



Guiding Principles for Educating **Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

*Developed by the Eastern Upper Peninsula Autism Coaches
in Collaboration with Building Level ASD Teams*

All students are, first and foremost, GENERAL EDUCATION students

Inclusion is not optional; participation in general education is not a readiness model.

Visuals are non-negotiable

Students with autism often have auditory deficits and a propensity for visual learning. Therefore, write it down, write it down, write it down. Understand that to a student with autism, if it's not "written" down, you didn't say it.

Social skills can only develop by having social opportunities with typical peers

Adults aren't cool! Typical peers are most effective at teaching social behavior.

Adults set the tone

"I have come to a frightening conclusion. I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanized or de-humanized"

~Hiam Ginott

It's never no; it's when and where!

Know the student's preferred interest that is part of their autism, and help them learn how to appropriately access it. Once you figure out what makes the student tick, develop a system that works for the individual and the system.

Team meetings are essential for supporting students with autism

Remember, there are no "bad" students...but sometimes poor plans!

Make the program fit the child, not the child fit the program

Work with the autism, not against it. The autism always wins!

Consistency and structure are critical to student success

Students should be actively engaged with their visual schedule.

Presume competence. Always.

Students with autism lack theory of mind and often struggle to show what they know. Teach them anyway.

Focus on the development of socialization and independence skills

These are the skills that are needed by all adults to lead successful and independent lives.

Interventions must be based on the law, the research, and the data.

Utilize evidence based practices and collected student specific data to drive decision making.