

Serving and supporting autistic children, teens and their families within the church and beyond



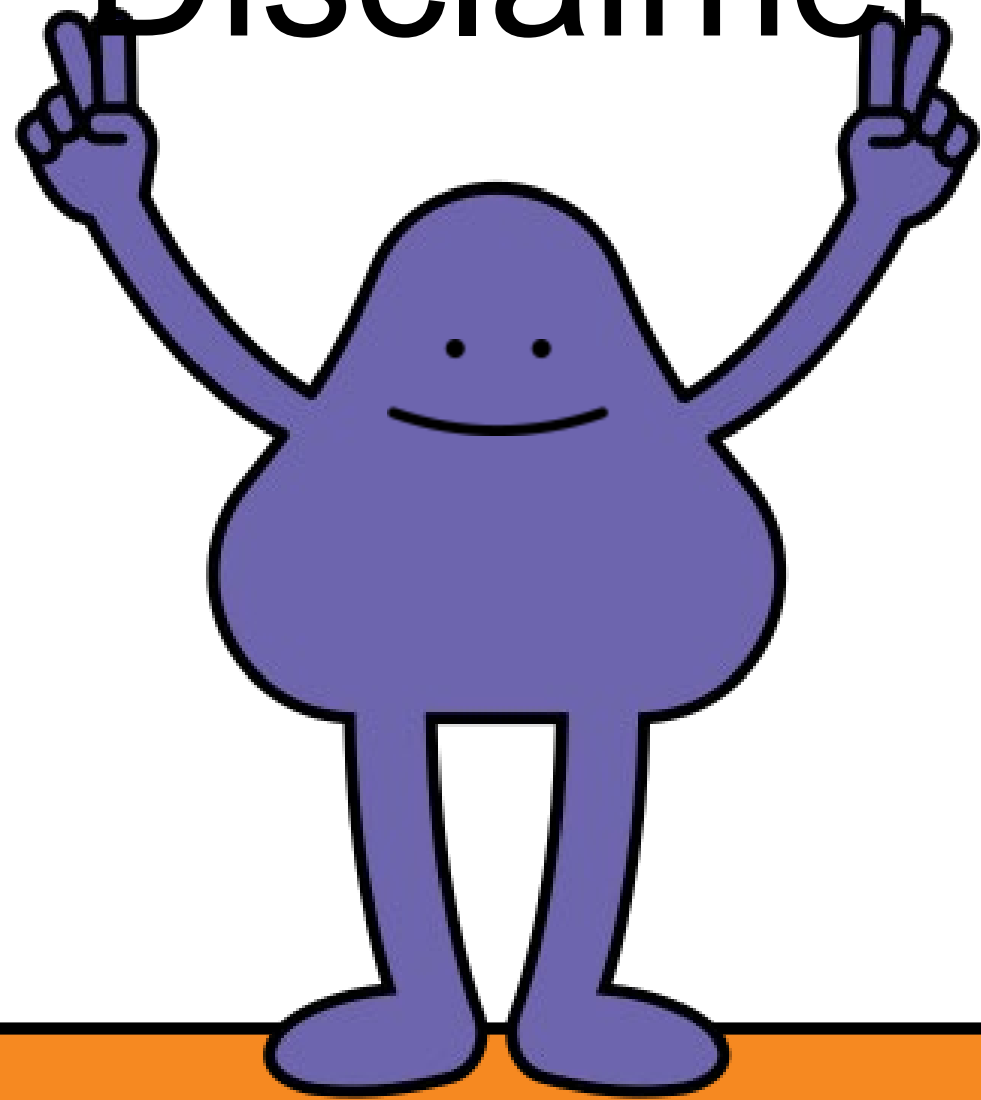
About me

Melody Goh

- Born to missionary parents, childhood in Singapore, lives in U.S.
- Wife to Dr. Low (CWTS) and mother to 5 kids, one on the spectrum
- Teaching credential in Singapore
- Masters in Special Education (Autism Spectrum Disorders) ²
- Board Certified Behavior Analyst with Santa Clara Office of Education
- Loves to eat, cook, play her Ukulele, and spend time with family exploring the Bay Area and beyond



Disclaimer

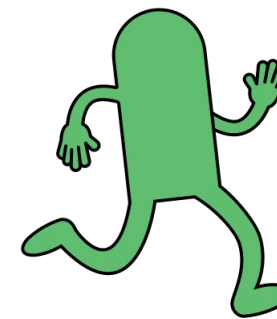


It is not the intention of this workshop or the presenter to assess or diagnose any developmental delays.

Any health concerns should always be directed to a qualified, certified medical or behavioral professional who can assess and monitor the individual on an ongoing basis in order to determine the next steps or develop a plan of treatment for the individual.

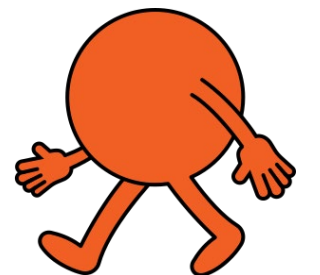
Person first language

Places the person first before the disability
Person who is blind, person with autism
Disability is only a part of the person identity

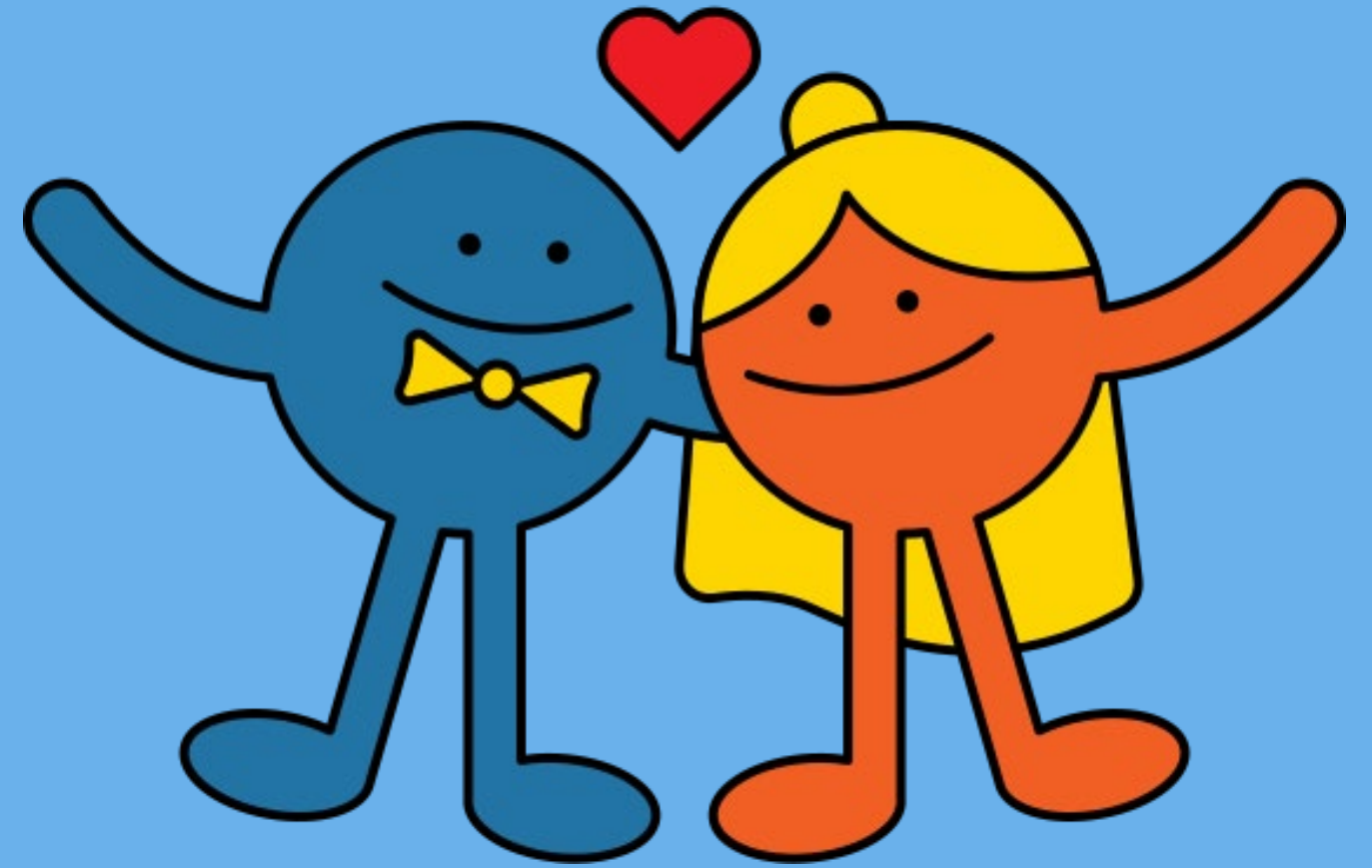


Identity first language

Puts disability first in the description
I am blind, I am autistic
The disability is central to the person's identity
– it is who they are



One body, many members



Rom 12: 4-5

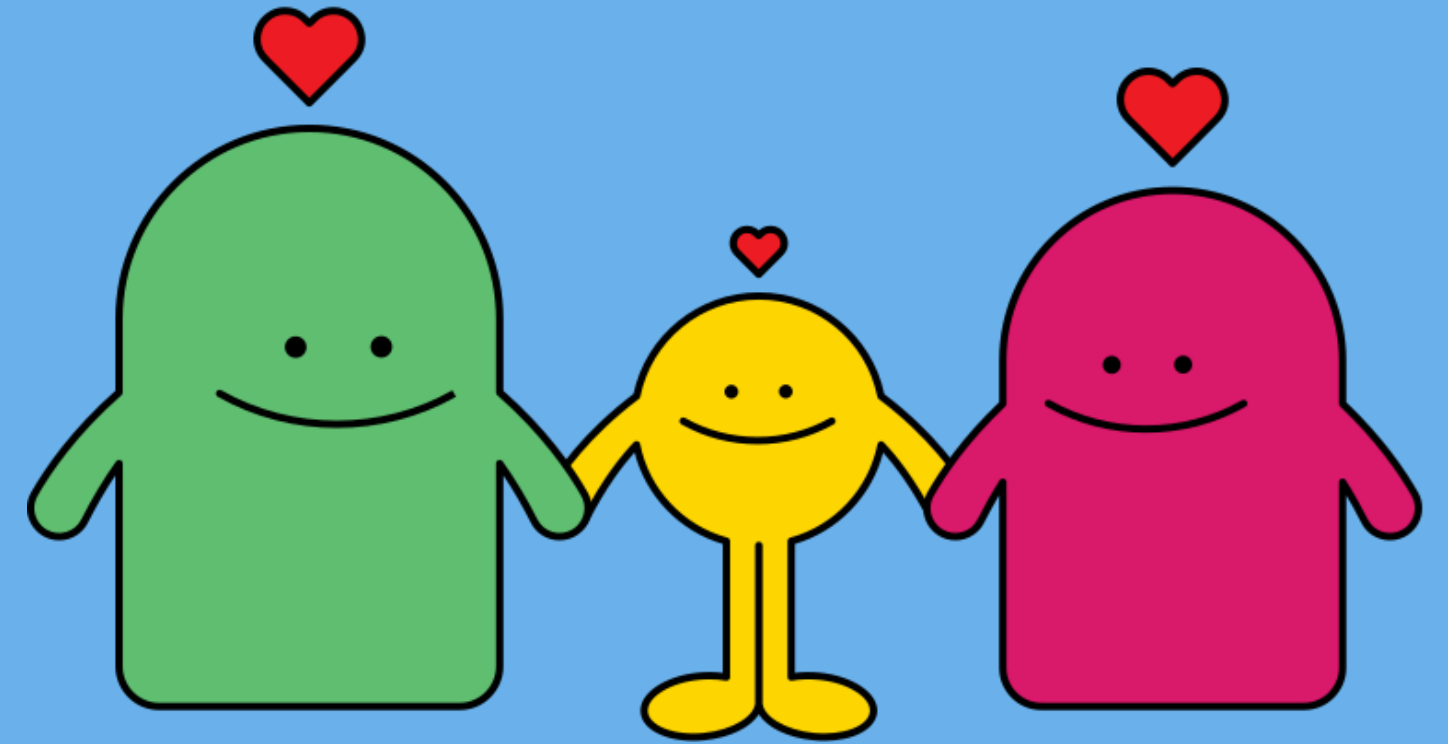
For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others

4

JUST LIKE EVERYONE

Autistics are like everyone else – with their own abilities, strengths and weaknesses. They make up the body of Christ and can contribute, given the right opportunities

Made in God's image



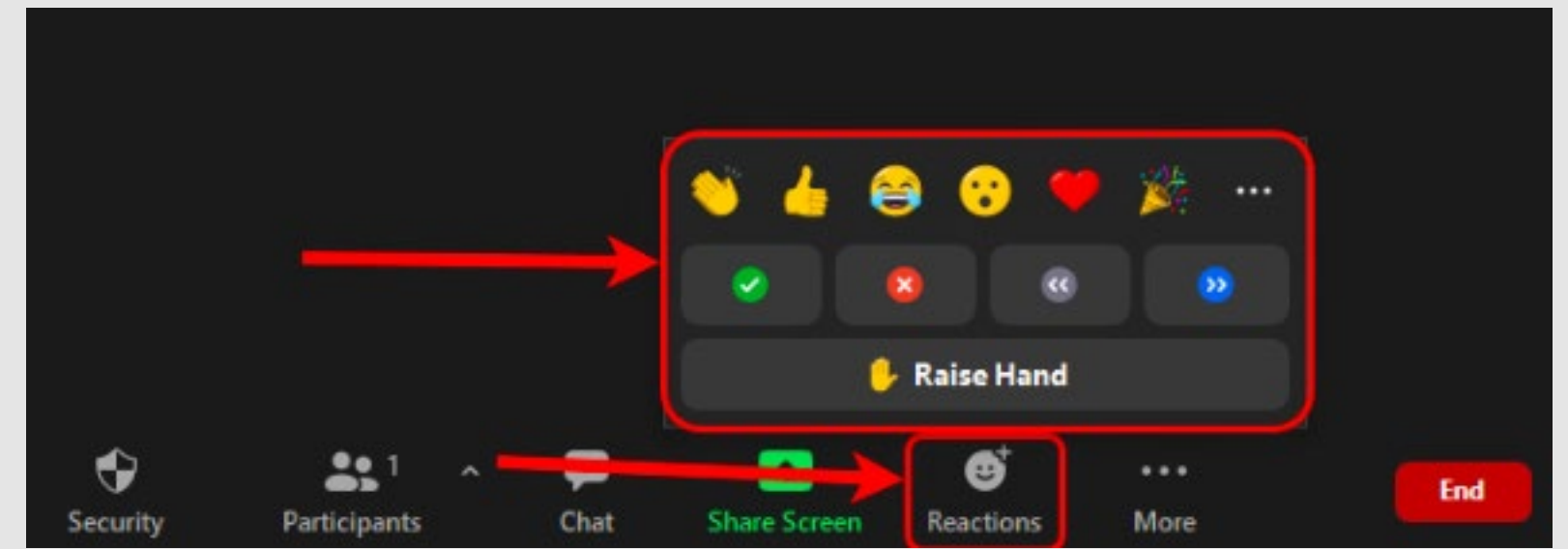
Gen. 1:27

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them

CREATED BY GOD AND FOR GOD

Autistics experience humanity in the same way as all of us. They yearn to be valued, love and understood

True or False?



Quiz time !



True or False?

Autism is caused by
poor parenting skills

7



True or False?

You can't grow out of autism

8



True or False?

The autism spectrum is linear
(straight line)

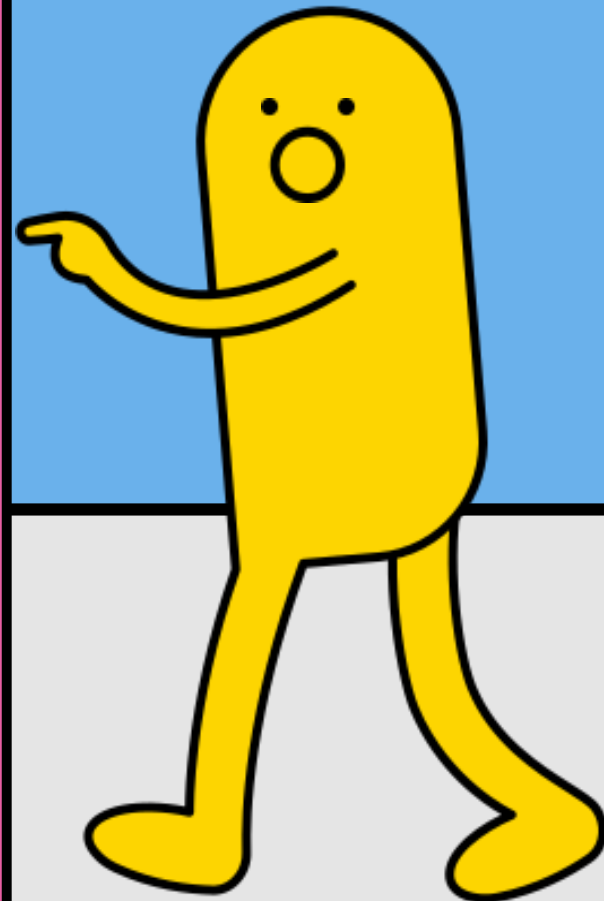
9



ASD facts



- 01 1 in 54 children
- 02 4 times more likely in boys
- 03 Affects all¹⁰ racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic
- 04 Spectrum disorder
- 05 No known “cure”



FUN
FACT



Temple Grandin

Kim Peek



Stephen Wiltshire



Well-known Autistics



Different skills,
challenges and
needs



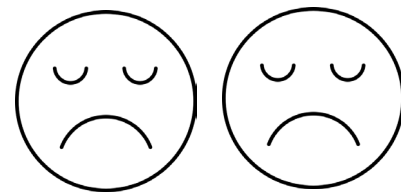
Diagnostical and Statistical Manual 5

Impairment of social interaction



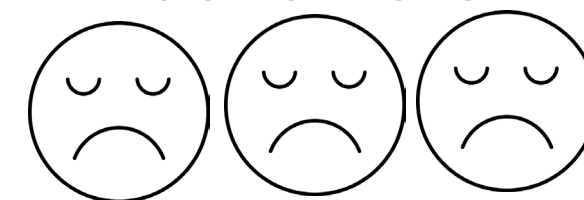
Briefly elaborate on what you want to discuss.

Impairment of communication

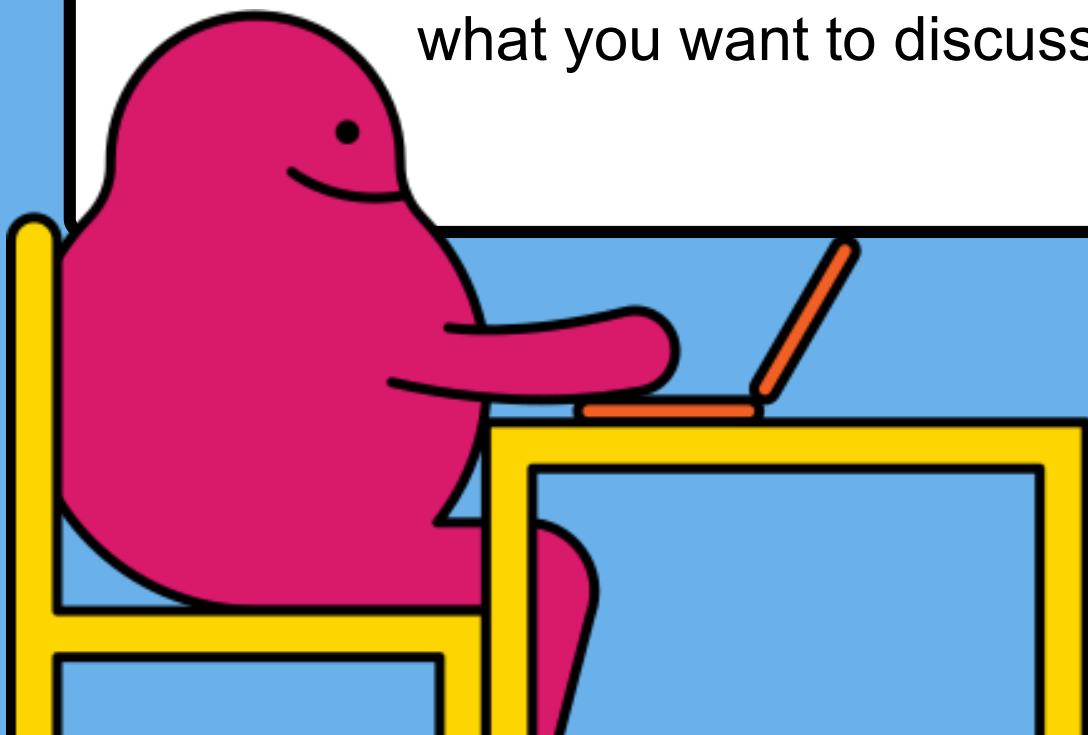


Briefly elaborate on what you want to discuss.

Restricted, repetitive and stereotype patterns of behaviors



Briefly elaborate on what you want to discuss.

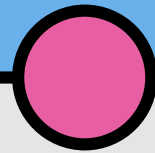


Early learner characteristics



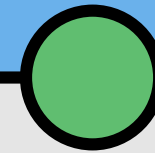
Lack of pointing

Joint attention skills like showing and responding to a point is lacking



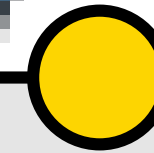
No/low response to name call

May not turn or respond to name or initiation or interaction



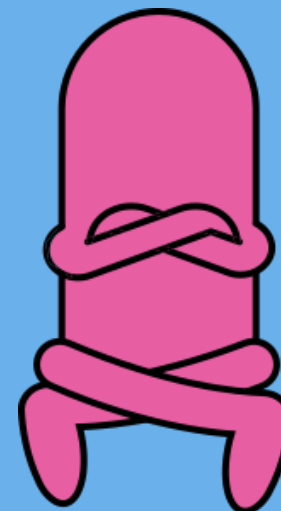
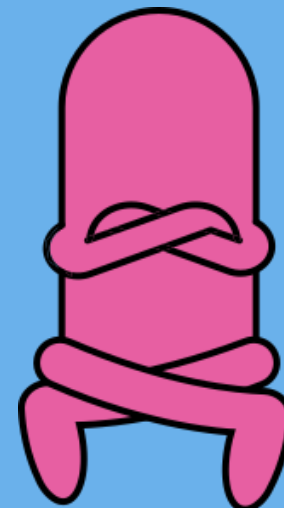
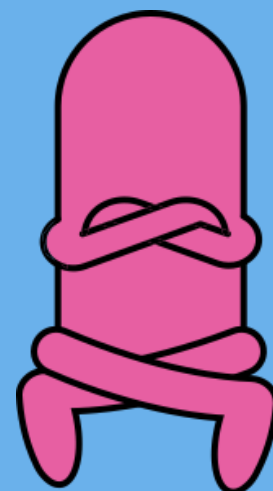
Language delay

May be non verbal or minimally verbal. May have poor receptive and expressive language



Fixed interests repetitive behaviors

May have intense and narrow interests which preoccupy them



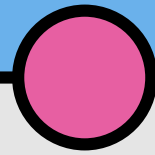
Early learner characteristics



Lack of pointing

Expected to

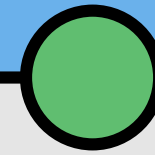
Attend to lesson, topic or page when directed to



No/low response to name call

Expected to

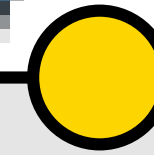
Respond when called



Language delay

Expected to

Engage and participate in the lesson/activity

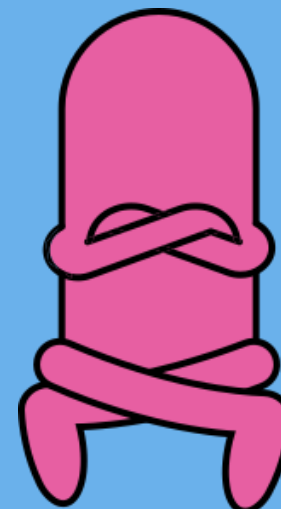
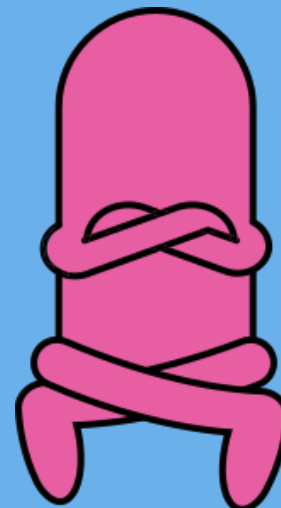
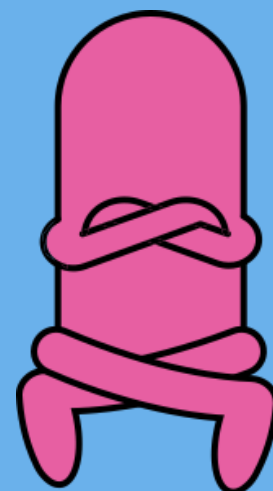


Fixed interests repetitive behaviors

Expected to

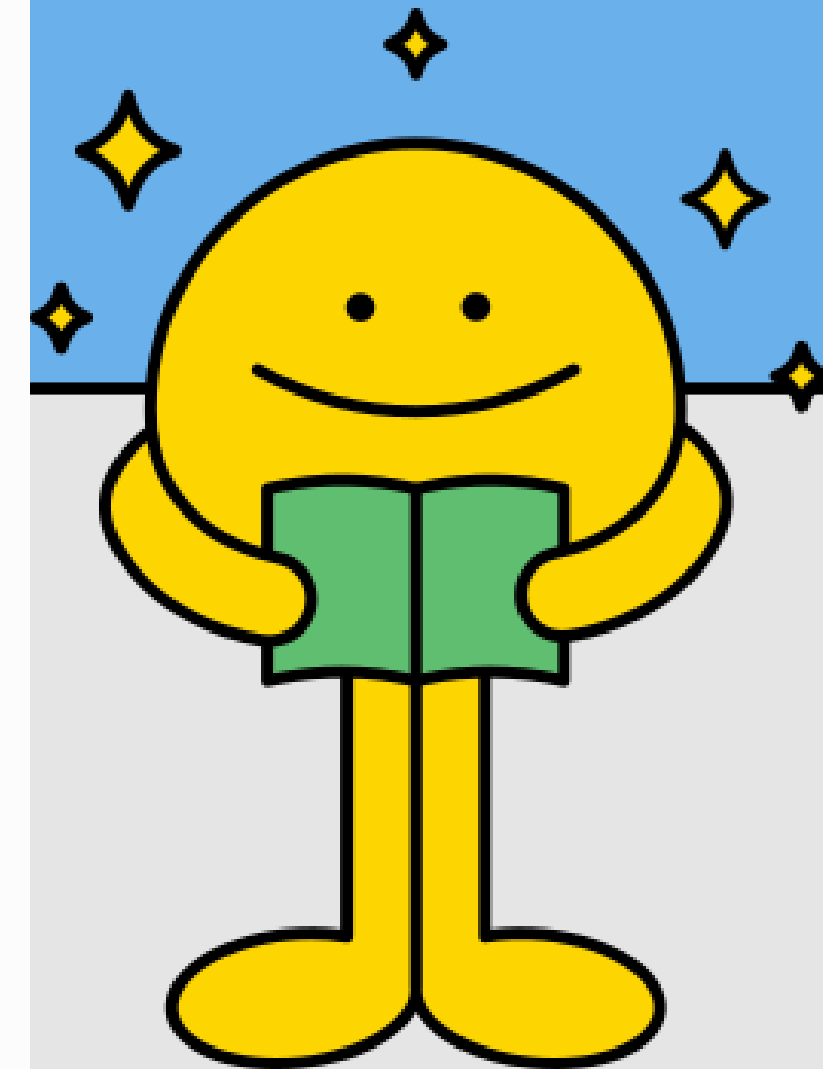
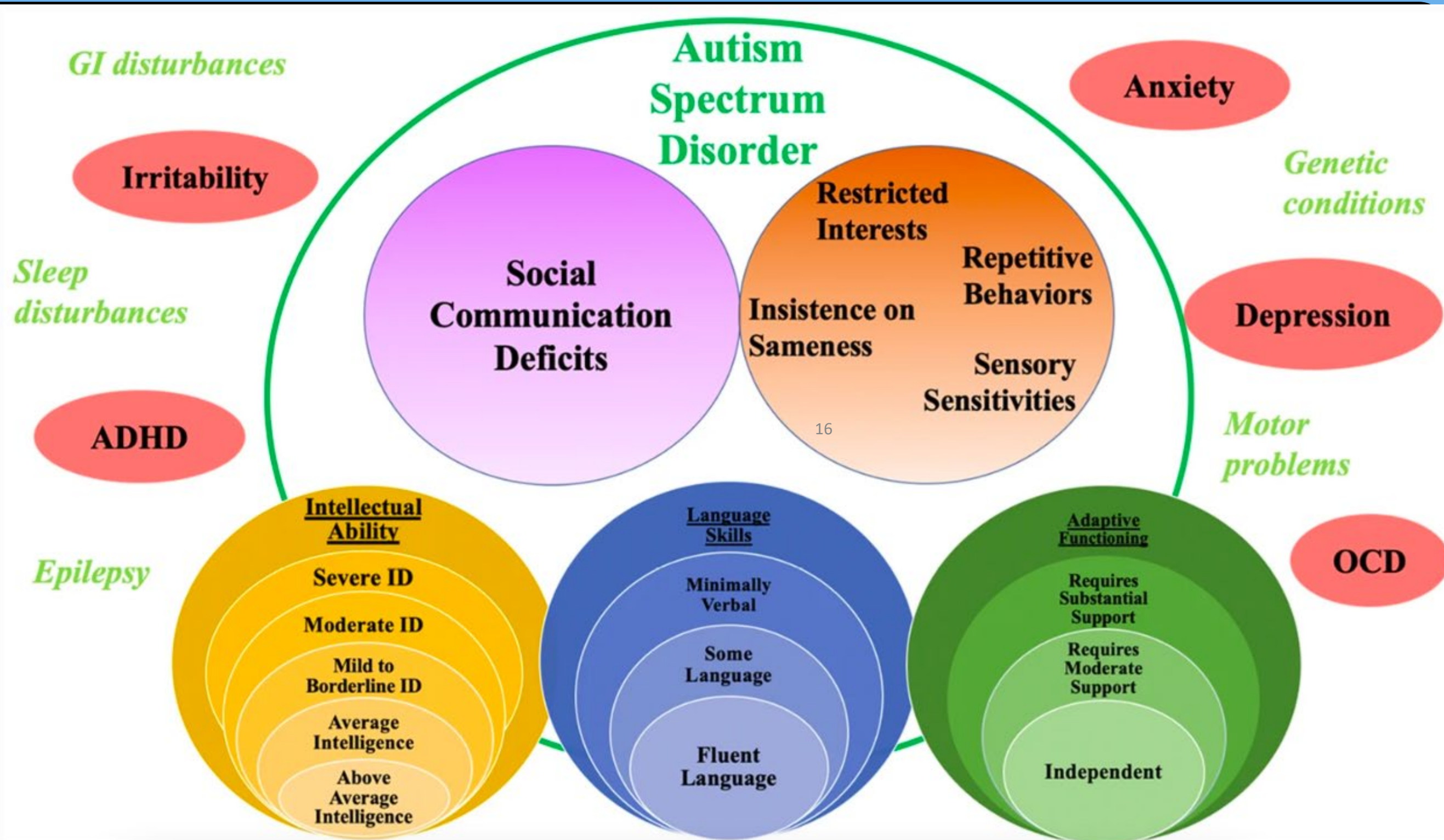
Do what everyone else is doing
Follow along with the activity

15



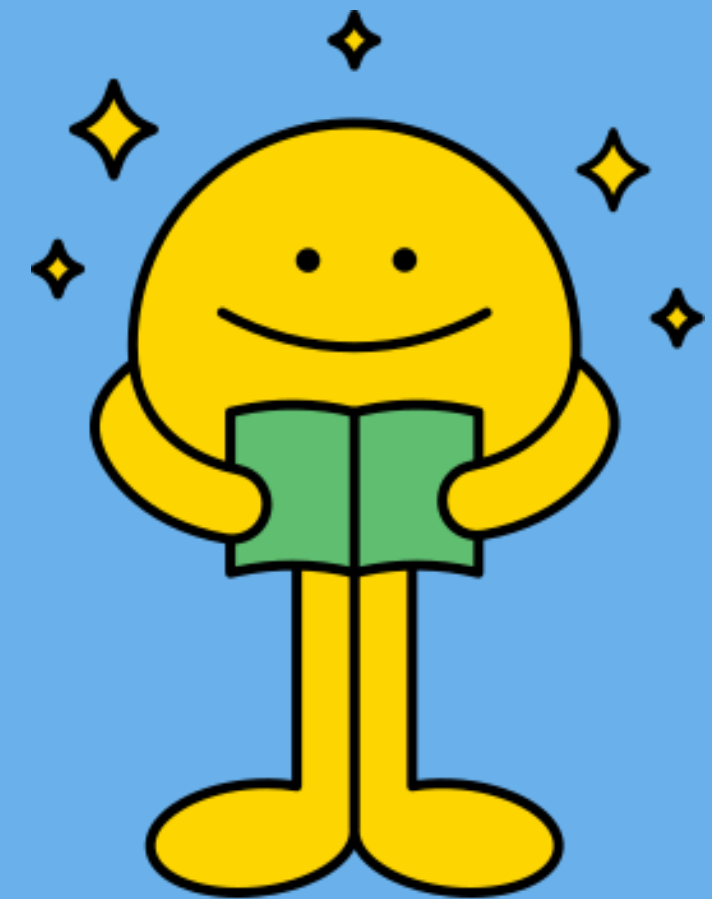


Other possible characteristics

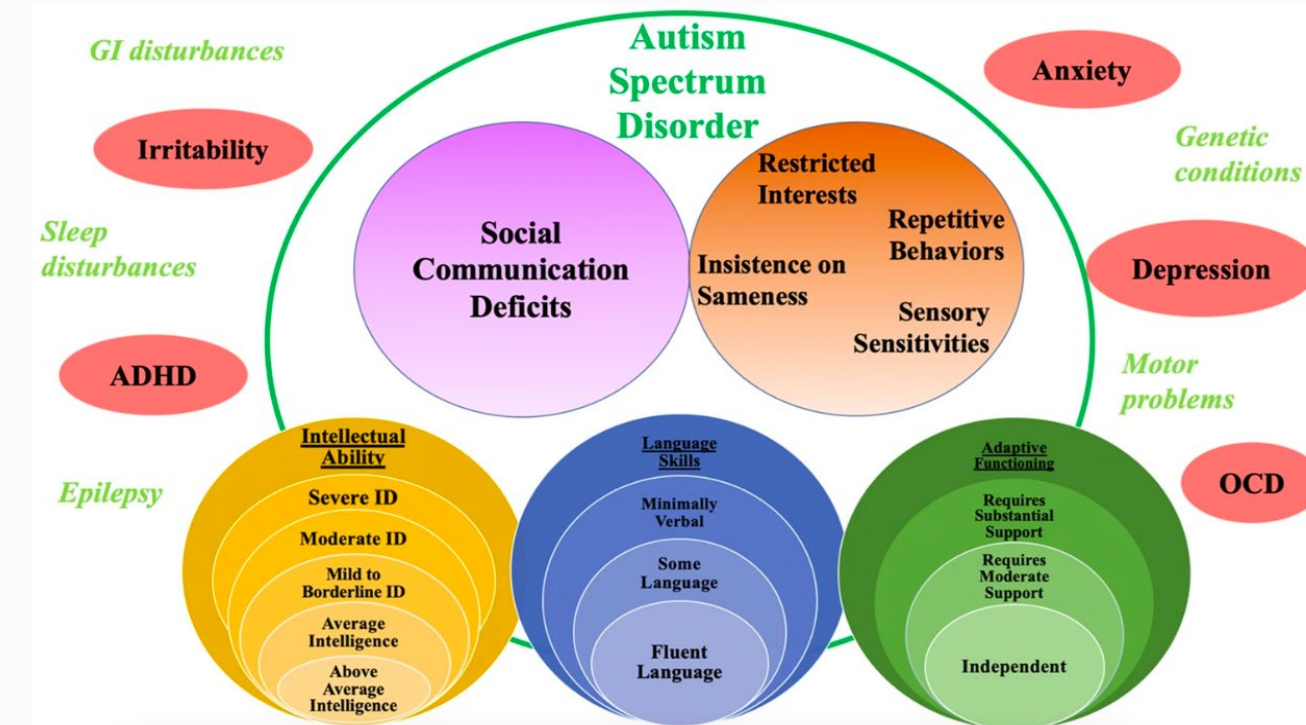




What to do?

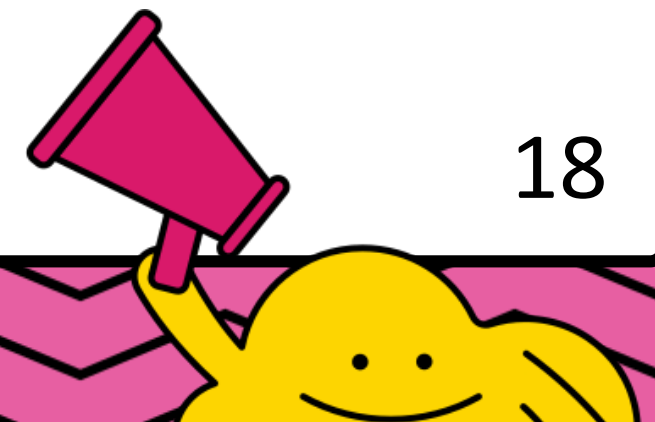


Social communication deficits	Expected to interact/socialize with new/different people
Range of intellectual ability	Expected to answer questions/share lessons learnt
Range of language ability	Expected to express thoughts in words/expected to understand what others are saying
Attentional difficulties	Expected to sit, keep body still, attend to speaker for extended time on unfamiliar/unpreferred topics
Sensory sensitivities	Expected to navigate crowds, people in close proximity, noise, loud music. Bright/fluorescent lights



I do not even know how to approach joining a church now since it is so evident that no one at my old church in my old city wants anything to do with me. For all the talk on forgiveness, I am apparently **too eccentric** and **egocentric** to be forgiven and to be accepted. Moreover, if not even loving Christians can put up with me, the rest of the world seems **scary**.

Taken from <https://church4everychild.org/2018/04/02/why-church-is-difficult-for-persons-on-the-high-end-of-the-autism-spectrum/>



Choosing strategies

01

Benefits the individual

Teach skills

Improves mental health

Meaningful for individual

Self determined goals

Alternative methods of communication

02

Brings safety and dignity

Safe

Tailored to individual's needs

¹⁹
Fulfilling for individual instead of making them look "less autistic"

Creates opportunities for reinforcers

03

Effective

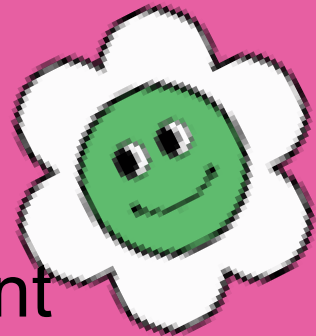
Evidenced- based practices

Promising practices

Backed by scientific research and best practices



Evidenced-based and promising practices



Antecedent based

Functional behavior assessment

Picture exchange communication

Peer mediated instruction

Visual schedules

Extinction

Visuals

Social narratives

Modeling

Time delay

Naturalistic intervention

Video modeling

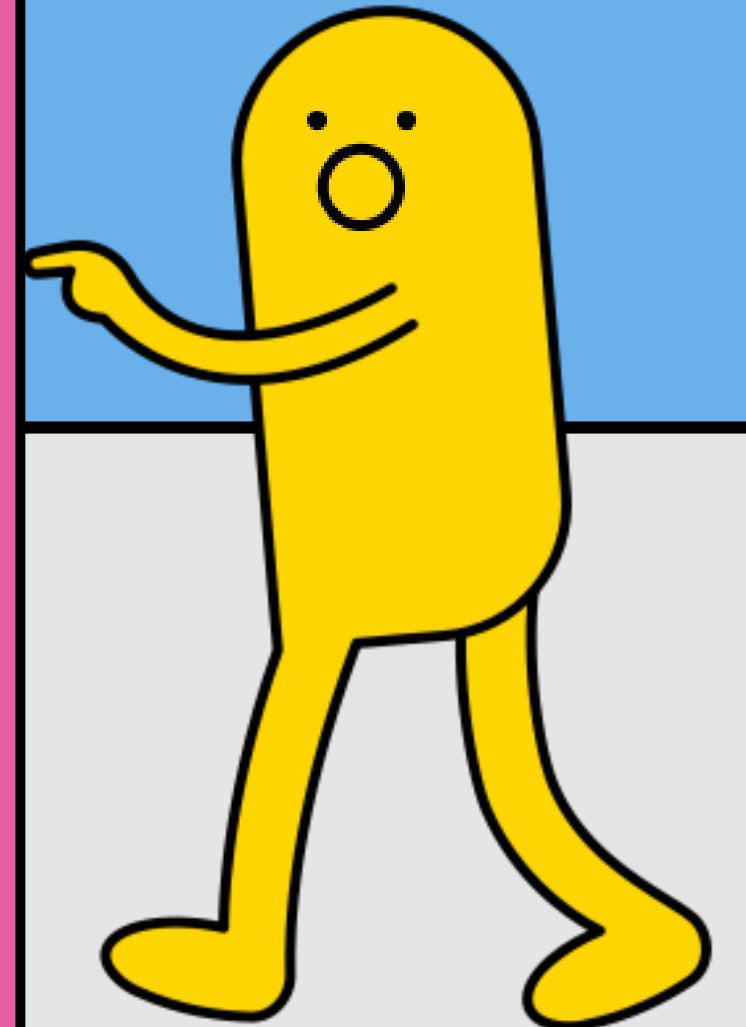
Social skills training

Pivotal response

Differential reinforcement

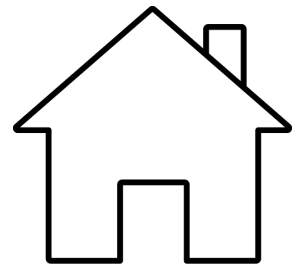
Prompting

20

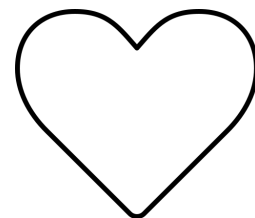


A closer look at strategies

Environmental
Manipulation
(antecedent-based)

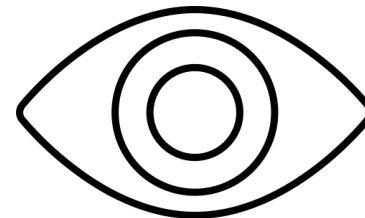


Sensory sensitivity
(antecedent-based)



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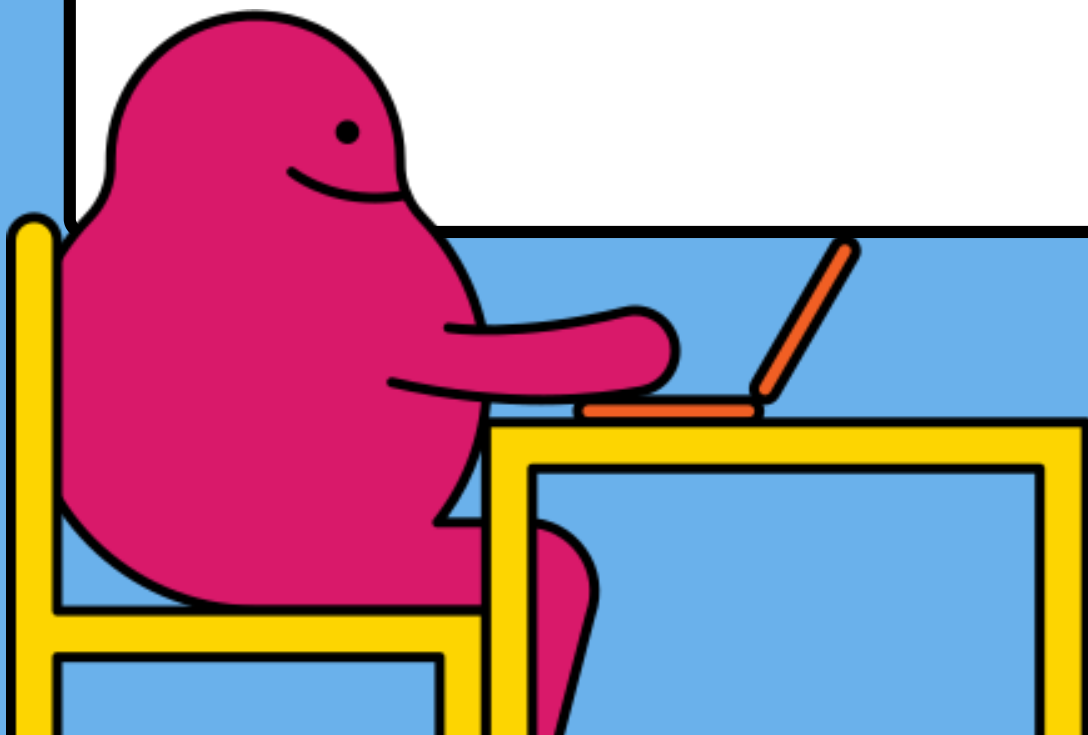
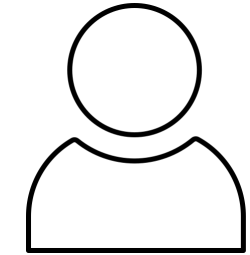
Visuals

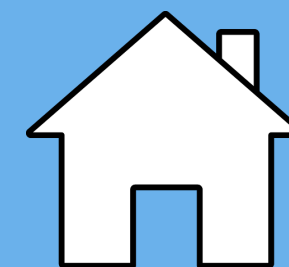
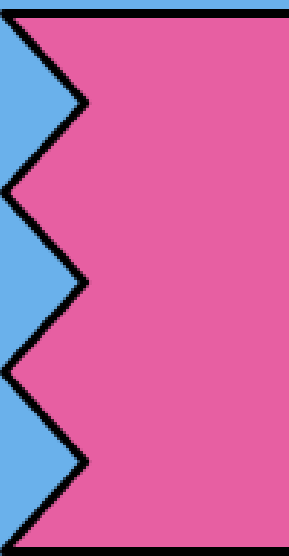
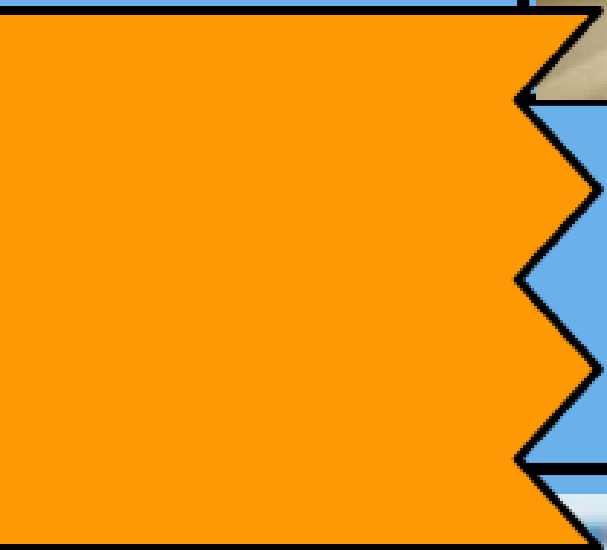


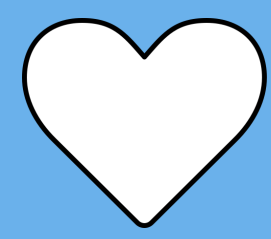
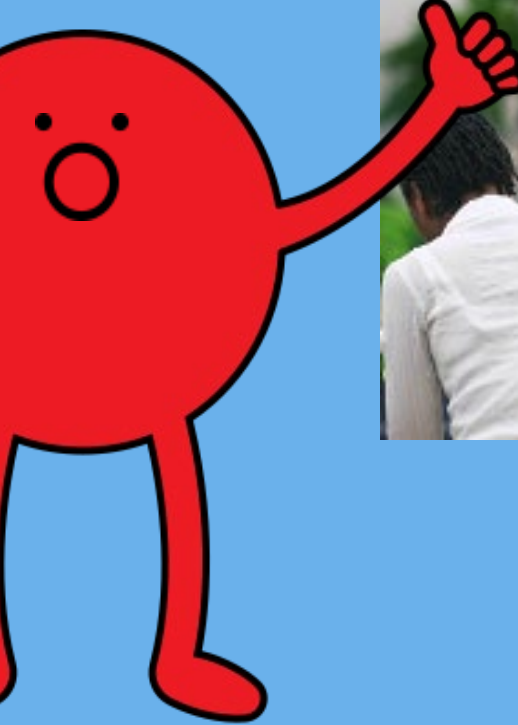
Reinforcement



Modeling







Consider sensory sensitivity
23

Picture exchange communication (PECS)



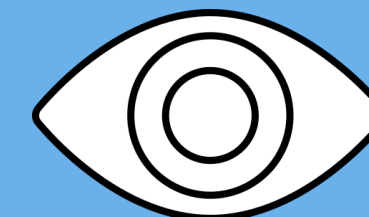
Social narrative



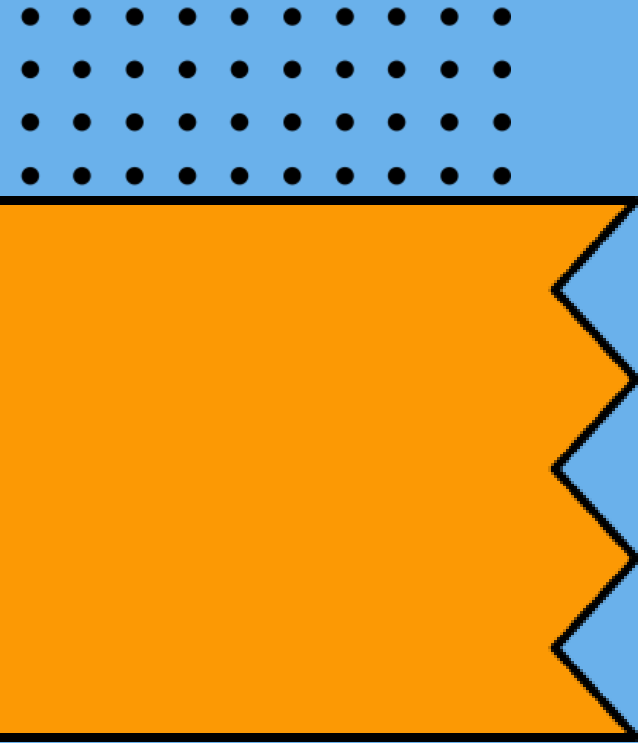
Visual schedules



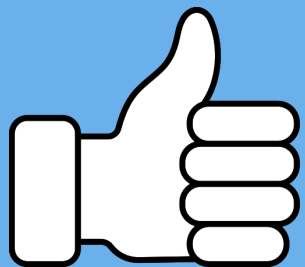
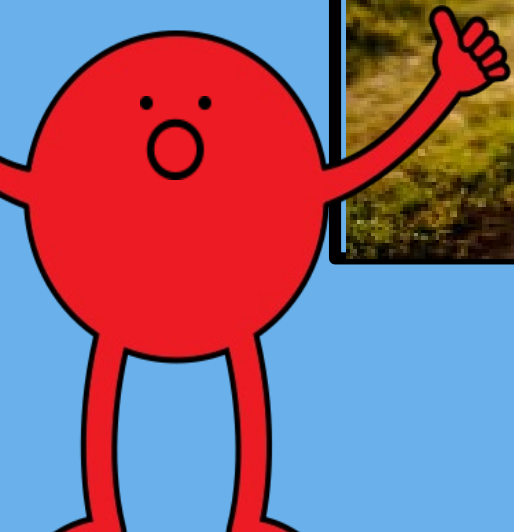
Time timer



Visuals

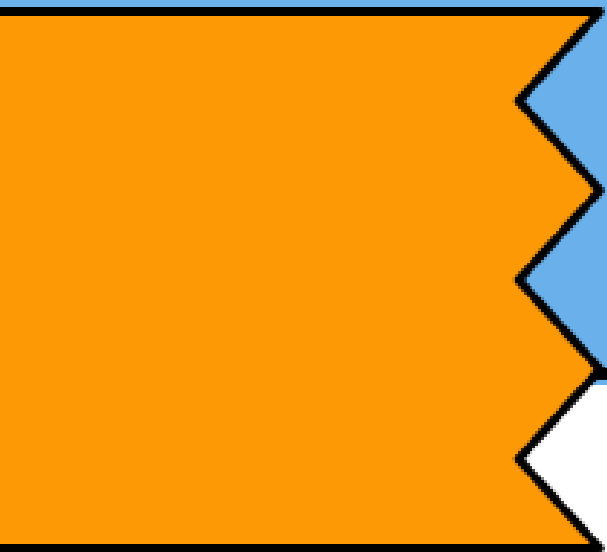
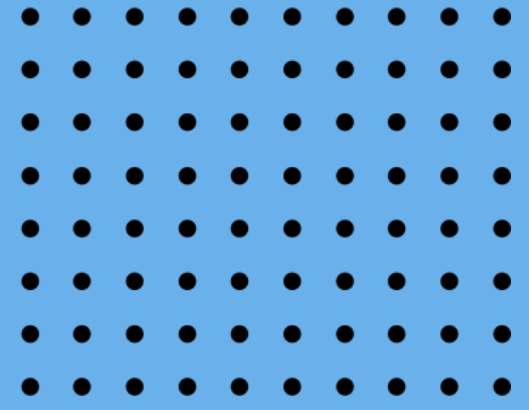


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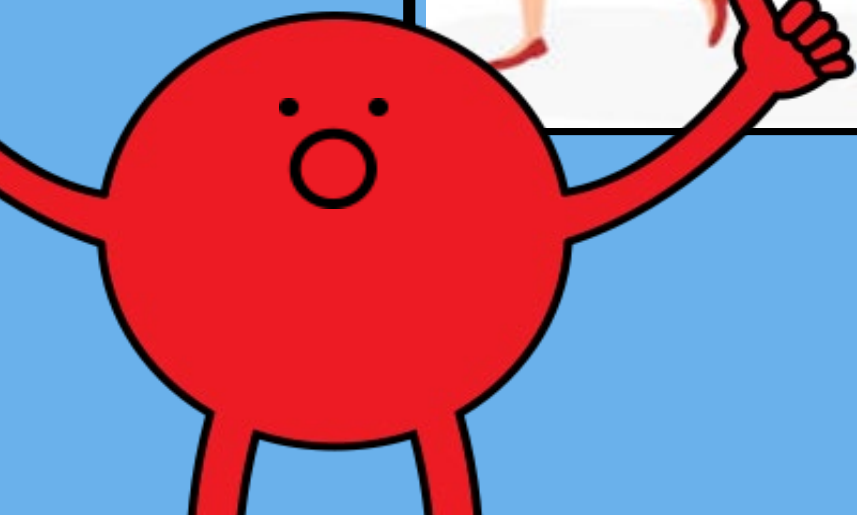


Reinforcement

25



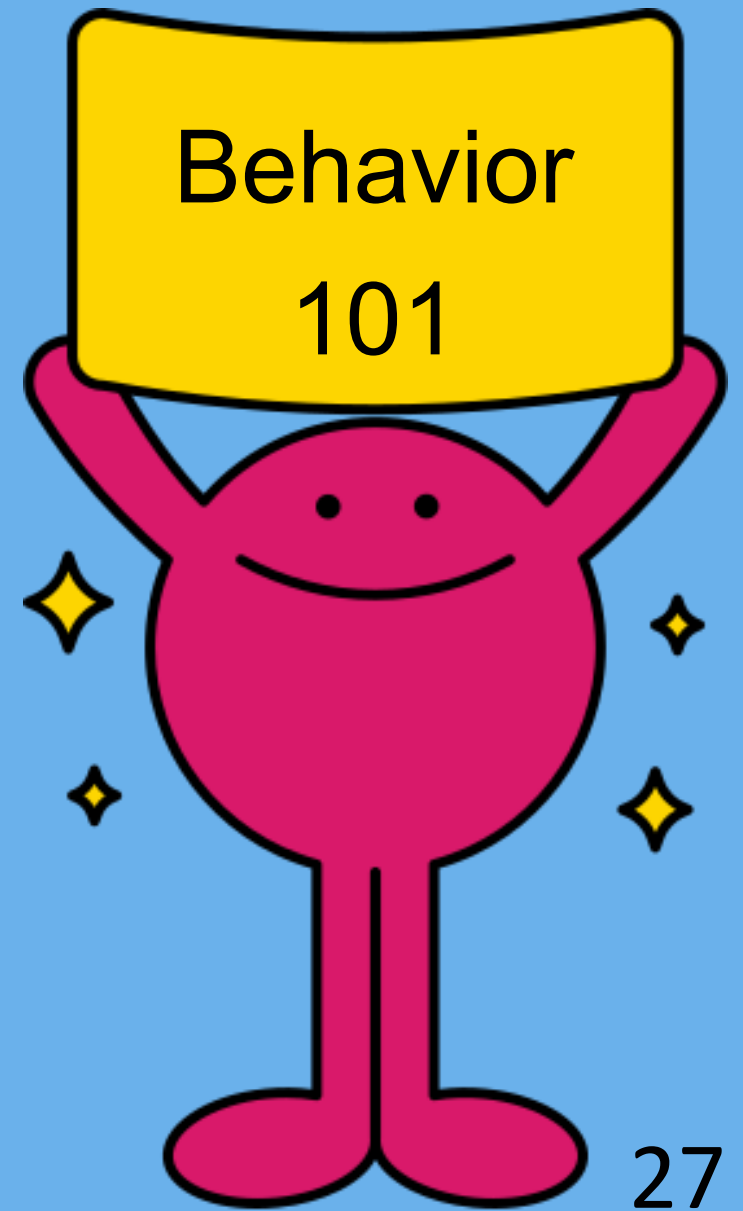
26



Modeling

26





Compliance 101



Determine the cause



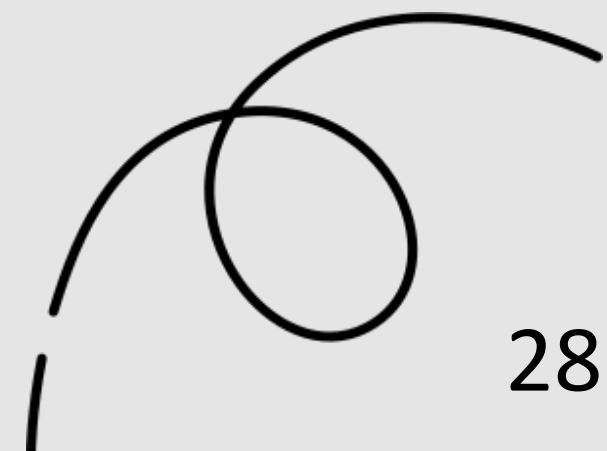
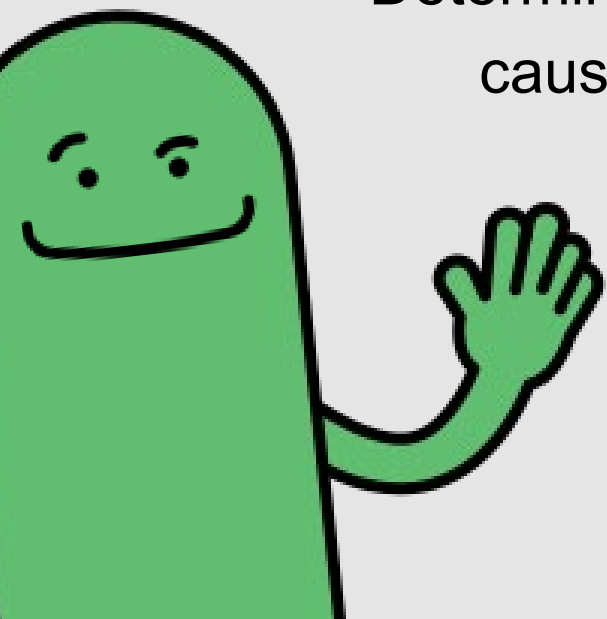
Work on the relationship



Wait out



Follow through





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Aggression 101

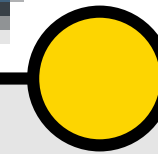
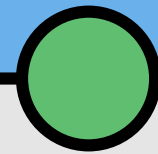
Safety first

Parental input

Prevention

Seek professional help

Learn through observation



A brief assessment of
basic skills

Baseline skills as starting
point

Individualized preference
assessment

Use preferences to gain
cooperation and build
relationships

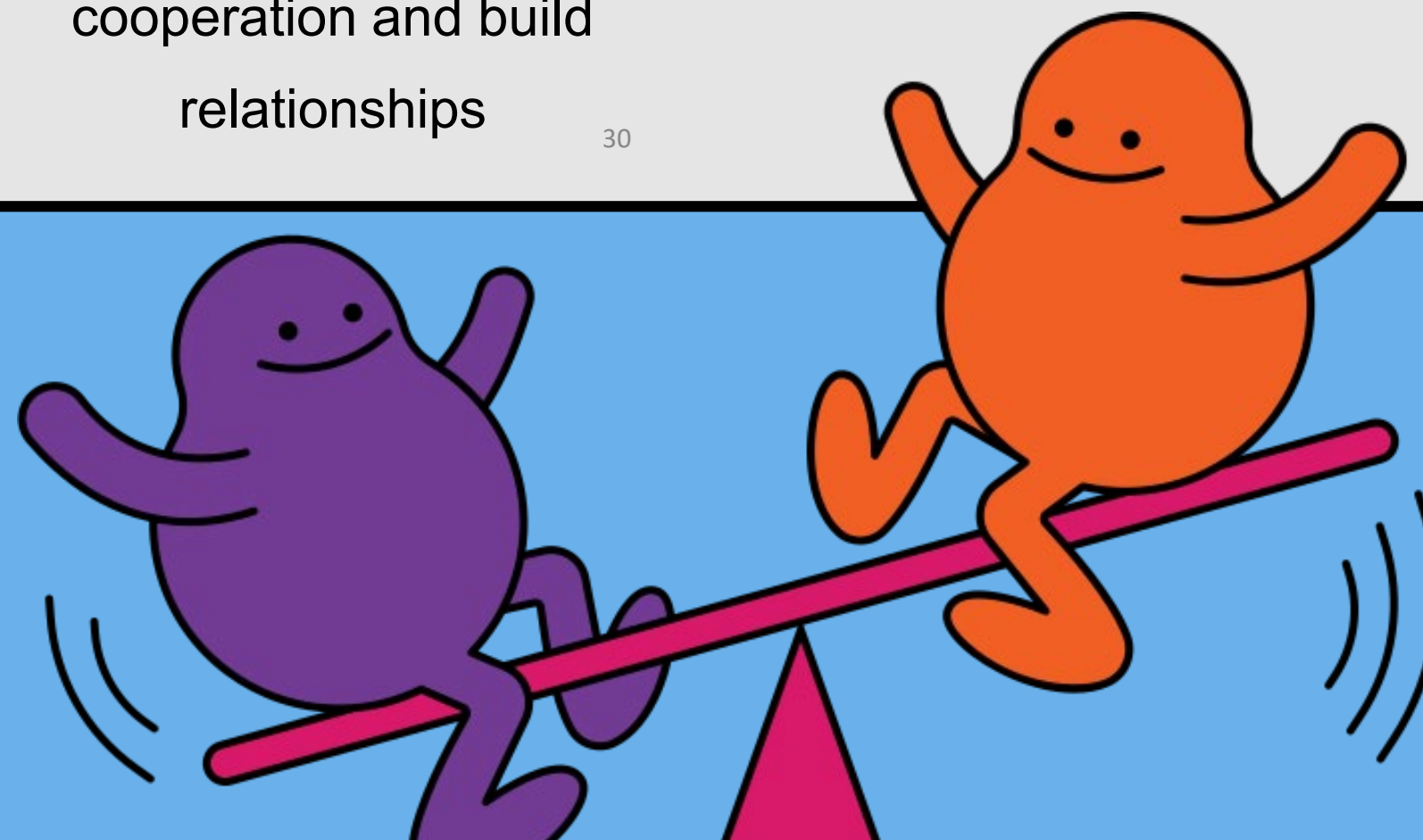
Parent Interview

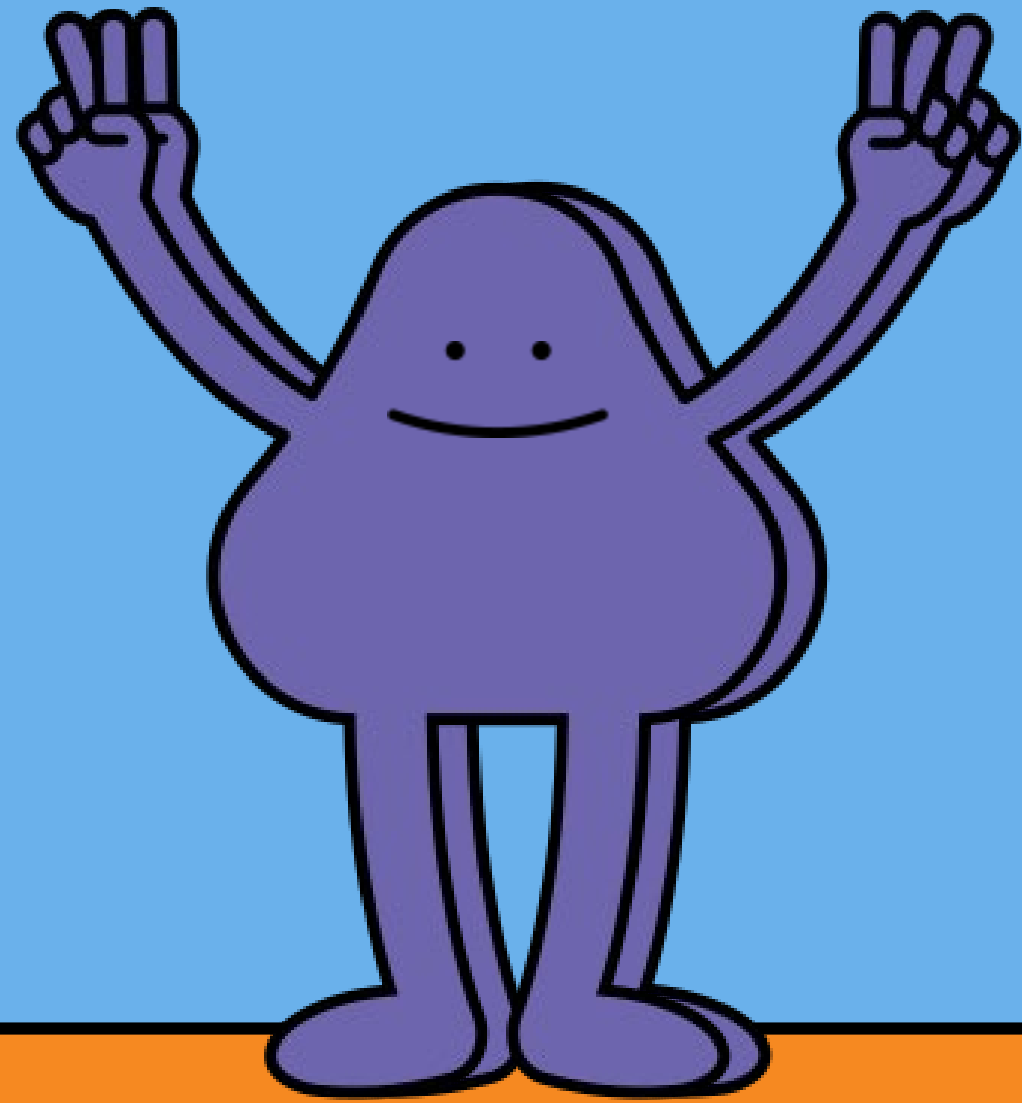
Allow parents to teach
you

Ongoing observations
and discussion

Keep working with and
observing the child's
abilities and style

30



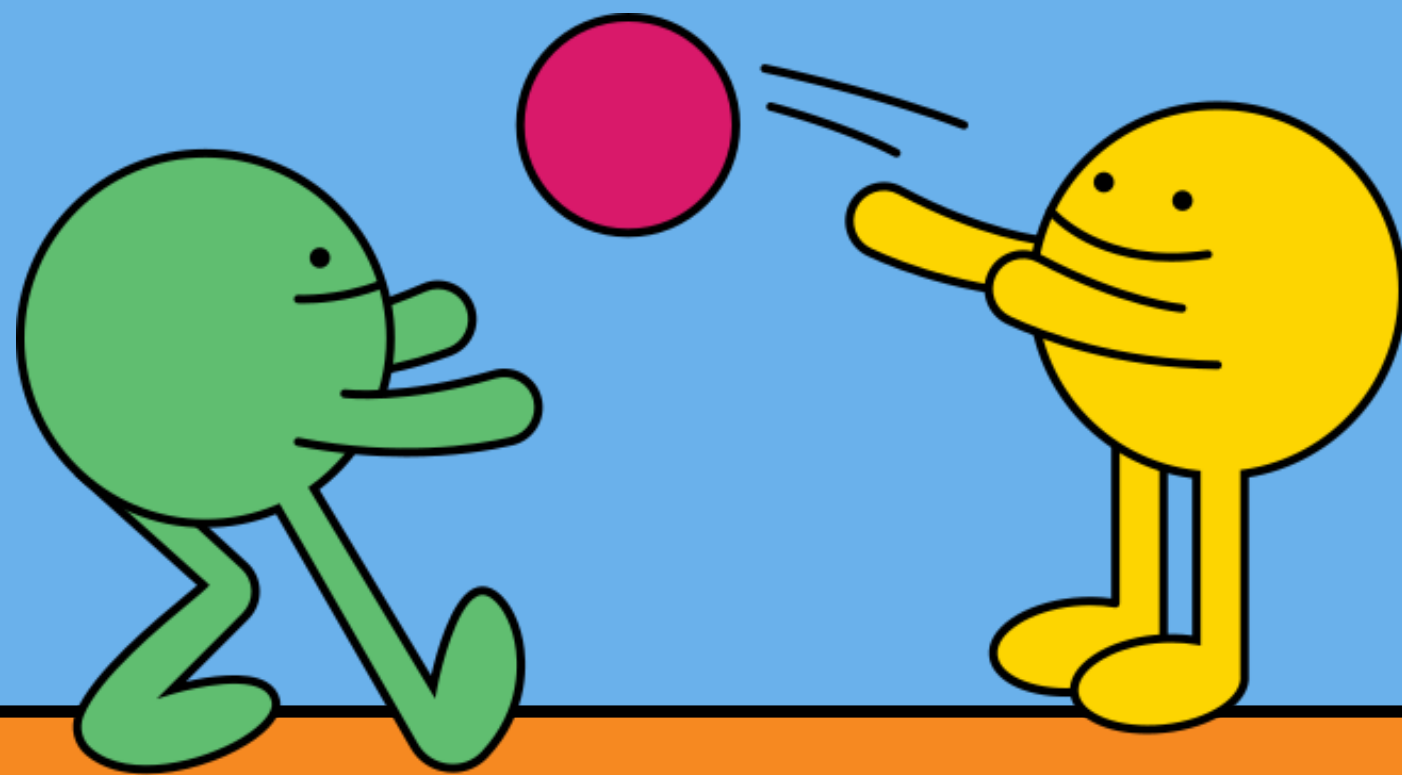


A brief assessment of basic skills

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A brief assessment of basic skills

1	Does the child play with others?	
2	Does the child play appropriately with a variety of toys?	
3	Does the child respond when given an instruction?	
4	Does the child look in the direction when other's point?	
5	Does the child accept changes in routine?	
6	Does the child transition when directed?	
7	Does the child respond to his name when called?	
8	Does the child follow what others do?	
9	Does the child imitate others?	
10	Will the child sit for 5 minutes or longer	
11	Does the child use gestures /speech /signs /other forms to communicate?	
12	Does the child request what he wants?	
13	Does the child point to objects to request?	
14	Does the child gain adult attention?	
15	Can the child self soothe?	
16	Can the child be comforted by others?	
17	Can the child play cooperatively with others?	
18	Can the child wait (in a group activity)?	
19	Can the child attend to the teacher presenting the lesson?	
20	Can the child attend to an adult in a one to one setting?	

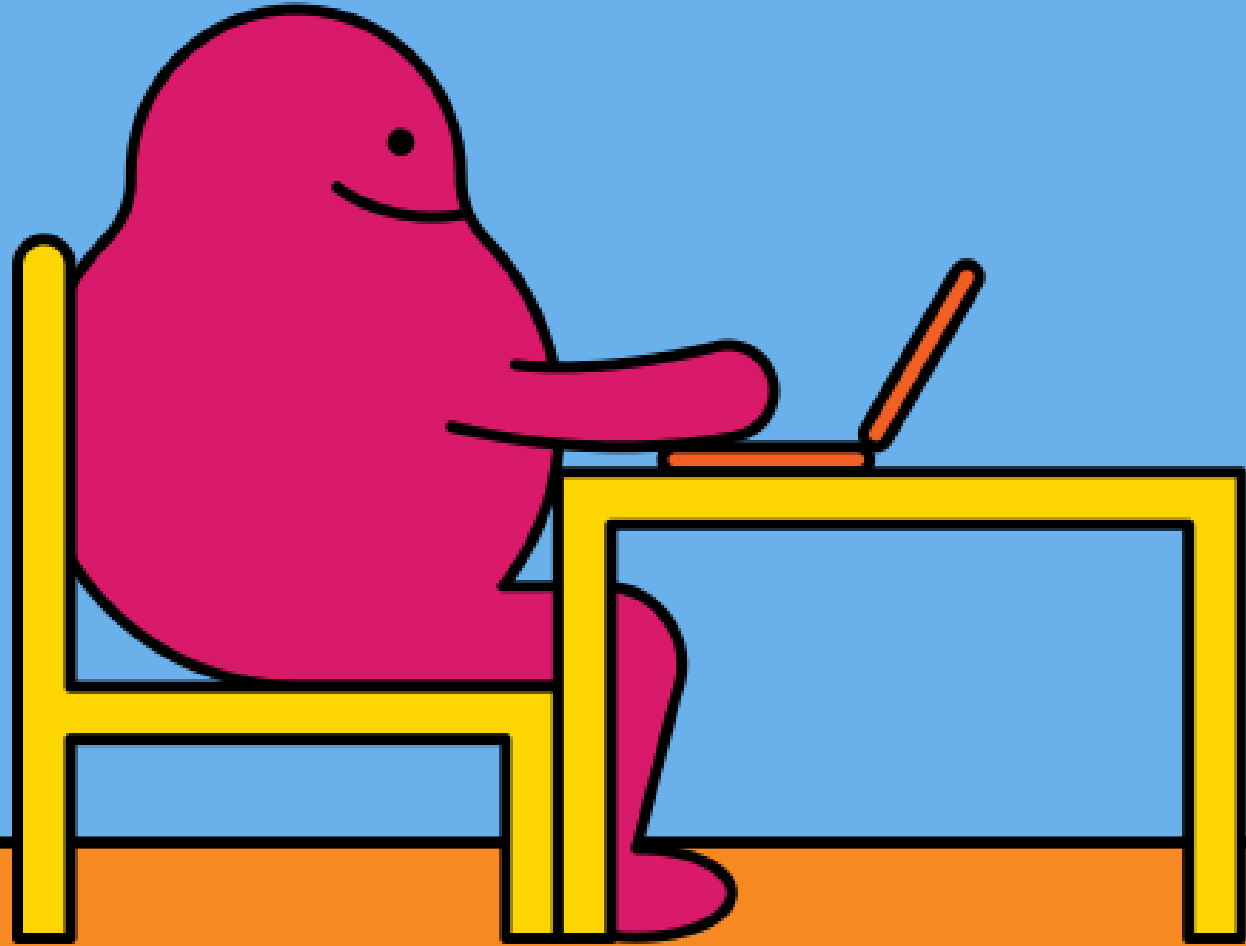


Individualized preference assessment

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Toys the child seems to spend time with/enjoy	
Activities the child seems to enjoy	
Activities/toys the child did not enjoy	
Food child prefers	
The child was happy, engaged and relaxed when	
The child was disengaged when	
The child was agitated when	

Based on the information above, some preventative strategies to put in place are	
Environmental manipulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> light sound/noise proximity space availability of toys availability of preferred persons quiet corner fidgets
Visuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of visual schedules Use of social narratives Use of visuals
Lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate movement Hand on activities concrete activities



Parent Interview

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1	What are the child's interests and strengths?	
2	What things are difficult for your child?	
3	Does your child have a diagnosis and/or educational label?	
4	Does your child have an Individualized Educational plan or 504 plan?	
5	Does your child have a behavior intervention plan?	
6	What are 2 things you wish for your child when he attends church? (e.g. listen to bible, sit quietly, learn to pray, respond to God's love etc.)	
7	What suggestions do you have for the teachers to better include your child? (e.g. sit closer to the teacher, don't call on him to answer questions etc.)	
8	Does your child take medication?	
9	Does your child need special help with personal care (e.g. using the bathroom, changing diapers, eating etc.)	
10	Would you prefer the teachers to explain about your child to the other children to help them	

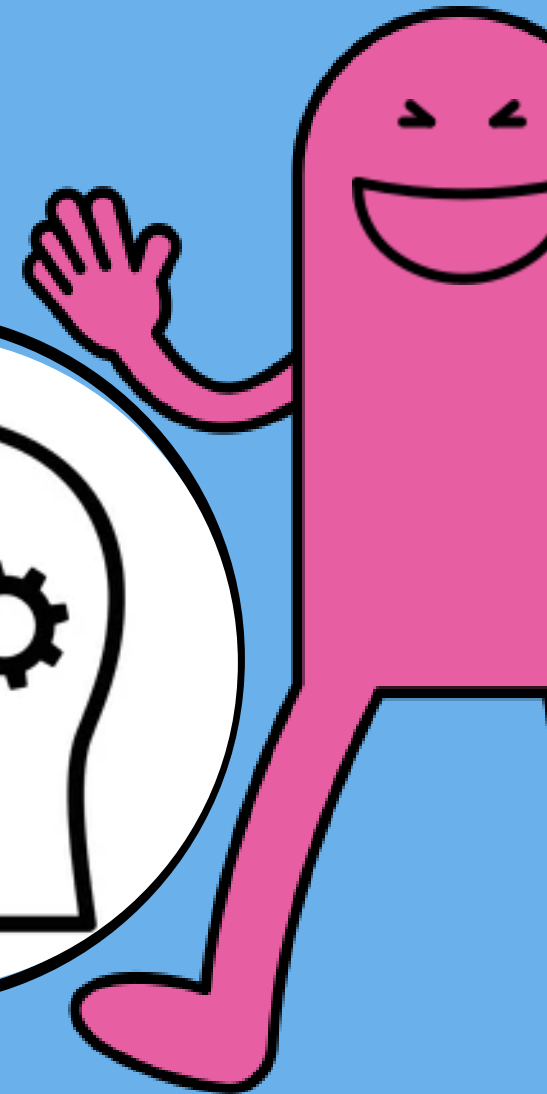
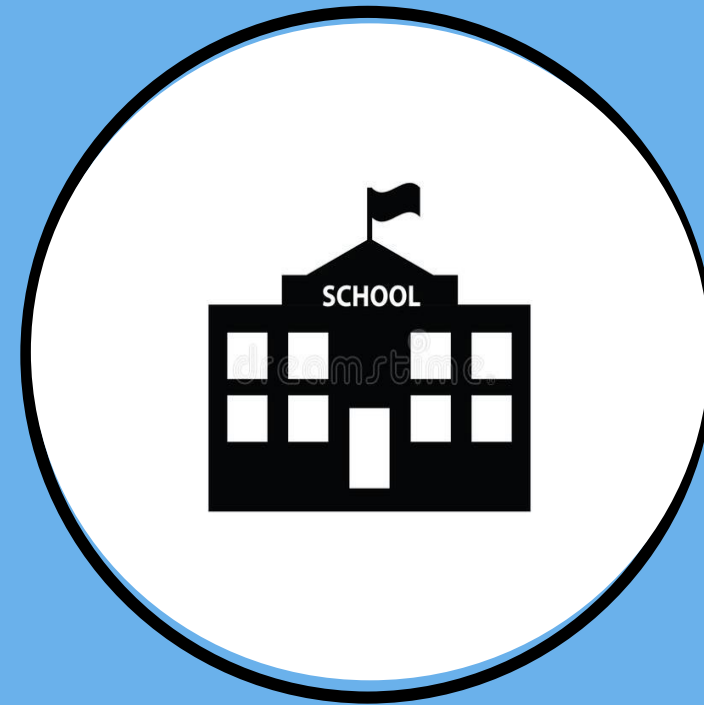


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Ongoing observation
and discussion

Confidentiality
and
consistency
is key

Useful documents

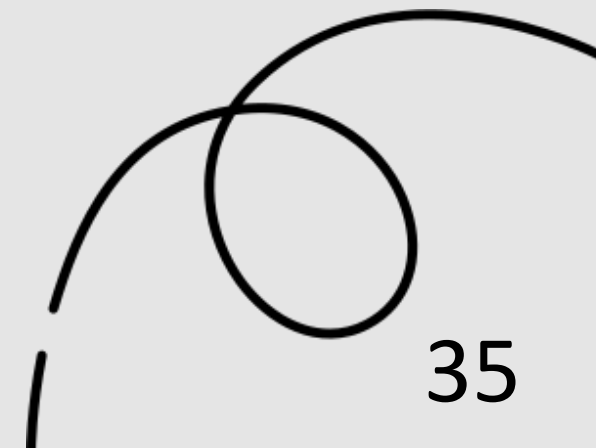
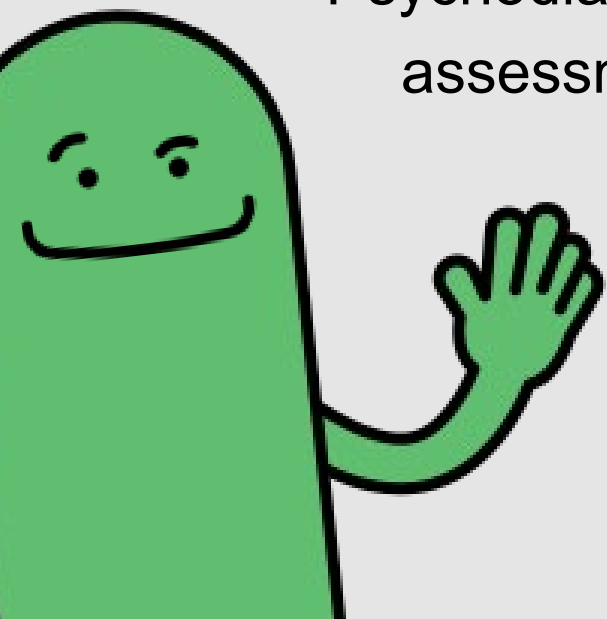


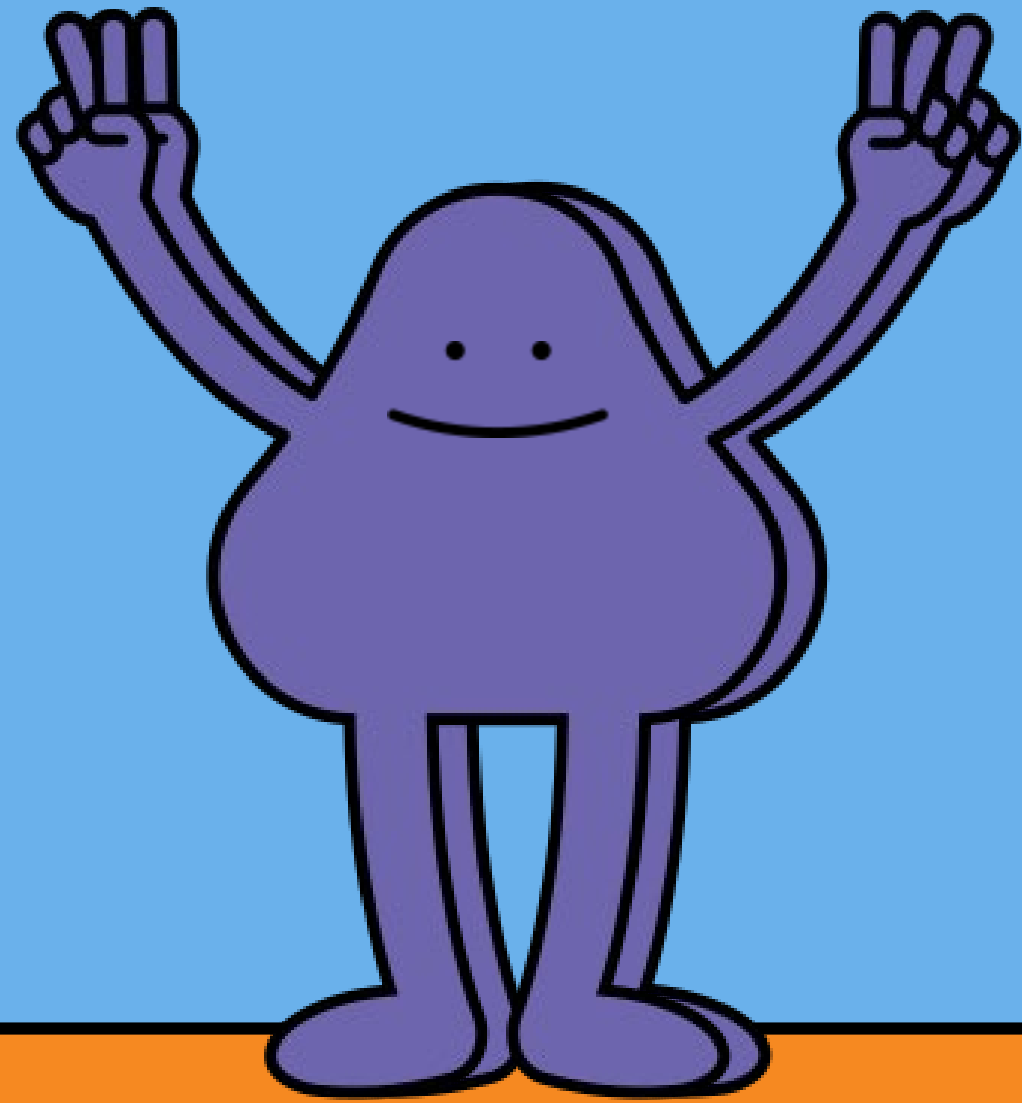
Psychodiagnostic
assessment

Multidisciplinary
Evaluation

Individual
Education plan
(IEP) or 504 plan

Behavior
Intervention Plan





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Take stock !

Good questions to ask



Resources ?

Environment ?

Leadership buy-in?

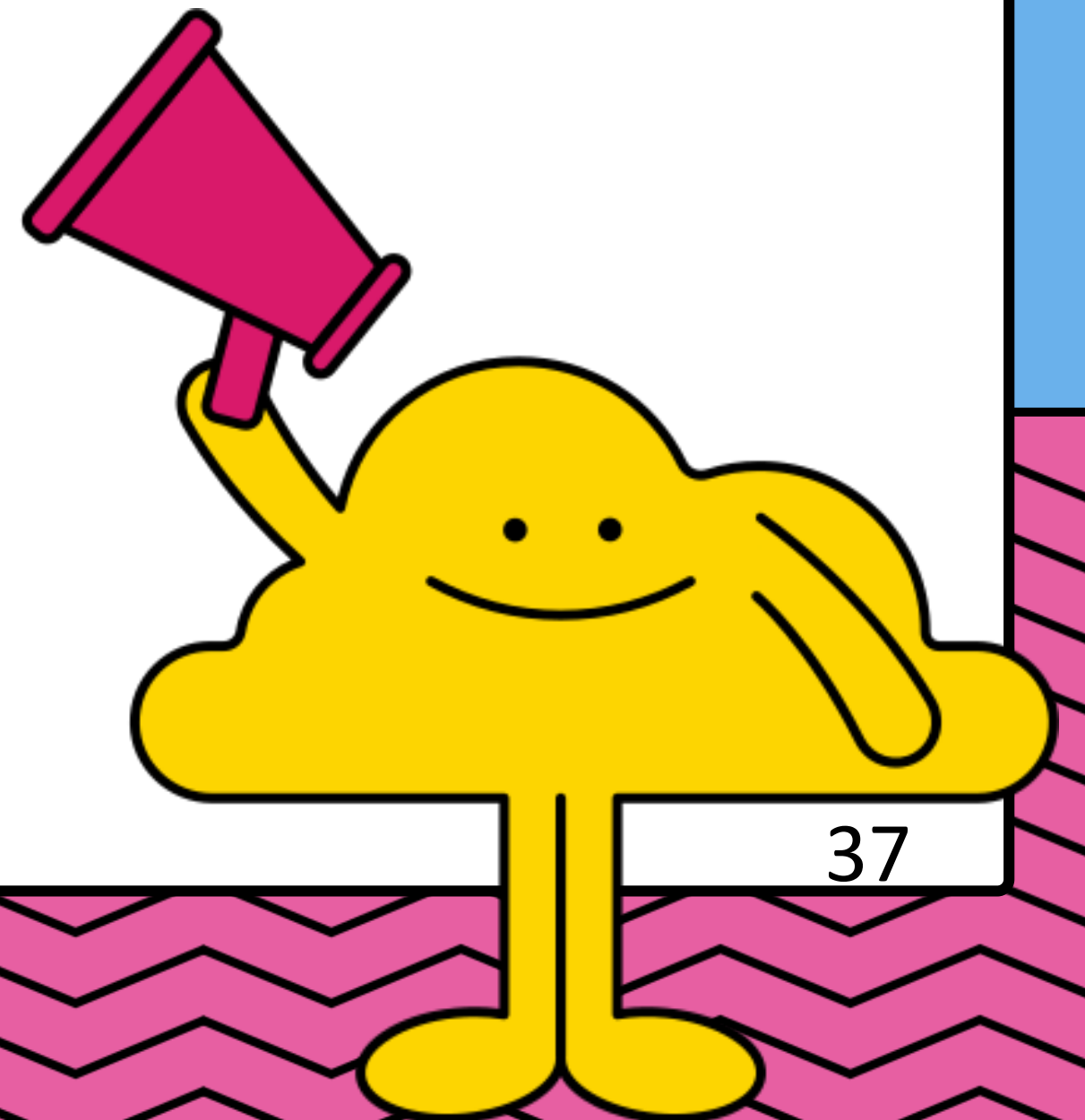
Long term/short term goals/plans ?

Small/big project ?

36

Nothing can substitute
for knowing the
person as an
individual

37



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By the end of this workshop, you should be able to list the considerations for serving and supporting autistic children, teens and their families to include

Familiarity with autistic characteristics

Evidence-based and promising strategies

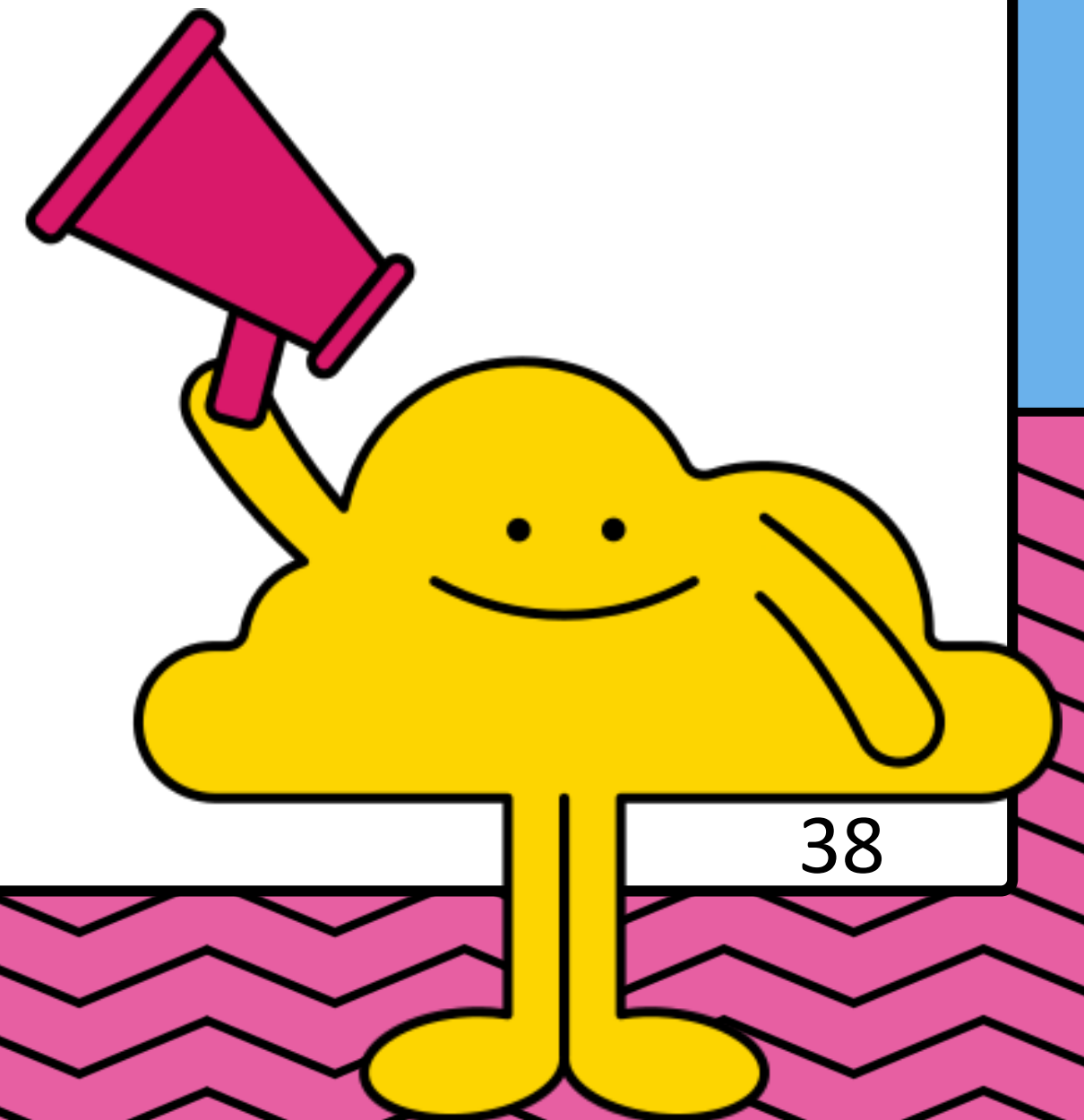
Behavior interventions

Observation and preference assessments and parent interviews

Useful documents

Church staffing, resources and buy-in

38



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References

Children in church? Welcome, teaching and worship with children with special needs. (2011).

<https://d3hgriq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/61f2fd86f0ee5/content/pages/documents/20211006-doc-mission-ministry-children-in-church-resource-v01.pdf>

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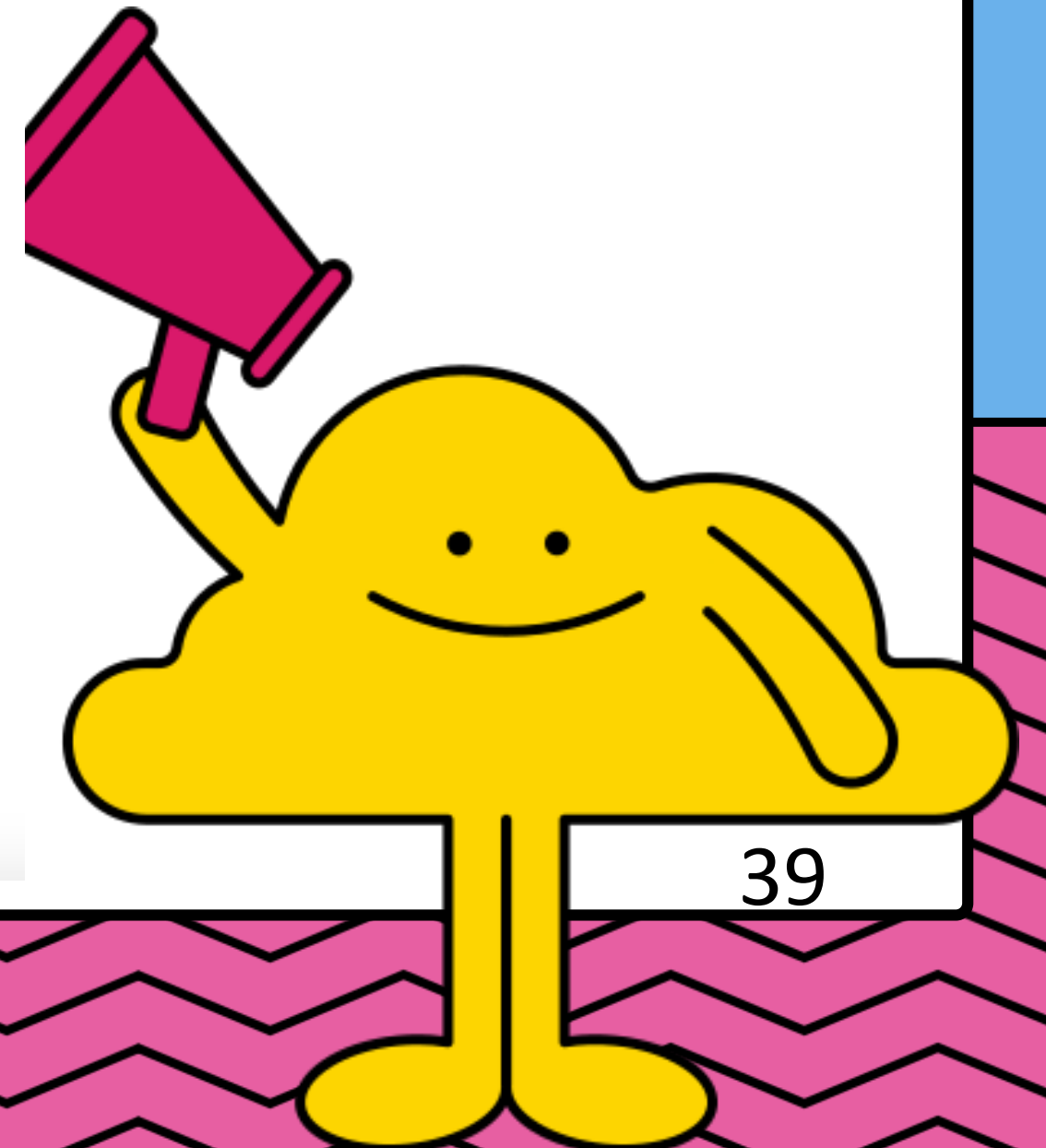
God loves autistic people the way we are. Churches can too. (2022).

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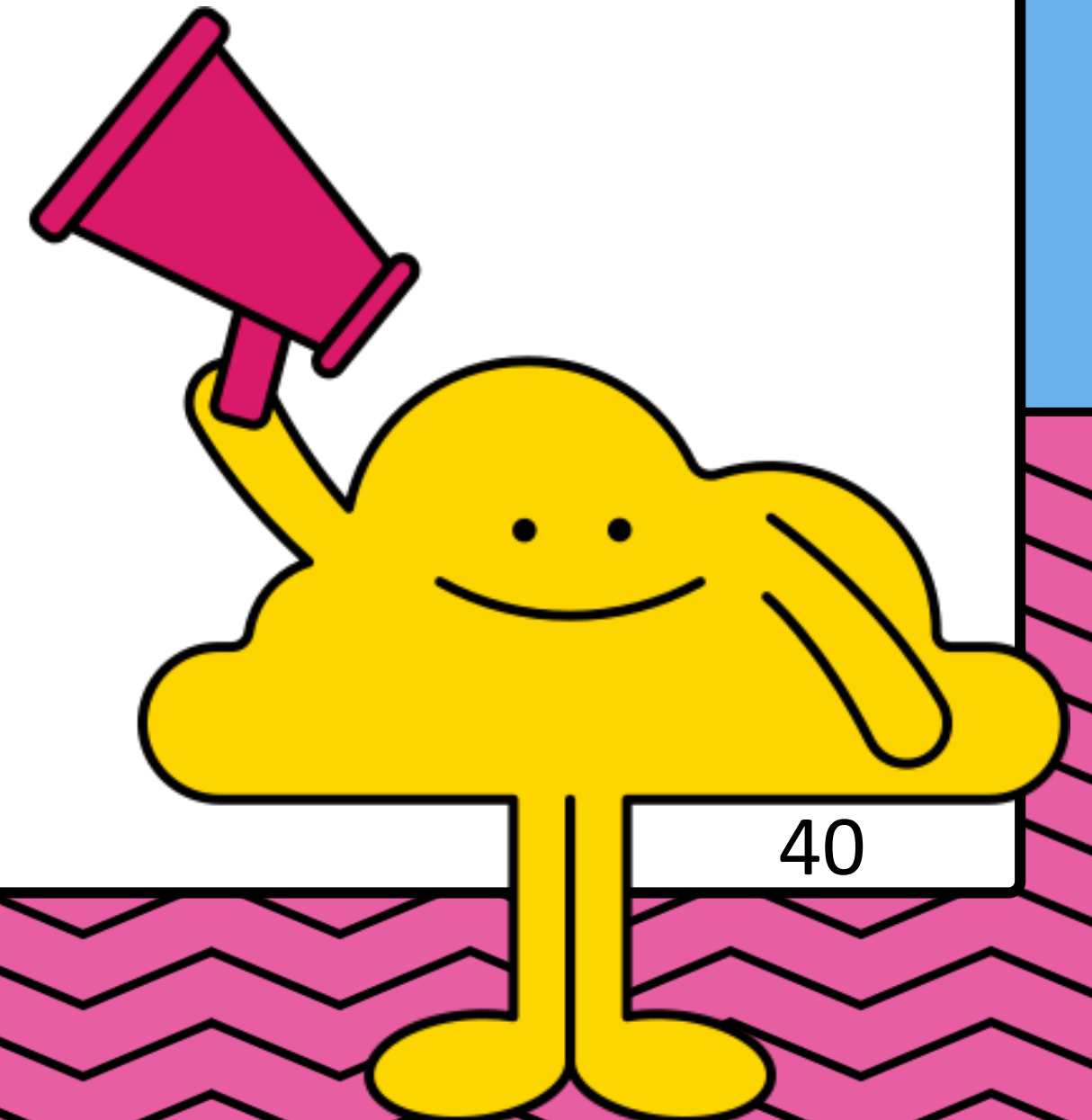
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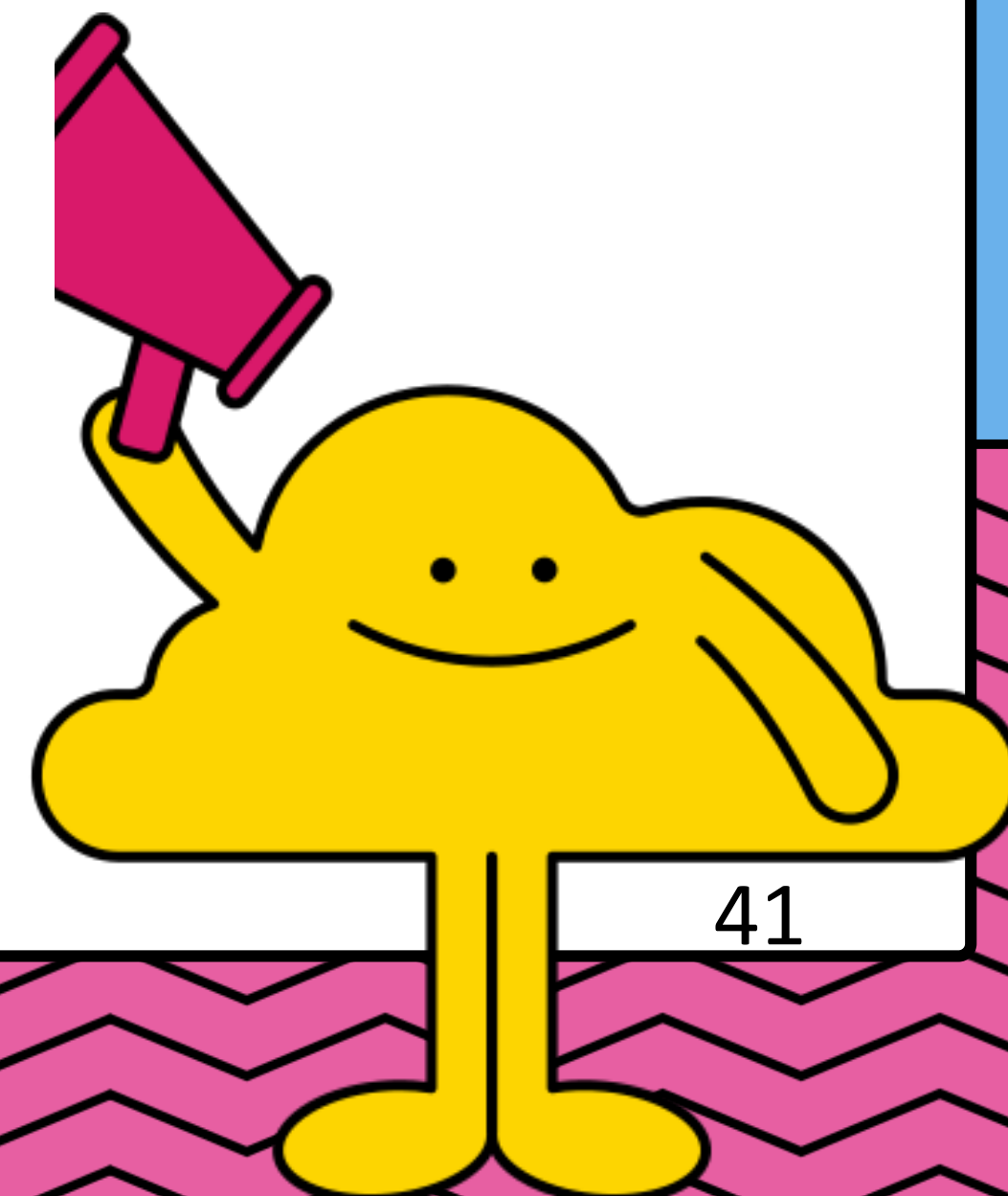
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Resources

A brief assessment of basic skills

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Individualized preference assessment

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YwmOkn07e2R-gx4Wr_UmwtLQN9f-2csZ/edit?usp=sharing&oid=101724394585979595643&rtpof=true&sd=true

Parent interview

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_NmVxBcTedR5csXgcuvMb-mlpj_z--yY/edit?usp=sharing&oid=101724394585979595643&rtpof=true&sd=true

