

# Identifying Best Practices in Autism Education: A Walkthrough Tool for Administrators Instructional Guide

**RRTC** Rehabilitation Research & Training Center



Virginia public school administrators, including principals, assistant principals, and special education support specialists, provide oversight, supervision, and support to teachers. Their feedback throughout the year is intended to help improve how educational practices are applied to support student learning.

The VCU-RRTC-ACE Best Practices Walkthrough Tool is designed specifically for educators who teach and support autistic students. It helps administrators determine whether or not specific best practices, which include evidence-based and high-leverage practices, are in place in school environments where autistic students are receiving educational and support services.

The tool is organized into seven foundational domains essential for supporting students with autism. These domains apply across all educational settings, including:

- Intensive support classrooms
- General education classrooms
- Specials or elective classes (e.g., PE, art, music)
- Non-academic environments such as the cafeteria or playground
- Off-site job training locations

## How to Use this Tool

The tool does not use a numeric rating or score. Instead, observers mark each indicator as Not Observed (N), Partially Observed (P), or Fully Observed (F). Additionally, observers should include notes about how each indicator was implemented, with any comments or suggestions to discuss when reviewing with the educator.

This tool is intended for teachers and administrators to use collaboratively to strengthen instructional strategies and supports and increase the use of best practices in schools. Below are several implementation approaches:

### • **Short Classroom Observations**

Administrators can use this tool during short classroom observations lasting approximately 15 minutes. Because of the short time frame, observers may only see a few domains or indicators in practice. Administrators should use the tool to record only what they see during observation. To get a more complete picture, additional observations should be done at different times during the school day.

- **Formal Evaluations**

Administrators can also use this tool during longer or formal evaluations to collect observable, specific evidence for teacher evaluations. The domains and indicators included in this tool are aligned with the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Teacher Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria ([www.doe.virginia.gov](http://www.doe.virginia.gov)).

- **Self-Evaluation for Teachers and Staff**

Teachers and support staff may use this tool to reflect on how they use evidence-based and high-leverage practices to support learners with autism. This information helps identify strengths and areas for growth, and can be used to set professional development goals.

- **Professional Collaboration**

This tool can support or guide conversations among staff working directly with autistic students across school settings. Consider creating opportunities for teams to discuss their self-evaluation results and create action plans to promote consistent use of best practices.

Before completing this Walkthrough Tool, administrators should familiarize themselves with all seven domains and 34 autism-specific indicators. The chart below provides definitions for each domain, followed by a detailed explanation with examples and non-examples of each indicator.

## Domains and Definitions

Domain	Definition
Learning Environment	Staff provide a safe classroom with visual supports and engaging materials.
Positive Learning Climate	The classroom is calm, positive, and respectful of students' dignity and privacy.
Effective Teaching Practices	Students have access to relevant grade-level, standards-based activities, are engaged with materials, and have multiple learning opportunities.
Independence and Self-Determination	Students are supported in self-advocacy and are only prompted as needed.
Social Communication	Communication in any modality is honored and explicitly taught.
Behavior Supports	Proactive strategies and reinforcement are utilized to prevent interfering behaviors and increase appropriate behaviors.
Data Collection	Data is collected on both academics and behavior.

**Indicator 1:** Staff can visually monitor students from all locations in the classroom.

**Main Concept:** Staff can see students from all locations in the room, regardless of whether staff or students are standing or sitting. There is no space in the setting where students cannot be monitored or observed.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desks are fully visible from all locations in the classroom.</li> <li>• Staff periodically glance around the space to check on student location.</li> <li>• Staff are aware of where students are at all times.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom furniture is placed in front of student learning centers, obstructing the classroom view.</li> <li>• Staff do not periodically check and notice where students are in the classroom.</li> <li>• Staff are unaware when students leave the learning space or classroom.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 2:** Staff proactively prevent classroom disruptions by engaging students in activities.

**Main Concept:** Staff notice when students are unengaged and redirect them to a meaningful task they can successfully engage with.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff provide engaging materials and activities that are individualized to students' skill levels.</li> <li>• Staff notice when students are engaged and on-task and provide acknowledgment or reinforcement.</li> <li>• Staff notice when students are off-task and provide redirection or a choice of activities that the student can complete successfully.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff-selected activities do not fit the needs of students and contribute to off-task behaviors.</li> <li>• Staff rarely interact with students.</li> <li>• Staff only attend to or interact with students when they engage in off-task or interfering behavior.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 3:** Classroom arrangement includes designated areas for specific activities, including breaks, instruction, and calming/cool down.

**Main Concept:** The space is arranged with clearly marked areas and boundaries to depict separate areas for various activities.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each classroom space has clear boundaries that distinguish its purpose.</li> <li>• Break areas are away from instruction and learning areas.</li> <li>• Furniture and classroom materials are strategically placed to allow classroom spaces to be utilized by students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom spaces are not defined for their purposes.</li> <li>• There are no boundaries that separate break, instruction, and calming/cool down areas.</li> <li>• Classroom or school spaces are used for multiple purposes and activities at the same time.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 4:** Personal and classroom visual schedules in various formats (e.g., written, picture, checklist) are available, portable, durable, and utilized.

**Main Concept:** Personal student schedules and classroom schedules are available, posted, and referred to by staff and students throughout the day. Schedules are visual, individualized to the learners' ability levels, and travel with the students to settings within the school.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All staff and students understand and use personal and classroom schedules throughout the day.</li><li>• Activities included in the schedule depict the activities of the day.</li><li>• Students have access to their individualized classroom schedule and travel with their classroom schedule throughout the day.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No staff refer to the classroom schedule.</li><li>• Activities that are part of the classroom day are missing on the individual and/or classroom schedule.</li><li>• Students do not have access to their individualized classroom schedule during the school day or once they leave the classroom, if needed or appropriate.</li></ul>

## Positive Learning Climate

**Indicator 1:** Staff demonstrate caring and calm by using positive or neutral tone of voice and facial expressions, open and relaxed body language, and are polite in their interactions within the classroom.

**Main Concept:** The classroom climate is positive, encouraging, and supportive. Adult interactions with students are relaxed and positive. Corrections are made with encouragement, and students receive positive feedback from classroom teachers and staff.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff voice volume is appropriate to the classroom situation.</li><li>• Staff display respectful and encouraging facial expressions in all interactions with students.</li><li>• Staff interact with students with relaxed and encouraging body language.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff have raised voice volume louder than needed for the classroom situation.</li><li>• Staff verbal and/or non-verbal behaviors are condescending or disrespectful.</li><li>• Staff interact with students with body language that is defensive or negative.</li></ul>

**Indicator 2:** Staff include students in conversations about them and do not talk about students in front of them.

**Main Concept:** Staff include students in classroom and school conversations, especially when the topic is related to the student. Staff are respectful and professional when interacting with students and are aware of student confidentiality and privacy.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff respect student confidentiality.</li> <li>• Staff promote student self-advocacy by having discussions with students and including them in educational conversations.</li> <li>• Staff presume competence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff do not maintain student confidentiality.</li> <li>• Staff do not promote student self-advocacy by excluding them from educational conversations.</li> <li>• Staff speak about students in front of them or others, and neglect to presume competence.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 3:** Student privacy is maintained, with special considerations given during self-care tasks and behavioral incidents.

**Main Concept:** Staff respect the privacy of students in all situations.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff ensure that students are given privacy during self-care tasks.</li> <li>• Staff ensure that students are given privacy during medical incidents.</li> <li>• Staff respect students' privacy during behavioral incidents and reduce the number of unnecessary people interacting with the student.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff do not protect the privacy of students receiving assistance completing self-help tasks.</li> <li>• Staff do not protect the privacy of students who may need assistance during a medical incident.</li> <li>• Staff do not protect the privacy of students having a behavioral incident.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 4:** Staff respond to off-task behavior in a timely manner by redirecting and reengaging the student in tasks.

**Main Concept:** Staff notice when students are not engaged in an activity or task, provide redirection to a task the student can complete successfully, and provide acknowledgment when the student becomes reengaged.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff notice when students are engaging in off-task behavior.</li> <li>• Staff redirect or provide a choice of activities to reengage the student.</li> <li>• Staff provide positive feedback when students are actively engaged in activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff ignore or do not acknowledge students when they are engaged in activities.</li> <li>• Staff do not provide choices of activities to reengage the student.</li> <li>• Staff only provide attention when students are unengaged in activities.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 5:** Students are redirected and corrected by being told, in concrete and easily understood terms, what to do instead of what not to do.

**Main Concept:** Staff provide explicit instruction regarding what students should be doing. For example, when a student is running, they should be redirected with "Walk, please" instead of "No running."

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff provide redirection and modeling of appropriate behaviors.</li> <li>• Staff respectfully correct interfering or incorrect behaviors.</li> <li>• Staff reinforce appropriate behaviors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate behaviors are not explained or modeled by staff in a manner that the students understand.</li> <li>• Interfering behaviors or incorrect behaviors are dealt with in a way that is disrespectful to students.</li> <li>• Students are told “no” or to stop doing certain behaviors without being shown or told what to do instead.</li> </ul>

## Effective Teaching Practices

**Indicator 1:** Students use instructional materials relevant to grade-level standards (e.g., differentiated, high-interest materials are utilized in upper grades rather than preschool materials).

**Main Concept:** Materials presented and expectations for students are appropriate to the students’ academic and developmental levels.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff ensure that instructional materials are presented in a manner for students to understand.</li> <li>• Staff ensure that classroom expectations match the students’ cognitive abilities and align with grade-level peers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The complexity of the instructional materials presented is far above or below the grade-level standards for the students being taught.</li> <li>• Classroom expectations are not consistent with those of grade-level peers.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 2:** Lessons are differentiated to provide individualized supports or increased rigor to students with varying abilities.

**Main Concept:** Staff provide modifications and accommodations to meet the individual needs of the students in their classroom.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff pre-teach concepts.</li> <li>• Staff modify and individualize academic tasks to meet the needs of students.</li> <li>• Staff provide accommodations for academic tasks that meet the individual needs of students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Novel material is not pre-taught, and students are expected to contribute without prior knowledge of a concept.</li> <li>• Academic tasks are presented in the same manner for all students in the classroom.</li> <li>• No effort is made to accommodate the individual needs of students in the classroom.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 3:** Lessons follow the “I do, we do, you do” sequence of skills practice.

**Main Concept:** Staff model and prompt new skills before expecting students to perform them independently.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When initially presenting a new skill, staff model it for students before expecting them to individually demonstrate it.</li> <li>• Staff implement prompting as an instructional teaching strategy.</li> <li>• Staff plan opportunities for students to demonstrate new skills independently and provide support as needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff ask students to demonstrate a new skill without modeling their expectations for the skill first.</li> <li>• Prompts are not systematically implemented to support students when learning a new skill without errors.</li> <li>• Opportunities are not provided for students to demonstrate new skills independently.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 4:** Students have multiple opportunities to respond to questions during instruction.

**Main Concept:** Students have multiple opportunities to answer clarifying questions asked by staff that gauge student understanding and are embedded in instruction.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff embed question checkpoints to ensure that students understand the material during instruction.</li> <li>• Questions are asked in a variety of ways to meet the different needs of the students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instruction is presented in the form of lectures, and opportunities to ask questions for clarification are not embedded.</li> <li>• Staff do not ask questions in a variety of ways to meet the needs of students.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 5:** Students have multiple opportunities to engage in independent practice during instruction.

**Main Concept:** Staff embed opportunities for students to work independently to demonstrate mastery of material, yet provide assistance and prompts when needed.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff embed opportunities for independent practice with staff monitoring.</li> <li>• Staff use least-to-most prompting strategies, as needed.</li> <li>• Prompts are systematically faded to promote independence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are not provided opportunities to practice skills independently.</li> <li>• Prompting is not provided to students who need additional help to work independently.</li> <li>• If prompting is provided, staff do not make an effort to fade prompts, regardless of whether or not a student is showing signs of increased independence.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 6:** During instruction, the teacher provides varied, specific, and frequent praise when students are correct.

**Main Concept:** Praise is individualized and specific to the behaviors being reinforced.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff provide reinforcement in the form of praise for behaviors they want to increase, such as correct responses and being on-task.</li> <li>• Staff tailor praise to the specific behavior that they are reinforcing, such as, “Great job finishing that division problem,” or “I love how you packed up your backpack by yourself today.”</li> <li>• Staff are aware of how students prefer to receive praise (i.e., students may prefer to be praised privately while other students are okay to be praised in front of the class).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff do not praise behaviors they want to see increase and/or provide attention to behaviors they want to decrease.</li> <li>• Staff provide generic praise statements that do not reference the behavior they are trying to increase, such as, “Good job,” or “Nice trying.”</li> <li>• Staff do not vary their praise based on student preferences.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 7:** During instruction, the teacher redirects and/or reteaches when students make errors.

**Main Concept:** Corrections are provided when the student responds incorrectly or inaccurately to a question or task so incorrect responses are not practiced.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff provide correction for incorrect responses from students.</li> <li>• In some instances, staff reinforce a student’s answer if it is close to the correct response.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Error correction is not delivered by staff, and students are not provided with the correct response after giving an incorrect response.</li> <li>• Progressively more accurate approximations of a correct response are not reinforced, and/or staff exclusively reinforce correct responses.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 8:** Classroom instruction includes a mix of whole group, small group, and one-to-one teaching opportunities.

**Main Concept:** Throughout the day, students rotate between multiple instructional methods, according to the activities being taught and their level of independence with a given activity.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff rotate between multiple instructional methods, including whole group teaching, small group teaching, and one-to-one instruction.</li> <li>• Staff follow a predetermined schedule for center and activity rotations for each student.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only one instructional method is used throughout the day.</li> <li>• A schedule is not in place for students to indicate planned transitions between instructional settings or subjects.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 9:** Communication devices/supports are used consistently for modeling communication exchanges during instruction.

**Main Concept:** Staff consistently utilize students’ preferred communication modalities throughout the day to model skills and provide students with opportunities to respond.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All students have a means of communication, and they are utilized by staff throughout the day to model, teach, and practice skills.</li> <li>• The classroom communication materials and devices are present and in good working order.</li> <li>• The classroom has adequate communication resources and materials for all students present.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not all students have a means of communication, or if they do, they are not used to model, teach, and practice skills throughout the day.</li> <li>• Communication devices and supports are damaged or missing pieces, and electronics are uncharged or otherwise unusable.</li> <li>• Communication devices and supports are not the students' preferred modalities.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 10:** Staff instruct students during transitions, unstructured time, and unplanned disruptions.

**Main Concept:** Staff capture organic, naturalistic teaching opportunities to deliver instruction and generalize skills to the natural environment.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff capture opportunities for instruction in “real life,” naturalistic settings.</li> <li>• Staff utilize less-structured activities and unplanned disruptions as opportunities to generalize previously mastered skills or practice flexibility and tolerance of change.</li> <li>• Staff ensure students engage in instructional and interactive activities more than downtime.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instruction is only delivered in the context of pre-planned academic tasks or in the form of 1:1 instruction.</li> <li>• Staff do not embed naturalistic learning opportunities in unstructured activities or unexpected changes in routine.</li> <li>• The ratio of downtime to instructional/interactive activities is skewed, and naturalistic learning opportunities are not embedded in free time.</li> </ul>

## Independence and Self-Determination

**Indicator 1:** Staff teach and honor independent choice-making.

**Main Concept:** Staff teach students to communicate preferences and offer multiple opportunities to voice those preferences throughout the day.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During instruction, students are provided with choices, such as which peer to work with, which activity to work on first, and where they will complete work activities, as appropriate.</li> <li>• Students are given a choice of break time and leisure activities.</li> <li>• Staff honor student choices whenever possible. If a choice is not available, they provide an appropriate alternative.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff make all decisions for students during the academic day, such as who students work with, the order of work tasks, and where work will be completed in the classroom.</li> <li>• Staff convince students to select another option when the student has voiced their selection.</li> <li>• Staff offer choices that are not available.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 2:** Supports are in place for students to complete tasks as independently as possible (e.g., classroom labels, visual steps of tasks, designated location for student materials, etc.).

**Main Concept:** Supports are in place that allow students to engage in instructional and leisure-related activities independently.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students have supports that assist them in starting and continuing academic and leisure activities.</li> <li>• Students have supports that facilitate self-monitoring of academic and leisure activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are not provided supports that assist them in starting and continuing academic and leisure activities.</li> <li>• Students are not provided with supports that facilitate self-monitoring of academic and leisure activities.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 3:** Students are allowed an opportunity to try a skill before assistance is provided by an adult.

**Main Concept:** Staff provide opportunities for students to attempt to complete an activity or task before stepping in to assist.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff build time into the schedule for students to attempt tasks on their own before stepping in to provide assistance.</li> <li>• Staff use different prompting strategies such as gestures, partial-physical prompting, visual supports, and waiting for response to assist students in completing tasks independently.</li> <li>• Staff provide least-to-most prompting, as needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff provide too little or too much wait time for students to start or complete tasks.</li> <li>• Staff give multi-step directions leading to student confusion.</li> <li>• Staff step in and complete the activity or task for the student.</li> <li>• Staff overuse verbal prompting.</li> <li>• Staff give unnecessary prompts when the student is able to complete the task more independently.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 4:** Self-advocacy statements are taught, and self-advocacy attempts are honored. These include (but are not limited to) vocal statements, vocal approximations, or behaviors indicating, “I need help,” “I don’t want to do this right now,” or “I want to do it my way.”

**Main Concept:** Staff teach students to initiate self-advocacy statements and honor students’ communication attempts.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff encourage, acknowledge, and respond to student initiated self-advocacy statements.</li> <li>• Staff teach students to use their specific communication modality to communicate preferences and requests.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff do not encourage self-advocacy skills.</li> <li>• Staff do not provide teaching opportunities for students to use self-advocacy skills.</li> <li>• Staff ignore students’ self-advocacy attempts.</li> </ul>

## Social Communication

**Indicator 1:** Staff acknowledge and respond to student communication attempts (in any modality) appropriately.

**Main Concept:** During structured or unstructured times, staff acknowledge and respond to student communication in a reasonable and timely manner while establishing parameters for when communication requests can be honored.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff acknowledge, in a positive, genuine tone, when students make a communication attempt by responding immediately or within a reasonable time frame.</li> <li>● Staff provide visuals and reminders of time frames for when requests will be honored.</li> <li>● Staff establish classroom expectations and routines to let students know when it's time to talk or ask questions unrelated to the lesson.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff ignore or fail to acknowledge communication attempts of the student.</li> <li>● Staff fail to establish individualized structures or supports that inform the student of when communication attempts can be accessed or honored.</li> <li>● Staff acknowledge communication attempts in a neutral or negative tone.</li> <li>● Staff ignore the student's communication attempt and continue to push through instructional time frames which increases interfering behaviors.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 2:** Students have consistent access to personalized assistive technology that is provided at all times and across all environments.

**Main Concept:** Staff provide consistent access to assistive technology that is personalized to the student during unstructured and structured times and in multiple environments.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff ensure personalized assistive technology supports are on students' learning spaces during whole group, 1:1, or small group activities.</li> <li>● Staff ensure personalized assistive technology supports are available during unstructured play/leisure tasks, including recess.</li> <li>● Staff ensure personalized assistive technology supports are available during resource/special periods of the day.</li> <li>● Staff ensure personalized assistive technology supports are available during breakfast, lunch, and snack times.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Personalized assistive technology supports are not available on students' learning spaces during whole group, 1:1, or small group activities.</li> <li>● Personalized assistive technology supports are not available during unstructured play/leisure tasks, including recess.</li> <li>● Personalized assistive technology supports are not available during resource/special periods of the day.</li> <li>● Personalized assistive technology supports are not available during breakfast, lunch, and snack times.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 3:** Students are taught to travel to and with their communication systems.

**Main Concept:** Staff teach and reinforce student behavior for independently retrieving and traveling with communication systems within the classroom and outside of the classroom.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● When communication systems are not located in personal learning spaces or charging, staff use individualized prompting techniques to teach students to travel to find their device and bring it back to a current learning space. Staff reinforce (i.e., specific praise, a token on a token board, a point on a point sheet, a dojo point, etc.) student behavior when completing this task.</li> <li>● During transitions to different learning spaces within the classroom, staff use individualized prompting techniques and reinforcement to teach students to carry communication systems to the next destination.</li> <li>● When transitioning outside of the classroom, and during arrival or departure, staff use individualized prompting techniques and reinforcement to teach students to retrieve and travel with their communication system to the next destination.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● When communication systems are not located in personal learning spaces or charging, staff retrieve the communication system for the student with no attempt to involve the student.</li> <li>● When transitioning to different learning spaces within the classroom, staff retrieve the communication system and carry it to the next destination without attempting to involve the student.</li> <li>● When transitioning outside of the classroom, and during arrival or departure, staff retrieve the communication system and carry it to the next destination without attempting to involve the student.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 4:** Students are taught to independently utilize their functional communication system, including augmentative or alternative communication supports.

**Main Concept:** Staff use individualized shaping and prompting strategies to teach the student to independently use their functional communication system on a consistent basis.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff teach students to independently use their communication system by modeling or providing direct instruction during instructional times of the day (i.e., whole group, 1:1, small group, resource).</li> <li>● Staff teach students to independently use their communication system by modeling or providing direct instruction during breakfast, lunch, and snack times.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● During transitional or unstructured times, staff do not use opportunities to teach students how to use their communication system. This is evidenced by staff not providing students with enough response time and/or failing to ask students direct questions.</li> <li>● During transitional or unstructured times, staff do not use opportunities to teach students how to use their communication system. This is evidenced by staff not providing students with enough response time and/or failing to ask students direct questions.</li> </ul>

(continued)

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff teach students to independently use their communication system by modeling or providing direct instruction during resource/specials or other school-based activities (i.e., assemblies, special events).</li> <li>● Staff teach students to independently use their communication system by modeling or providing direct instruction during transitional or unstructured times inside and outside the classroom with adults and peers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● During breakfast, lunch, and snack times, staff do not capitalize on opportunities to teach students how to use their communication system, as evidenced by staff not providing students with enough wait time and/or failing to ask students direct questions.</li> <li>● During play/leisure times, staff miss opportunities to teach students how to use their communication systems with peers. Instead, they only support activities like independent or parallel play, without encouraging interaction.</li> </ul>

## Behavior Supports

**Indicator 1:** Proactive strategies are used to prevent interfering behaviors (e.g., offering breaks, sensory strategies, shortened tasks, etc.).

**Main Concept:** Staff use antecedent strategies or interventions to decrease the likelihood of interfering behaviors.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Before instruction begins, staff teach or remind students of behavioral expectations in an effort to reduce interfering behavior and support students in being ready to learn.</li> <li>● Staff provide students with choices when presenting instruction(s).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff do not pre-teach students with classroom expectations.</li> <li>● Staff deliver instruction and create schedules without embedding opportunities to make choice(s).</li> </ul>

**Indicator 2:** Movement and sensory activities that assist with alertness and calming are interspersed with seated work.

**Main Concept:** Staff proactively embed time for movement opportunities, sensory activities, and breaks from academic and seated work in the classroom schedule.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff provide regular movement opportunities and/or sensory activities.</li> <li>● Staff provide breaks from academic and/or seated demands, as needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff deliver instruction and follow schedules without embedding movement opportunities and/or sensory activities.</li> <li>● Breaks from demands are not offered by staff and are not honored when requested.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 3:** Positive or replacement behavior is reinforced consistently across settings and staff.

**Main Concept:** Replacement behaviors, as alternatives to interfering behaviors, are explicitly taught and reinforced, and progress is monitored consistently by all staff.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Replacement behaviors are identified.</li> <li>● Explicit instruction is used to teach replacement behaviors.</li> <li>● Staff provide positive reinforcement for desired behaviors and do not reinforce interfering behaviors.</li> <li>● Staff redirect interfering behavior to desired behavior.</li> <li>● Staff respond to interfering behavior consistently across team members and environments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Replacement behaviors are not identified.</li> <li>● Replacement behaviors are not taught.</li> <li>● Replacement behaviors are not reinforced by staff.</li> <li>● Interfering behaviors are reinforced or redirection does not occur.</li> <li>● Staff respond to a student's interfering behavior differently across team members or environments.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 4:** Reinforcement provided is individualized, positive, and occurs more frequently than correction.

**Main Concept:** Staff deliver individualized positive reinforcement, contingent on prosocial behaviors targeted for increase. Positive reinforcement is delivered immediately after desired behaviors occur.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff use a clearly defined positive reinforcement system targeting specific behaviors for increase.</li> <li>● Staff deliver reinforcement that is personal, contingent, immediate, and specific.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff do not adhere to a defined system for delivering positive reinforcement.</li> <li>● Reinforcement is delivered inconsistently, absent of the desired behavior, and is not individualized for specific students.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 5:** Classroom-wide reinforcement system is positive, clear, and concrete.

**Main Concept:** Staff adhere to a classroom-wide positive reinforcement system with embedded, clearly defined behavior management procedures.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff use a positive, age-appropriate, and concrete classroom-wide reinforcement system.</li> <li>● Staff are trained in and follow safe reactive management procedures (e.g., Safety-Care, CPI, The Mandt System, etc.) to address interfering behavior, as directed by division policies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Classroom-wide contingencies are punishment or response cost-oriented, inappropriate for the age group served, or vague.</li> <li>● Reactive management procedures to address interfering behaviors are implemented inconsistently, unnecessarily, and/or unsafely.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 1:** Staff collect data on student academic progress during instructional activities/lessons.

**Main Concept:** Academic data is collected accurately and immediately after instructional activities or lessons occur. Response criteria and mastery criteria are clearly communicated on data sheets.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data sheets for IEP goals and objectives include clear parameters regarding response and mastery criteria.</li> <li>• Academic progress data is collected immediately after a task is completed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data sheets do not specify how academic progress is measured or what constitutes mastery for an academic goal.</li> <li>• Academic progress data is collected long after instructional activities occur.</li> </ul>

**Indicator 2:** Staff collect data on interfering behavior.

**Main Concept:** Interfering behavior data is collected accurately and immediately after behaviors occur. Staff are fluent with data collection measurement systems, and data sheets are accessible at all times.

Examples	Non-Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavioral data is collected immediately and accurately according to the measurement system indicated on the data sheet (e.g., duration, frequency, partial interval, etc.).</li> <li>• Staff keep behavioral data sheets (paper or electronic) in sight and available when working with students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data is entered long after a behavior occurs, is falsified, or is entered in a way that does not correspond with the data collection procedures outlined on the data sheet.</li> <li>• Behavioral data sheets are kept out of sight or are not easily accessible to staff.</li> </ul>