

What Would Daniel Do?

I am Daniel Durany, public speaker in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Speaking to many parents instantly helped me put myself into their shoes in the difficulty raising a child with autism. If I were a parent, here are some procedures I would implement with a child on the spectrum.

Teaming Up with other parents

Teaming up with other parents eases the tension in many ways: not trying to solve the entire problem alone, better understanding of your child, knowing you aren't the only person with this struggle, and sharing information amongst each other in what works and doesn't work with a child on the spectrum.

Here are some ways parents can team up with other parents: Support Groups, Social Media online (Facebook, MyAutismTeam, etc.), and churches with Special Needs Ministry.

Red Light, Yellow Light, Green Light

Many Applied Behavior Analysts (ABA therapist) emphasize color charts with their clients on the spectrum. ABA therapists use a color chart to benefit the child in many ways: guiding them in modulating their emotions better; proper social interaction with others in relation to the environment surroundings; and better enabling them to evaluate their child on the spectrum.

Parents who use the color chart with their child help them in many ways: gauging overall progress made with their child, constantly reinforcing behavior, and enabling them to use in many behavior situations.

KISS Method (Keep It Simple Silly)

Personally, I would implement this method toward goal setting. However using this method for teaching tactics is an excellent tool to use, as well. Many people struggle in knowing how to set goals. Why? Too many of their goals are based upon performance and not enough toward the process and then the progress made.

Goals based upon progress made rather than merely results oriented tremendously reduce heartache and disappointment while working towards a goal. Goals focused on progress benefit the child on the spectrum in many ways: lasting motivation longer, better outlook on life, and easier to compare yourself from within.

Patience, Patience, Patience

Autism is a pervasive developmental disorder. The breakdown of the word pervasive means, "Spreading everywhere." The word "delay," should instantly without hesitation trigger the word "patience" in a parents mind. Patience required at multiple levels: understanding how they learn and mature overall, embracing them completely and never giving up on hope for the child.

When parents ask my mother's advice about raising her child on the spectrum, she constantly mentions the word, "Patience."

Avoid Auditory Teaching

If you ask most parents, what is the most common way their child aggravates them, it is their child's refusal to listen. A couple of summers ago, I went to a seminar to find out how students best learn. Interestingly, students trying to listen to a teacher lecture were the least effective way to learn. The best way was to learn through movement (kinesthetic learning). Most kids on the spectrum are also visual learners. Pictures, graphics, and animations are a helpful key ways kids on the spectrum learn.

Role-Playing

Over the year, my mom and I role-played many scenarios in my life. Role-playing helped me in many ways: decision-making, social interaction (especially with peers my age), and modulating my emotions. If I were a parent with a child on the spectrum, I would constantly put into action as many role-playing situations as possible. Role-playing has been found to produce positive results such as decreased stress especially in unfamiliar circumstances, being better prepared for possible scenarios, and hopefully a bonding parent & child relationship.

Positive Reinforcement

Negative reinforcement on a child with autism rarely produces positive results. An easy way to avoid negative reinforcement is by simply staying away from contractive words such as, "can't, won't, shouldn't, don't, and etc."

It is crucial to instill confidence in a child's life especially a child on the spectrum. Confidence for someone on the spectrum is very fragile. Positive reinforcement benefits children on the spectrum in many ways: increase motivation, willingness to persevere, more positive energy, and fewer meltdowns.

Avoid Multi-Tasking by Remembering First Things First

Children on the autism spectrum often struggle with multi-tasking, especially men who struggle more often than women.

Daily, parents must remind themselves to simplify things one task at a time. Parents who simplify focusing one task at a time should see significant improvement in their child. They see significant improvements such as: a better gauge of their child's strengths and weaknesses, reduced stress, and efficiency in accomplishing the task at hand.