

Alex's Case Scenario

Alex is a 3-year-old preschool student who was diagnosed with ASD three months ago. For the past two months, Alex has been participating in a special education preschool classroom 4 hours per day, 5 days per week. Alex is energetic and loves to play on the playground at school. Before coming to preschool, he attended an in-home child-care center. In his initial assessment through the local school district, Alex enjoyed playing with toys but had a difficult time transitioning when it was time to clean up. Alex's mother reports that at the age of 3 Alex had limited language skills and only spoke a few words. At that time, Alex's parents also became concerned and took him to see a developmental pediatrician. Once Alex's assessments were complete, he was given the diagnosis of ASD. Alex's parents are very supportive and will participate in any intervention that they feel will help their son. Alex's level of frustration is evident when he is transitioning from one activity to another in the classroom. He will cry or attempt to hit others if he is leaving an activity that he enjoys. For example, during recess Alex has appropriate behavior on the playground. Once the bell rings and it is time to go inside, Alex will run from teachers laughing and attempt to climb up high on structures to avoid moving on to the next activity. In the classroom, Alex has a difficult time sitting and attending to large and small group activities. If an adult is not near him, he will jump out of his chair and run around the room. The majority of the time, Alex will exhibit tantrum behavior of rolling around and screaming if he does not want to complete an activity in the classroom.

According to reports from Alex's parents and observations made in the classroom environment, Alex is sensitive to touch and sound. If the classroom noise level increases, Alex will begin to hand flap as well as cry out of frustration. He occasionally covers his ears when music is played during circle time. Alex does not like to be hugged, and prefers to maintain a large distance between himself and others.

Alex's Present Levels of Development

Communication/Language

Alex is able to label up to 5 objects (car, bus, mom, dad, train, juice) but is not communicating needs and wants. He struggles with frustration levels when he is unable to let an adult know if he is hungry, tired, etc. In the classroom and in the home, Alex will throw himself on the floor and roll around and scream if he is not able to access things that he wants. He may cry or shout verbal jargon when wanting to eat or drink. If he wants a toy or food item he will attempt to grab it from a shelf or another child. Alex is not able to answer simple conversational questions such as "What is your name?"

Social/Emotional Development

Alex has no interest in interacting with peers in the classroom or outside the classroom. His parents report that when they are gathered with family members and Alex's cousins that are similar ages, he will play alone. He enjoys playing with toy trains and cars and, will repetitively drive them back and forth on the train track or road. He is not able to respond to greetings from adults or peers. If a teacher says "Hello, Alex" 50% of the time he will respond by repeating "Hi, Alex" but make no eye

contact. If his parents walk in the classroom, 50% of the time he will run to mom and give her a hug. At this point, Alex's parents want him to work on responding to greetings as well as begin to use age-appropriate his play skills. Alex needs to begin to work on pretend play as well as demonstrate the use of toys other than a car and train.

Self-help

At the age of 3 Alex is not potty trained, but he does demonstrate good skills in the area of hand washing and personal hygiene. Alex is able to wash his hands on his own and brush his teeth independently. His parents would like to begin potty training soon and would like to work on these skills both at home and school. Alex is able to open his lunch box and open items in a plastic baggie but does not use a fork or spoon to feed himself with food items that require utensils.

Fine Motor/Gross Development

Alex loves to climb and swing on the playground equipment and prefers not to complete motor activities such as riding a bike. When he is asked to participate in social games on the playground (baseball, basketball, etc.), he prefers not to get involved. Alex is beginning to color pictures with a pincer grasp and enjoys painting and playing with play dough. He does not know how to hold scissors on his own at this time.

Cognitive/Academic

Alex is able to match colors as well as complete a 10-piece inset puzzle. He loves to look at books about trains and cars, but he will throw a book if it is on another topic. His parents report that they have heard him rote count 1-10, but this skill has not been observed in the classroom. When working at stations in the classroom, Alex is beginning to complete one activity on his own independently if the skill has previously been taught to him in a one-on-one setting. Alex is not able to identify any letters of the alphabet and is not able to identify his written name on the class board.