30	lunch	lunch	guided reading group
11:30 – 12:00	recess	guided reading group	lunch
12:30 – 1:00	fluency instruction	Speech	recess
1:00 – 1:30		fluency instruction	Speech
1:30 – 2:00			fluency instruction





## What if you don't have paraprofessionals?

- Get creative with your schedule.
  - Have shorter centers intermixed with more independent centers.
  - Plan the components of the 3 Part Framework on different days.
  - Have longer centers and work on all 3 components of the framework in each center

## Create Student & Adult Schedules

a way to show what each student needs to do and when they need to do it

a way to show what each adult needs to do and when they need to do it



## Why are schedules SO important?

We all rely on schedules.

Schedules are functional.

Schedules reduce anxiety, inappropriate behaviors, & increase independence.

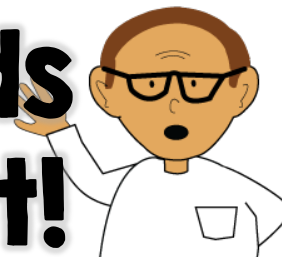


## Why are schedules SO important?

- Children with autism typically struggle with receptive language {understand what is said to them}.

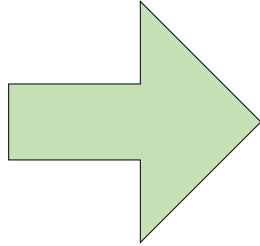
First we are going to turn in your homework, then go over the calendar, then do reading, then take a math quiz, then go to art class, then we have

**Our kids are lost!**





**goal of  
schedule  
use**

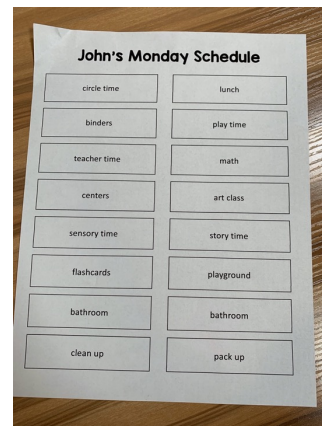
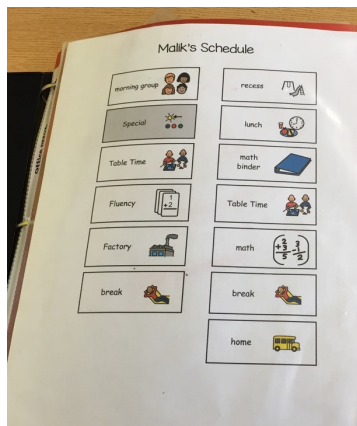


**student  
uses the  
schedule  
without a  
teacher**



**Create a student & adult schedule.**

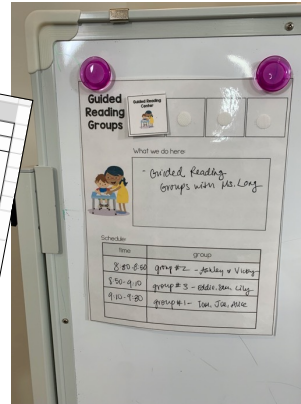
- not every student needs a visual schedule
- schedules should be individualized to meet the needs of the student
- a functional way to show the student what they need to do & the order they need to do it



# Create a student & adult schedule.

- create a detailed staff schedule
- prevents potential miscommunication & conflict

	Ms. Long	Ms. Thomas	Mr. Ellis
8:00 - 8:15			
8:15 - 8:30	circle time 1	circle time 1	
8:30 - 8:45			
8:45 - 9:00	prep	specials	
9:00 - 9:15			
9:15 - 9:30			
9:30 - 9:45	DI with Jim & Tom	fluency with Kayla and Alex	specials
9:45 - 10:00	DI with Kayla & Alex	fluency with Sam and Jacob	reading with Jim & Tom
10:00 - 10:15	DI with Sam and Jacob		reading with Kayla & Alex
10:15 - 10:30	DI with Sarah & Susan	lunch	reading with Sam and Jacob
10:30 - 10:45			reading with Sarah & Susan
10:45 - 11:00	monitor computers		
11:00 - 11:15			
11:15 - 11:30			
11:30 - 11:45	lunch	recess with kids	monitor work boxes
11:45 - 12:00			
12:00 - 12:15	math with Jim & Tom	lunch with kids	recess with kids
12:15 - 12:30	math with Kayla & Alex		lunch with kids
12:30 - 12:45			
12:45 - 1:00			



# Organization

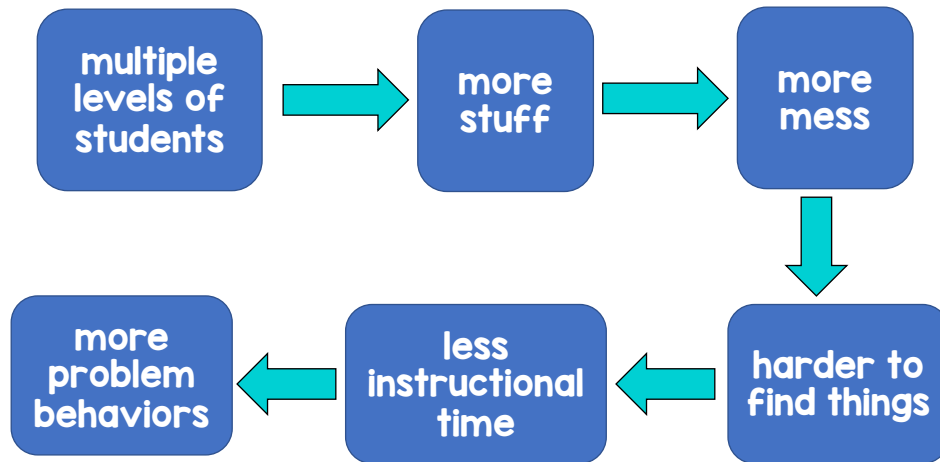
How can you differentiate for  
a wide range of skill sets?

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## **Small Group Instruction and Organization!**



## Organization is Key



## Organization is Key

- In order to accomplish a lot in short amounts of time, we need to be efficient.
- We need to be able to find resources, data sheets, and activities right away.
- We need systems!



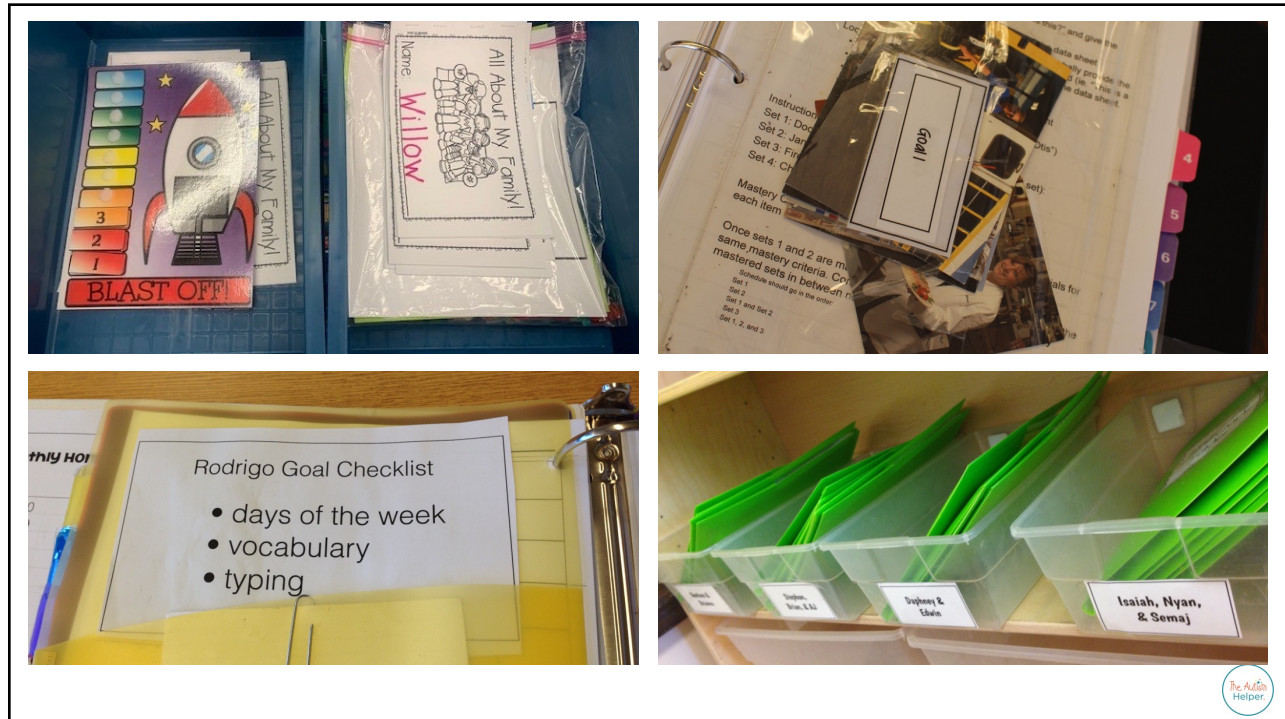
## Organization is Key

Easier to start out  
organized and  
maintain the  
system.

Doesn't need to  
be laminated,  
matching, pretty,  
etc. It just needs  
to be functional.

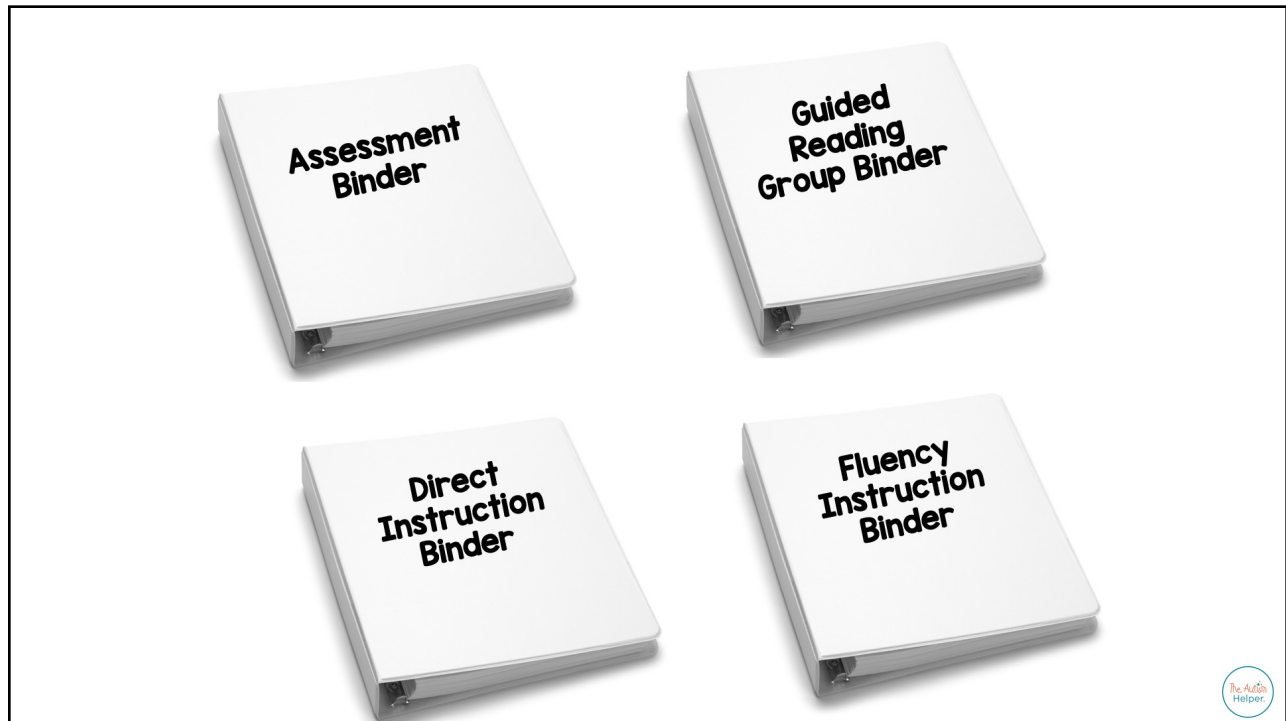
## Store Things Where You Will be Using Them

- By each center:
  1. instructional materials



## Store Things Where You Will be Using Them

- By each center:
  1. instructional materials
  2. data & lesson plan binder



## Store Things Where You Will be Using Them

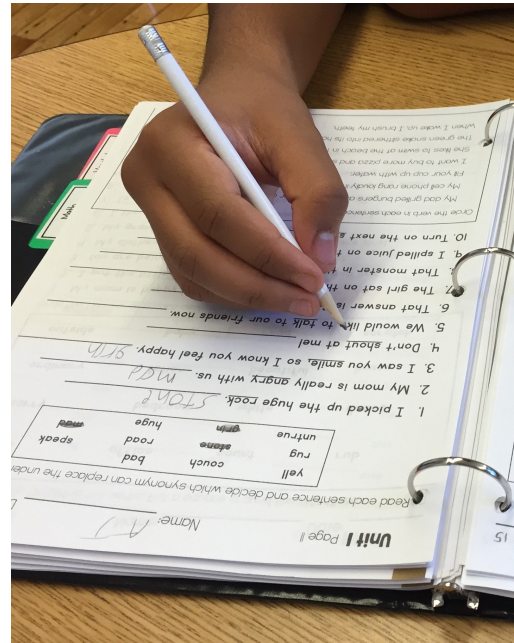
- By each center:
  1. instructional materials
  2. data & lesson plan binder
  3. supplies



## Store Things Where You Will be Using Them

- By each center:
  1. instructional materials
  2. data & lesson plan binder
  3. supplies
  4. extra work





## Additional Organization Tips:

- Label everything
- Make sure everything has a home
- Put things back after you use them

# How to Run a Small Group Lesson

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## Steps for Running a Lesson:

1. **Review Expectations and Schedule** (1-2 minutes)
2. **Introduce or Review Focus Concepts** (2-5 minutes)
3. **Do the main activity** (2-15 minutes)
4. **Extension Activities** (2-15 minutes)



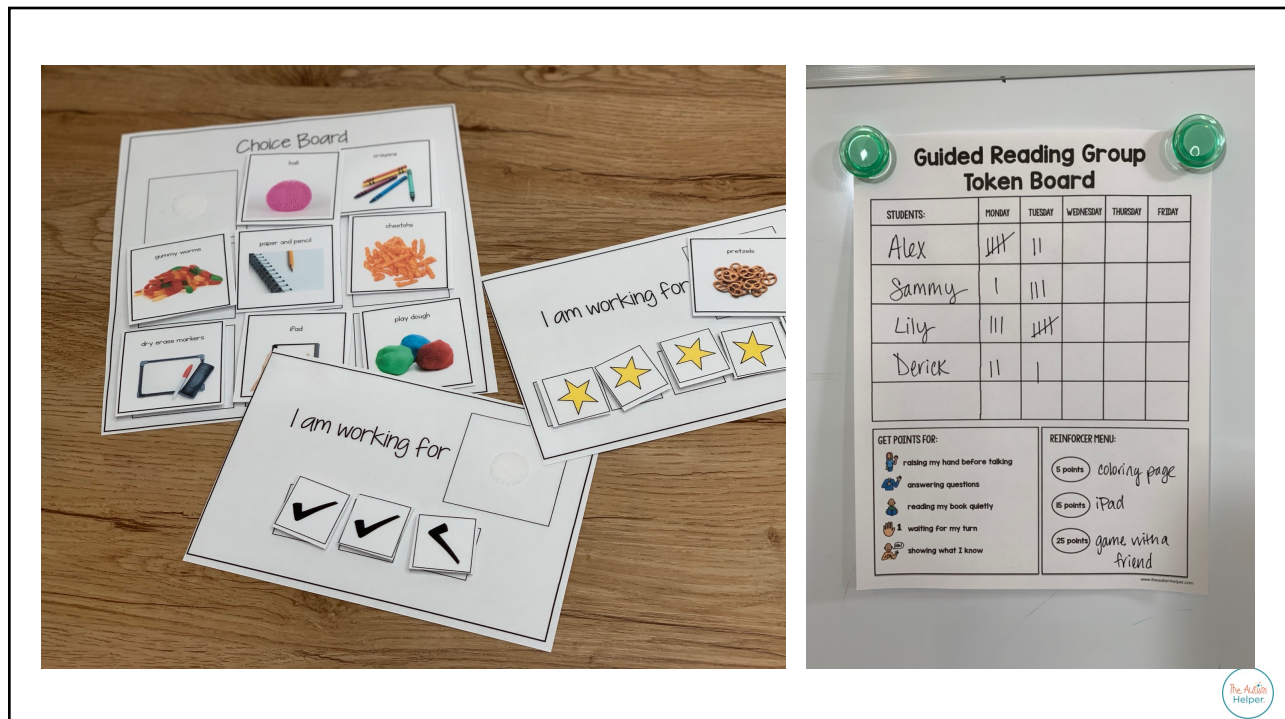
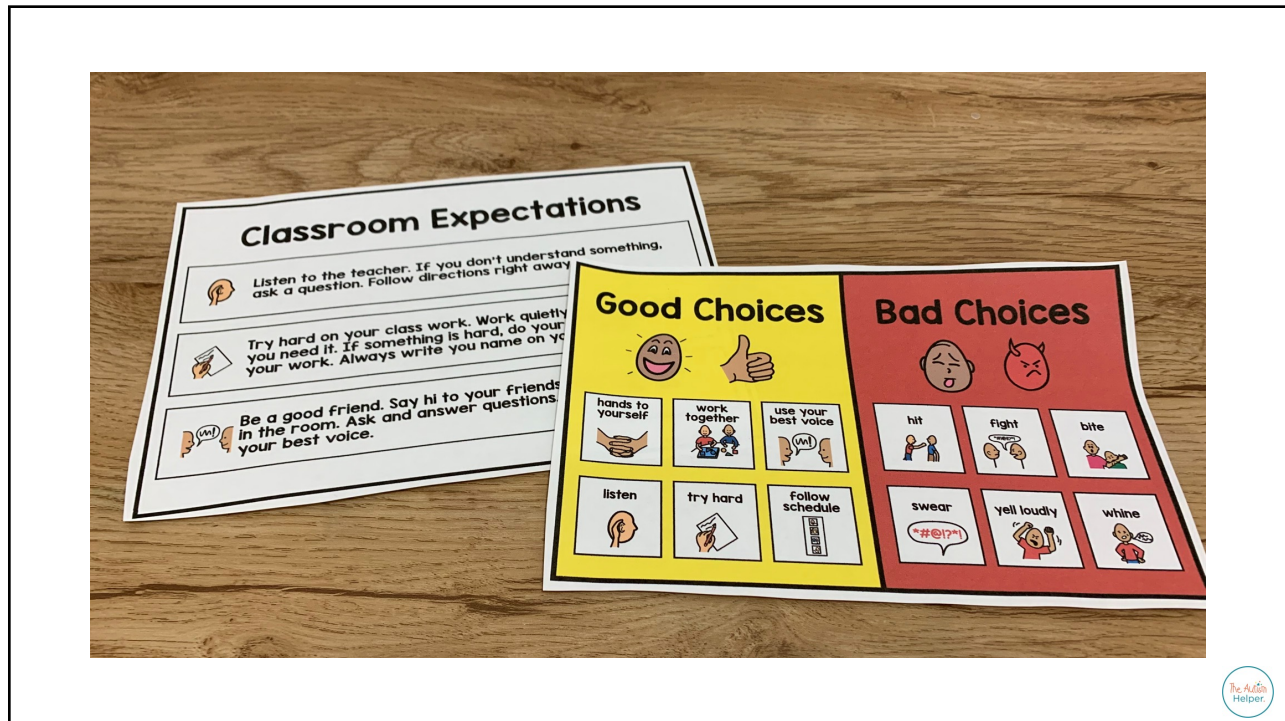
# I. Review Expectations and Schedule (1-2 minutes)

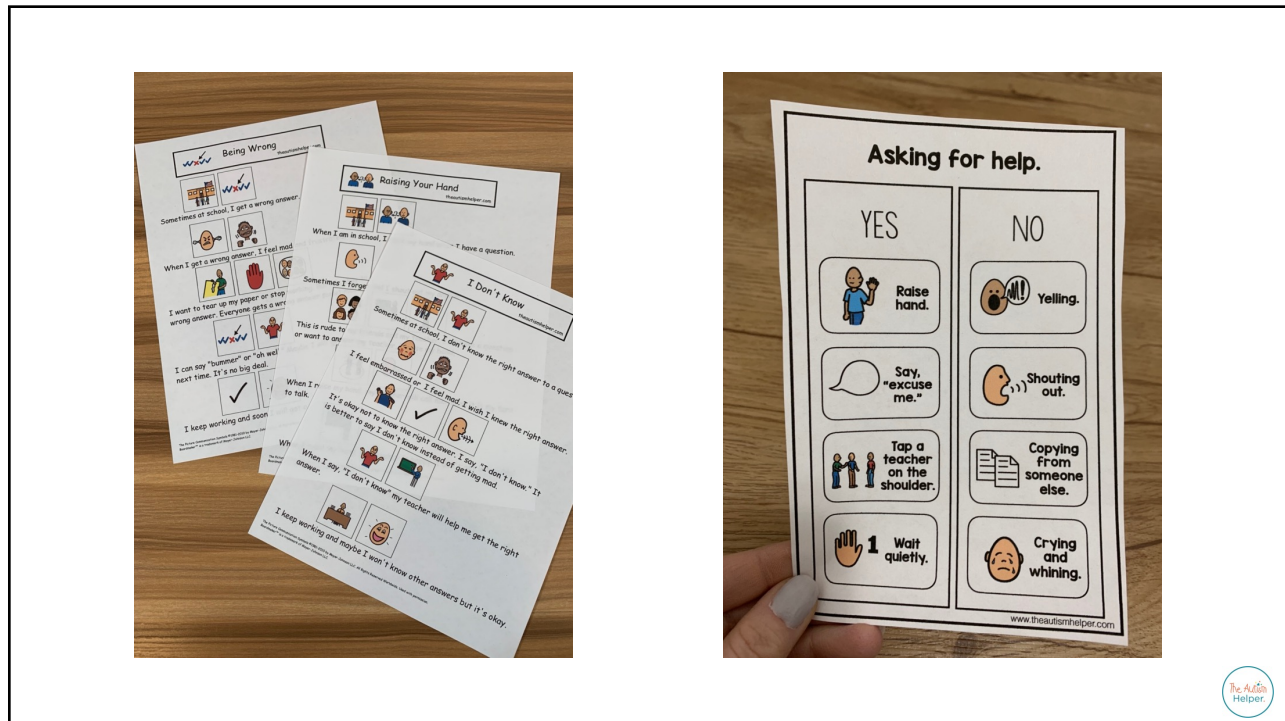


## Review Behavioral Expectations

- focus on overall rules/expectations
- add in areas of difficulty for specific learners
- highlight reinforcers and the 'why'







## Review the Schedule

- mini schedules show the order of activities
- utilize mini schedules that are accessible
- text is a visual



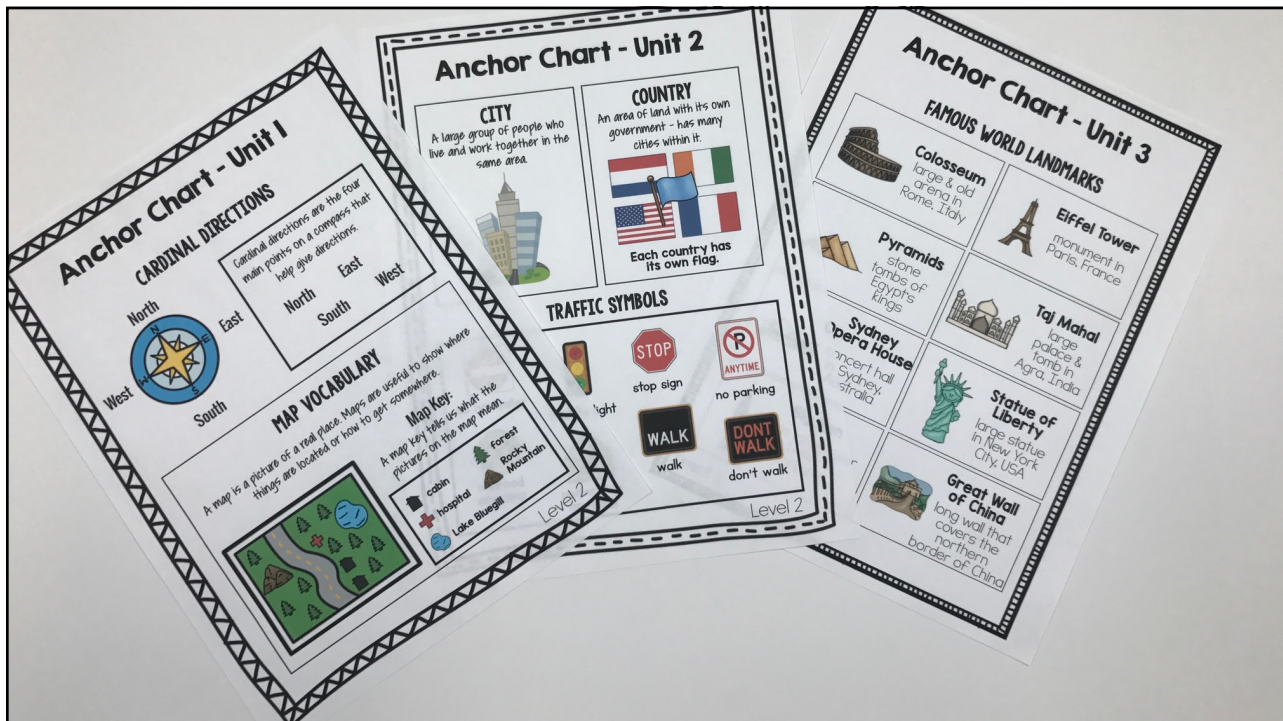


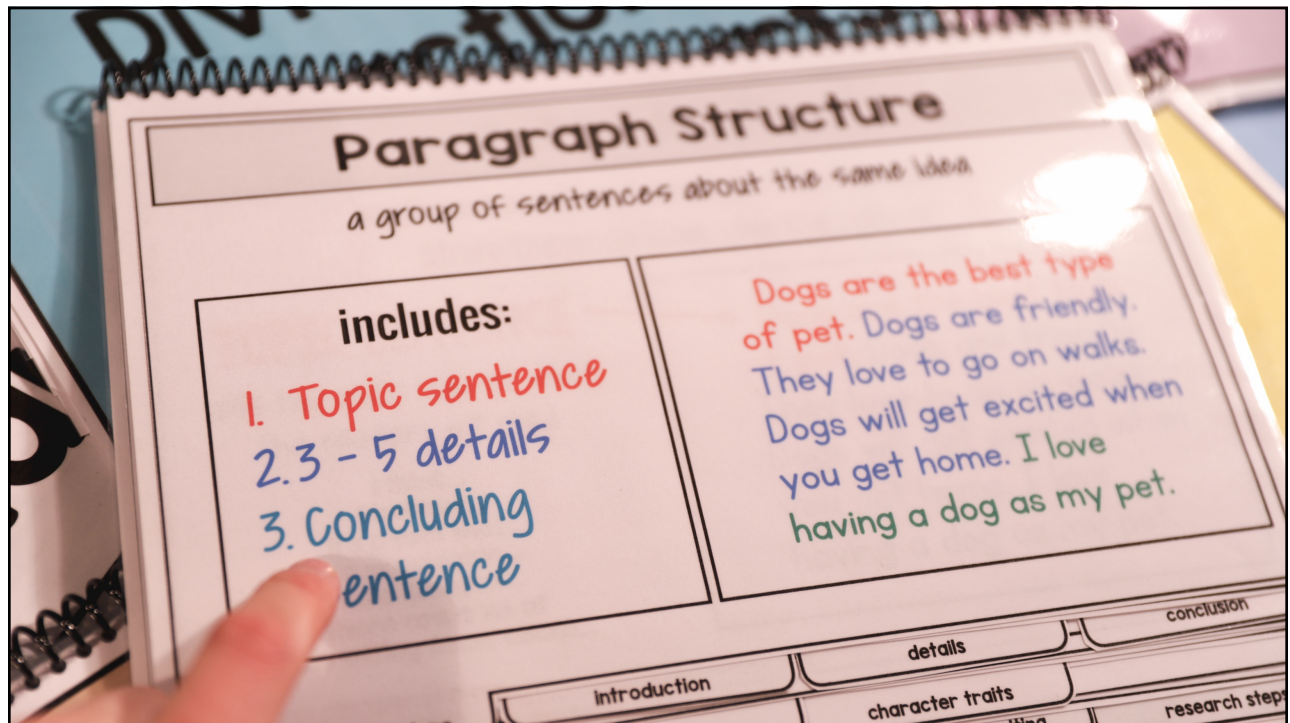
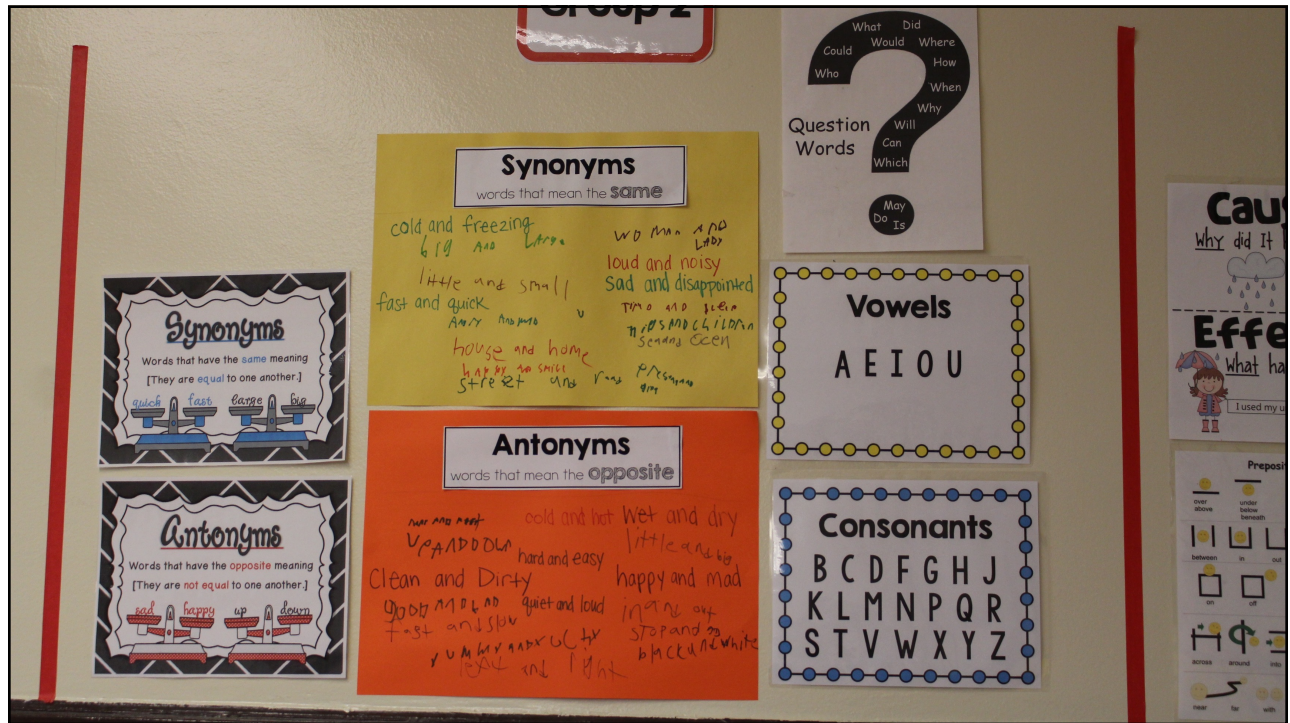
## 2. Introduce or Review Focus Concepts (2-5 minutes)



# Focus Concepts

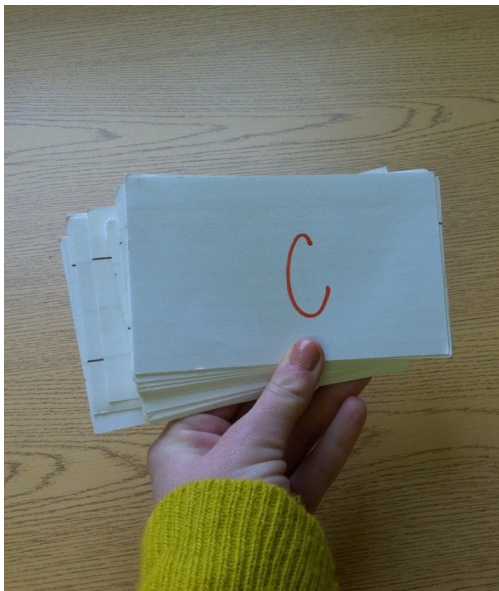
- What is the main goal of the lesson?
- Introduce or review what you will be working on
- Utilize anchor charts, examples, and/or discussion

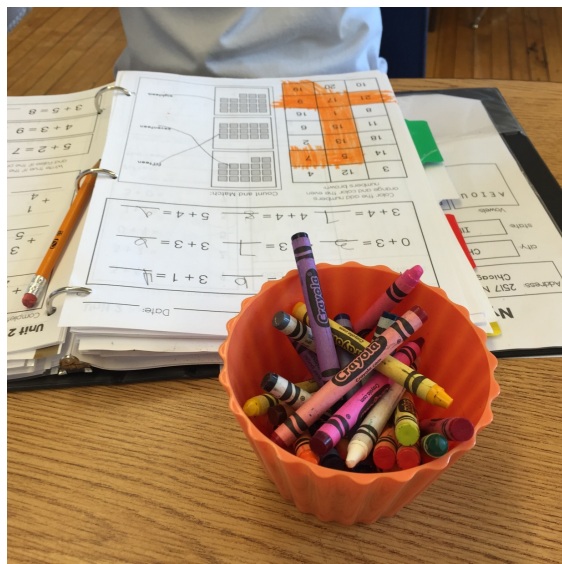
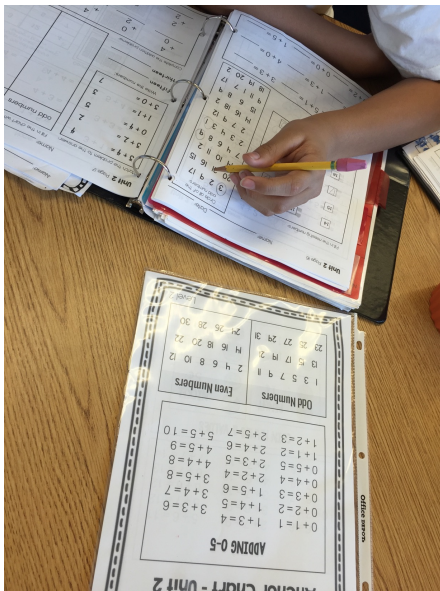
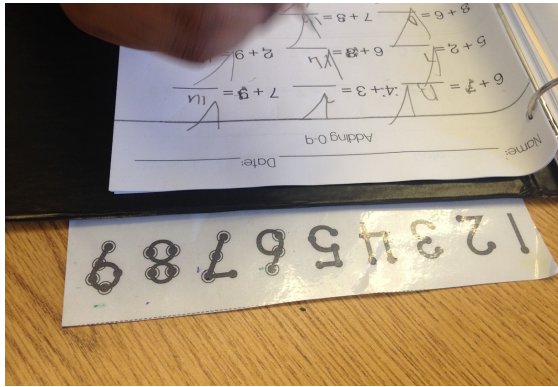






# 3. Do the activity (2-15 minutes)





## 4. Extension Activities (2-15 minutes)



### Extend on the Activity

- additional examples on the board
- discussion
- journaling or drawing
- reflect and wrap up

If the author wrote another book, what would it be about?

What if the character didn't win the race?

What if the character lived in a castle?

Draw the setting.



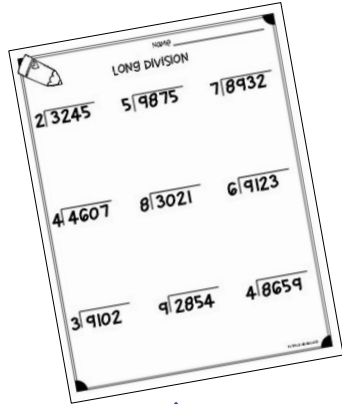
# Wrap Up: Make the Environment a Tool Not an Obstacle

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## I'm ready to go...

- how the environment is set up is one of the most valuable tools you have
- impacts the success of your academic instruction





**do something  
difficult**

**in a distracting &  
overwhelming setting**



Goal: Make the Classroom  
Environment a Tool Not an  
Obstacle

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## Structured Classroom Environment

routine based  
& predictable

visually divided  
& visually defined



## Why is a structured environment important?

- decreased negative behaviors
- lessen student anxiety
- increase independence
- increase efficiency



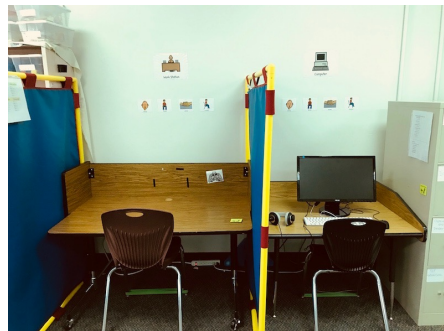
## Routine Based & Predictable

- same tables and areas of classroom are used for the same tasks each day
- *Since verbal language and socially cues can be difficult for children with autism, when the same physical areas are used for the same types of tasks - students know what is expected of them and what they will be doing when they arrive at a center.*



## Visually Divided & Defined

- centers are separate with minimal visibility to other centers
- students can focus on the work in that area and not be distracted



**Blue Reading Center** check in **Direct Instruction**

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What we do here:


- work with Ms. Thomas
- do binder work
- play a game

Schedule:

time	group

## Visually Divided & Defined

- utilize visuals or text to name each area and clarify expectations




# Classroom Readiness Checklist

**Classroom Readiness Checklist**

- ✓ **Routined Based & Predictable**

  - guided reading groups, direct instruction, & fluency instruction each happen at the same location
  - guided reading groups, direct instruction, & fluency instruction each occur at the same time or schedule throughout the week
  - the schedule stays consistent
  - when changes happen, there are other cues to alert students of the change
  - each student has a schedule to navigate between reading centers
  - each adult has a schedule to show when, where, & with who instruction is occurring
- ✓ **Visually Divided & Defined**

  - each center has a clear boundary between it and other areas of the classroom
  - supplies for that center are stored nearby
  - potential distractors are minimal around each center
  - technology screens that are not being utilized are not facing any centers
  - each center is labeled with either a visual, color, or text
  - expectations, activities, or choices are listed for each center





# Agenda

-  Why Small Group Instruction is Beneficial
-  Considerations for Grouping
-  Scheduling
-  Organization
-  Best Practices for Running a Small Group Lesson
-  Wrapping Up: The Environment as a Tool Not an Obstacle



# Wrapping Up

- ✓ Why Small Group Instruction is Beneficial
- ✓ How to Group Students (+ paraprofessional training)
- ✓ How to Schedule
- ✓ Organization
- ✓ Running Small Groups
- ✓ Setting up the Environment



# Additional Questions?

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The Autism Helper.

