

# IEP MAKEOVERS FOR NEURODIVERGENT CHILDREN

## Therapist Neurodiversity Collective International

• Therapy • Advocacy • Education •  
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Before an IEP goal is accepted, determine if all possible supports, modifications and accommodations are implemented and actually being used for the student.

Then consider which of the two, either A or B, the IEP addresses:

- A) Access to education, communication access/AAC, language development for educational purposes, functional ability, fine/gross motor skills, self-determination, self-advocacy, equitable access?  
B) Correcting or masking Autistic 'deficits' (differences) as compared with neuromajority peers?

### DEFICIT/PATHOLOGY MODEL

During unstructured free time or play time or recess:

1) After a teacher models a request for play initiation, and prompts the child to verbally repeat it, the child will repeat the demonstrated request 2 times within a 20-minute play session.

2) Student will play (participate, share, follow directions/rules, take turns during free time or recess) with 1-2 peers for 10 minutes.

EYE CONTACT goal of any kind.

Stopping/Reducing Stimming

Stopping/Reducing Echolalia

Using Deprivation Reinforcement, (only having access to desired foods, objects or activity when therapist allows), and hand over hand prompting, and/or prompting from second adult from behind child:

Child will express desire for food using PECS®/signs/words.

Child will express desire for activity using PECS®/signs/words.

Child will express desire for toy/object using PECS®/signs/words

(Source: The Problem with PECS® by Therapist Neurodiversity Collective.  
<https://therapistndc.org/the-problem-with-pecs/>)

Given a verbal instruction, student will look at the person, say "okay," and do it right away in 4/5 incidents.

Using positive reinforcement, Learner will watch various video clips that model desired (neurotypical) social skills and behaviors, and then will appropriately imitate the behaviors depicted on the video.

Using a social story, cartooning, or a written script as a guide, student will appropriately respond in social situations.

Student will greet all peers and adults encountered while establishing and maintaining eye contact and saying, "hi" to a variety of peers and adults across at least three different environments.

XXX will tolerate Choral Reading without screaming or running away by sitting quietly.

### NEURODIVERSITY MODEL

IEP Goals for free time or play time - NONE: IDEA mandates that special education and related services be provided in the LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENTS (LRE).

Neurodivergent students deserve the same unstructured free time, playtime and recess as neuromajority students to play as they choose.

Forced contact goals are archaic, ableist and not based on scientific research.

Stimming has function. Why regulate it unless it is harmful (and then help with replacements)? Sensory strategies, not extinguishment.

Echolalia often, but not always, has communicative purpose (e.g. request, initiate conversation exchange, draw or gain attention, affirmative reply, protest). Model expansions.

Using a Total Communication Approach, including spoken, Core Language AAC, sign, gestures, behavior, and therapist modeling, child will increase expressive communication and self-advocacy to:

Request  
Protest  
Comment  
Direct  
Ask questions  
Give opinions  
Share News  
Start a conversation

(Source: All the reasons we communicate by AssistiveWare.  
<https://www.assistiveware.com/learn-aac/consider-communication-functions>)

Student will communicate personal, academic, and sensory needs, modifications, accommodations and supports to which he is entitled, verbally and/or via AAC.

With fading support and access to AAC, XXX will identify personal areas of need for self-advocacy, and then identify strategies for communicating and expressing needs/wants, asking for clarification, explanation, or need for an example, to be presented when he does not understand a comment, direction, or activity.

Demanding tolerance for sensory triggers is abusive. Supports, accommodations: Earphones for choral reading activities - not compliance with tolerance.

(Source: "...findings suggest that these autistic children would not benefit from 'exposure therapy,' in which a therapist gradually exposes a person to increasing levels of a troublesome stimulus."  
Green SA, Hernandez L, Lawrence KE, et al. Distinct Patterns of Neural Habituation and Generalization in Children and Adolescents With Autism With Low and High Sensory Overresponsivity. Am J Psychiatry. 2019;176(12):1010-1020. doi:10.1176/appi.ajp.2019.18121333)