



ECHO Session Date: 2/20/25

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: 1st grade

Summary:

A young student with an IEP under Cognitive Delay spends over 50% of the day with general education peers but requires full-time 1:1 paraprofessional support. Strengths include letter and sound recognition, a passion for Dr. Seuss, and good motor control, though communication is extremely limited. He struggles with transitions, potty training, and following instructions. He has no ASD diagnosis or behavior intervention plan. His family recently relocated after fleeing domestic abuse. The school, facing staffing challenges, is exploring accommodations like visual schedules, frequent breaks, and modified assignments while seeking guidance on balancing academic expectations with his developmental needs.

Recommendations:

First, thank you for sharing this case. Kudos to you and your staff for the dedication you have for this child. Key recommendations include:

Assessment and Support for Communication and Behavior

- **Hearing and behavioral assessment**
 - Determine if the child has had a formal hearing test
 - Conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) to identify target behaviors and necessary skills
 - [SESTA](#) can offer guidance, resources and technical assistance to support conducting an FBA
 - Engage a school psychologist or behavioral specialist to support this process

- **Communication support**
 - Ensure consistent access to the child’s AAC device (e.g., Proloquo2Go)
 - Clarify who owns/funded the device and explore Medicaid options for obtaining another one
 - Utilize visuals and social stories, potentially incorporating Dr. Seuss to align with the child's interests
 - To learn more about Augmentative and Alternative Communication tools, we recommending watching [this](#) recorded ECHO session
 - An [Assistive Technology Consult request](#) from the Idaho Assistive Technology Project would help the SLP and school to provide technical assistance and device trials in collaboration with staff (who coordinate separately with families)



Behavioral, Learning, and Safety Strategies

- **Behavioral and learning strategies**
 - Establish structured routines and use closed-ended tasks to support engagement
 - Implement behavioral momentum by reinforcing confidence-building tasks before introducing new tasks
 - Utilize reinforcement systems that align with the child's interests
 - Playdough could be used as a transition tool
 - Consider using putty instead of playdough in circle or group time to be different than the reward
- **Elopement and safety planning**
 - Develop a crisis plan for elopement, given the high risks associated with running behavior
 - Recognize that behaviors change over time and anticipate future adjustments
 - Consider ensuring the classroom door is lockable/child proofed; consider using a half door/gate
 - Visual boundaries might also help with elopement

Collaboration and Caregiver/Educator Support

- **Supporting caregiver and educator needs**
 - [Autism Speaks School Community Toolkit](#) (provides information about how to support students in the school setting)
 - Provide resources for the child's mother to build resilience
 - [Idaho Parents Unlimited](#) is a good resource to share with families
 - To learn more about how to work with families with a trauma-informed lens, here is a helpful article: [Toward trauma-informed applications of behavior analysis](#) (Rajaraman, et al.). This article discusses how teams can better understand trauma's role in behavior, build trust and collaboration with families, prioritize emotional safety, and shift from control to support),
 - Offer additional support and guidance for the SLP working with the child
 - Continue to foster strong teacher-student relationships by engaging with the child's interests to build trust
- **Collaboration and next steps**
 - Ensure the school is actively hiring for needed support roles
 - Consider seeing if youth would qualify for [DD services](#) as developmental delay is mentioned on his IEP
 - Some school districts don't allow outside service providers/agencies to provide IEP related services (e.g., personal aid/support person), however many districts can and do contract with those agencies for staff