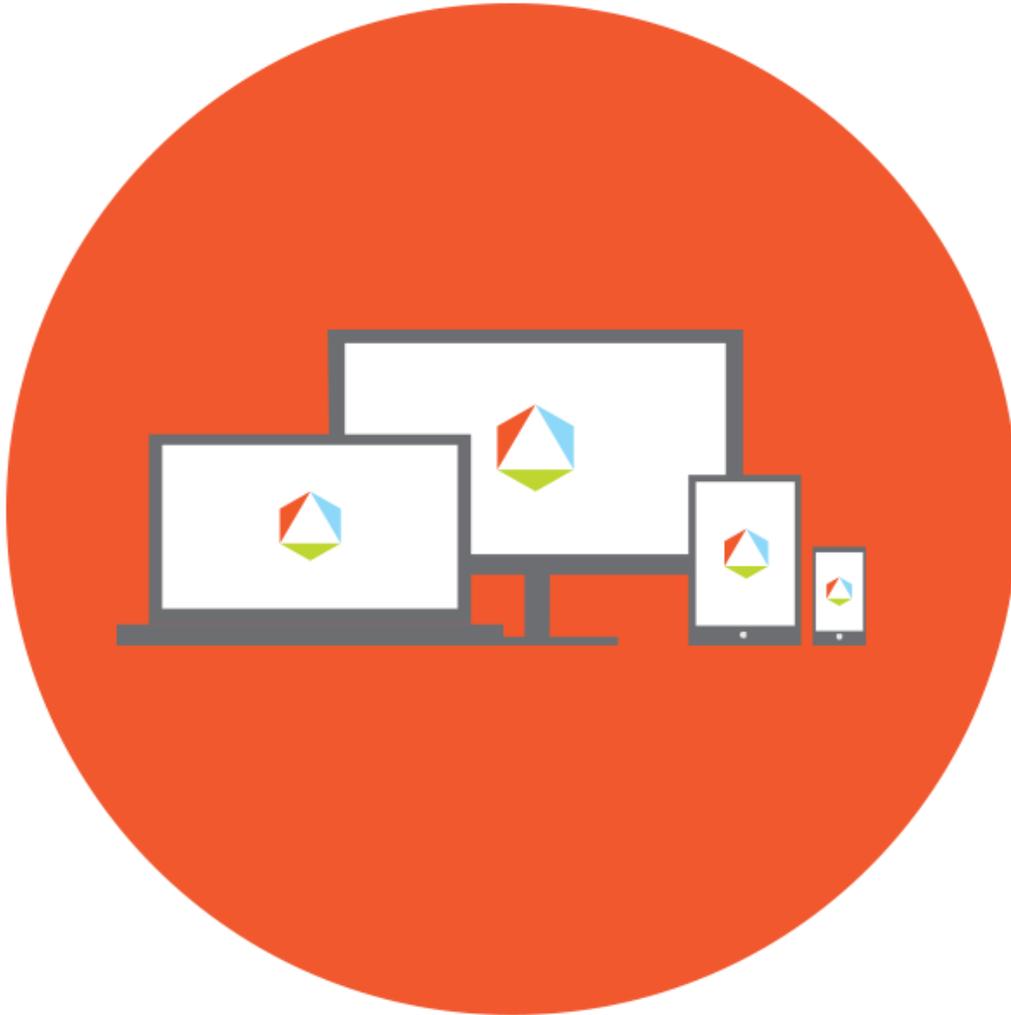




FIRSTPATH
AUTISM



Lesson Guide

36. Life Skills / Assertion

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Overview

Teaches:	Appropriate assertive techniques such as saying no, declining an offer, and standing up for oneself. Allows the child opportunities to practice typical situations when these skills might be used (e.g., when another child crowded in line, someone took away a toy without asking, etc.).
Before beginning:	Basic mand, tact, and intraverbal skills should be mastered, and the child should be in the process of developing advanced skills in these areas. A working understanding of Emotions & Perspectives will also be beneficial before beginning this lesson. In addition, familiarity with pretend play and the difference between "real" and "pretend" is critical, as situations may be role-played and the child needs to understand that they are not real (e.g., that the teacher is not actually being mean to the child but is modeling what a peer might do, and teaching how to respond).
Why it's important:	Knowing when, and how, to stand up for oneself when someone is not being kind, or not following rules.
Materials needed:	Easy-to-understand, simple social stories can be used; but materials should be dependent upon the specific situation in which an undesired action of another child presents itself. Talking 1:1 with the child about assertive techniques and role-playing those techniques can be helpful as well.
Generalization activities:	Playing games (that include "incorrect" actions such as breaking rules, not taking turns, or crowding in line to allow for practicing assertion), role play, sharing toys, choosing activities, etc.



Steps

Prepare

1. Sit next to, or facing, the child.
2. Have materials prepared: appropriate social stories, props/costumes, dolls, etc. and be ready to verbally instruct and role-play.
3. Ensure reinforcer assessment has been completed and potential reinforcers available for motivation.
4. Make sure the child is ready to attend, ideally looking at the teacher, and not engaging in any other activities.
5. Have data collection ready.

NOTE: A good rapport with the child should be established before beginning this lesson, as trust is important here. Also, the teacher should advise the child that they are about to PRETEND a situation, so the child knows what to expect.

Teach

1. Identify what mode will be used for the specific situation being taught, and start with telling the child what is about to happen. Example: "We are going to read a story about a boy who has trouble sharing with his friends. Then we are going to practice what to do if this happens to you."
2. After reading story, the teacher should tell the child, "Now we are going to pretend and practice what to do if someone takes your toy away without asking. You can say, 'I was playing. Please give that back.'"
3. Have child vocally imitate the phrase: 'I was playing. Please give that back.'
4. Teacher will then tell the child, "Now I am going to pretend to take your toy. Remember to tell me, 'I was playing. Please give that back.'" Child plays with toy; teacher takes it without asking. Correct response would be the child saying the practiced response: "I was playing. Please give that back."



Correct response: Enthusiastic praise. Let the child know that he is doing a great job learning how to play with friends that sometimes may not take turns.

Incorrect or No response: Let the child know "nice try" and then demonstrate what he/she should do. Have him practice saying the correct response again, then give opportunity for him to do it again.

5. Record data.

6. This lesson should ultimately be generalized into the community and various environments such as school and play dates, so the child can generalize and effectively understand how to kindly assert himself during social situations.

Examples include:

Correct response	Incorrect response	No response
Teacher: "We are going to practice what to do when a friend takes your toy." (Teacher takes toy from child.) Child: "I was playing. Please give that back." Teacher: "Great job! You asked me to give the toy back." (and gives the toy back to the child)	Teacher: "We are going to practice what to do when a friend takes your toy." (Teacher takes toy from child.) Child: Yells, "Gimme that!!!" and grabs toy back. Teacher: "Oops. Let's try to talk more nicely. Say, 'I was playing. Please give that back.'" (child practices, no reinforcement delivered except social praise for practicing, new trial starts)	Teacher: "We are going to practice what to do when a friend takes your toy." (Teacher takes toy from child.) Child: (no response) Teacher: "I just took your toy without asking. That's not okay. You can ask for it back. Let's practice." (teacher assists child in saying, "I was playing. Please give that back", and then starts new trial)

TYPICAL ORDER OF LEARNING TARGETS:

NOTE: The order of these targets is highly variable, and for each child the most functional targets should be taught first so that the child learns what he needs to



know at the time he needs to know it. This suggested list may also be added to based on each child's needs and experiences.

1. Saying "No, thank you" to decline an offer or question of desire.
2. Saying "Please stop" when someone is bothering/disturbing the child or treating him in a non-preferred way.
3. Asking for an item back when it has been taken (e.g., "Please give that back.")
4. Asking to participate (e.g., "Can I play with you?")
5. Standing up for oneself (e.g., "If you do not stop, I will call the teacher.")
6. Generalized to family and close friends in contrived situations, during adult-led play dates.
7. Generalized to natural environments such as school, playground, and other social situations.