



**ECHO Session Date:** 1/16/25

Thank you for presenting your student at ECHO Idaho – K12 Supporting Students with Autism session. Please keep in mind that your School District policies and Health Services procedures, medication administration protocols, process guidelines, remain the guiding principles to your practice.

After review of the case presentation and discussion of this student’s case among the ECHO Community of Practice, the following suggestions have been made:

**Student Grade Level:** 2<sup>nd</sup> grade

**Summary:**

This case involves a second-grade student with autism who exhibits sensory sensitivities, rigid preferences, and behavioral challenges. The student refuses to wear shoes and only wears the same overalls and shirt daily, both of which are too small, leading to discomfort and hygiene issues. Despite being toilet-trained, he wears pullups, causing rashes. At home, he remains unclothed. The student has strong academic strengths, particularly in reading and writing, and enjoys drawing characters from movies and books. He spends his school day in a self-contained classroom with one-on-one paraprofessional support. Efforts to address his challenges include behavior plans, sensory accommodations, and modified teaching strategies.

**Questions:**

Looking for recommendations aim to improve his comfort and safety by transitioning to appropriate clothing and shoes, increasing therapeutic support, and engaging his family.

**Recommendations:**

First, thank you for sharing this challenging case. Kudos to you and your staff for the dedication you have for this child. The panel overarching panel recommendations aim to improve the child’s quality of life, safety, and comfort while supporting the family and school staff in effectively managing challenges.

**Focus on high-priority goals** (e.g., hygiene, safety) while gradually working on secondary issues like wearing shoes.

**Connect with primary care provider / developmental pediatrics:** Suggest consulting with a developmental pediatrician to address the child’s needs holistically and engage the family in the process.

**Clothing and sensory adaptations:**

- Clothing adaptation and selection: Gradually desensitize the child to wearing different clothing, including proper-sized overalls and underwear, while introducing sensory-friendly options tailored to their preferences.
- Interactive clothing choices: Allow the child to pick out clothes online or in-store, or explore fabric shops for textures and patterns that match their interests.



- Creative engagement: Make smaller versions of favorite clothing for a cherished stuffed animal or doll to encourage acceptance, and involve an adult dressed as Huckleberry Finn in adult-sized overalls to make the process engaging and fun.
- Incorporate lessons gradually: Sprinkle in lessons on the importance of wearing shoes through enjoyable and engaging activities.
- **Increase Occupational Therapy involvement:**
  1. Develop a detailed sensory profile to understand the child's sensory needs.
  2. Explore private OT services for more intensive support.
- **Consider Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)** to address behavioral challenges, including transitions to new clothing and managing rigidity. [Here](#) is a guide to help parents find an ABA therapist

**Regulation support:**

- Aquatic therapy might be a great way to address regulation as well

**Family and home support:**

- Train the family in self-regulation strategies to improve their capacity to coregulate with the child.
- Engage with parents to improve home routines and safety measures.
- Recommend a case manager to connect the family with external resources.
- ADEPT (Autism Distance Education Parent Training) - Clinicians at the University of California-Davis developed these online, on-demand learning modules to help parents/caregivers learn more about behavior and autism. The following are particularly helpful: Module 1: Strategies for Teaching Functional Skills; Module 2: Positive Behavior Strategies for Your Child with Autism.  
[https://health.ucdavis.edu/mind\\_institute/centers/cedd/adept.html](https://health.ucdavis.edu/mind_institute/centers/cedd/adept.html)

**Address health and nutrition:**

- Monitor the child's nutritional needs and recommend feeding therapy if necessary.
- Ensure hygiene and address issues related to prolonged use of pull-ups.
- Tool Kit: Parent's Guide to Feeding Behavior in Children with Autism - This tool kit helps parents and professionals better understand feeding issues. It includes the sections 1) What are Feeding Problems?, 2) Conditions that Might Affect Feeding, 3) When to be Concerned, 4) Tips to Help with Feeding Issues at Home, and 5) Frequently Asked Questions. This tool kit can be found at <https://echoautism.org/feeding> then scroll down to Autism Speaks - A Parent's Guide to Feeding Behavior in Children with Autism.
- Feeding resources – Best-practice feeding resources including books and articles can be found at <https://echoautism.org/feeding/>. Some feeding resources include: 1) Helping Your Child with Extreme Picky Eating by Rowell, 2) Fearless Feeding by Castle, 3) Food Chaining by Walbert, 4) Kids Eat Right, and 5) Choose My Plate)

**Enhance communication tools:**

- Reintroduce or improve augmentative and alternative communication devices to support language needs.

**Behavioral safety measures:**

- Consider enrolling the child in a neurodivergent-friendly swim class for safety and recreation.