



Autism and Tertiary Behavior Supports  
[www.ksdetasn.org](http://www.ksdetasn.org)

September 2012

### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT:

Have you noticed our name has changed? You may have previously known us as KISN, or Kansas Instructional Support Network. We have changed our name to TASN Autism and Tertiary Behavior Supports. We still offer all the same services.

## 10 Tips for Starting the School Year Off Right

by Lindy McDaniel

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*Regional Consultant for TASN Autism & Tertiary Behavior Supports*

1. Get Organized- Create a prioritized "to do" list for yourself and your paras AND STICK TO IT! Have a "to do" tub for staff to go to if and when they have a free moment. Place things that need to be done first on top, with instructions of how to do them so you won't be interrupted with questions when you are working with students.

2. Maximize your Space... Declutter- Sort through and organize your classroom so that needed supplies are out and easily accessible, while other items are put away in an organized fashion. Label containers and cabinet doors with what is inside so staff can find things quickly. Color code items by grade level, subject or individual student.

3. Set up a Strong Data Collection System- Have a method for taking data, so that it is easy, meaningful and time effective. Consider video-taping your students during the first week and then periodically throughout the year, you will be amazed at their progress. Showing before and after video footage is



a great way to share progress with parents and staff, as well as collect data.

4. Build Strong Connections with Your Students-

The first two

weeks of school, spend

extra time observing your students. Be present. Get

to know them and find out who they are. Focus less on curriculum and more on connection. Building a strong connection will really pay off in the end. Your students will be more willing to comply and do what you expect, if they know you care. Consider having a "Sneak a Peek" day where students come to school with parents a day or two before school starts to meet you and see the classroom. (This one on one time can give you valuable information about what your students like and don't like and what might motivate them.

5. Build a Positive Rapport with Parents and Guardians- Parents are a child's number one teacher. Get their feedback. Ask them to fill out a questionnaire regarding what times and ways it is best to contact them, as well as their goals and dreams for their child. Have a plan to contact them regularly to share success and progress from the beginning . Touch base by phone, email or even text. By communicating with parents early on, they gain the understanding that you truly care about their child, making it much easier to contact them if and when you need to discuss the tough stuff.

6. Build a Strong Team- Communicate and collaborate often with your paraeducators and support staff. Be appreciative of their expertise, ask their opinion and brainstorm with them. Respect the time they have for your students. Before the year gets busy and calendars get full, schedule team meetings to meet with your support staff on a monthly, bi monthly or quarterly basis, depending on staff schedules and your students' needs. Have a short "to do" list or agenda ready for your meetings so everyone knows what will be discussed and the meeting can stay on topic and be most effective.

7. Create an Effective Schedule- Creating staff and student schedules can be a nightmare. It can be tough to coordinate schedules with service providers and get students out in regular education classrooms when applicable. Just because the

schedule was a certain way last year does not mean it needs to be that way this year. Think



outside the box: ability group, team teach and create opportunities for students to teach each other. (It can be a great social opportunity and

method for building student confidence.)

8. Put Visual Cues in Place- By posting visual cues, students can be more independent and you can focus on what you want them to do rather than redirecting them from what they should not be doing. Post rules, procedures and schedules in your classroom so everyone knows what to do in every moment. Teach children what is off limits from the beginning by posting visuals. (Stop signs and the

*(article continued on Page 3)*



## SEPTEMBER TRAININGS

### SEPT 21, 9:00-3:00PM

TRAINING IS FULL - Burning the Chair, Encouraging Chaos and 8 Other Ways to Differentiate Instruction Presented by Paula Kluth - Wichita, Kansas

### SEPT 25-26, 8:00-3:30PM

2 Day Regional TTAP Training Presented by Mary Woodworth - Oakley, Kansas

### SEPT 25, 3:30-4:15PM

Webinar Series - An Introduction to Boardmaker, Part 1 Presented by Katie Thomas - Online

### SEPT 27, 3:30-4:15PM

Webinar Series - Boardmaker Continued Part 2 Presented by Katie Thomas - Online

For more information, please visit our Training Calendar, found on our website - [www.KansasASD.com](http://www.KansasASD.com)

universal sign for “no” are your friend.)

9. Find Out What Motivates Your Students- Everyone wants to be recognized for their hard work. Make sure your students are getting the reinforcement they need to participate appropriately. Sometimes it takes a little more reinforcement and motivation in the beginning to train children to act appropriately. As they become more successful and feel intrinsically motivated you can decrease the amount of reinforcement you give them.

10. Teach the Systems- Model, Model, Model. Create systems that help students follow the rules and make sense to them. Use social narratives and video modeling to help students understand what is expected. Work on basic learning to learn skills first, as they will have the most impact (sitting and attending, asking for help, waiting, quietly entering the room, etc.) REMEMBER: When there is a chaotic moment in your classroom, it is probably because the routine has not been taught, or needs to be restructured or retaught.

\*\*\*Lastly stay positive! Our jobs are tough. It is important to focus on what we want to happen and celebrate when it DOES. Don't sweat the small stuff!

**Direct link to our website:**  
[www.KansasASD.com](http://www.KansasASD.com)

**TIPS FROM THE CORNER:**

At the beginning of this new school year it is important to set the tone for how your class will run. Some teachers start out very strict with their behavior expectations while other teachers start out less strict and find they need to tighten up the behavior for their classroom. I'm not here to tell you which way to act in your classroom but would like to explore some things we know about behavior

and then let you decide. The start of your year will set the tone for behavior expectations you will have in your class yearlong. It is not impossible to change the behavior norms of a classroom but it is much easier to set them how you'd like from the start.

Rules should be clear, simple, few and applied across all students evenly. It is much easier to set the expectation of raising your hand to ask a question than to change that once students have spent time blurting out answers or questions. Rules should be positively stated and using phrases that encompass broader behavior norms. For example, “Be respectful of others”, encompasses a broad range of things you will find acceptable in your class and can be applied several ways. Rules with very specific targeted behavior are easy for students to get around, thus making you amend your lists over and over. “Don't hit” then creates the need for “don't pinch” then “don't kick” .....

Positive reinforcement is the best way to establish the behavior goals you set for your room. Using it often at first then targeting more specific behaviors to change will get you desired results. Educators must think of reinforcement as a stimulus that “strengthens” or builds up the probability of the desired response occurring and not as a reward for undesired behaviors. Identifying a desired behavior and strengthening the chances of it reoccurring is the foundation of good education practice.

Helpful Topic Summary on Reinforcement Assessment, found on our website:

[http://www.kansasasd.com/news\\_attach/TSReinforcementAssessment.pdf](http://www.kansasasd.com/news_attach/TSReinforcementAssessment.pdf)

