



AUTISM CLASSROOM RESOURCES PODCAST

EPISODE 57: GET ADULT LANGUAGE ON TRACK

URL: <http://autismclassroomresources.com/episode57>


Welcome to the Autism Classroom Resources Podcast, the podcast for special educators who are looking for personal and professional development. I'm your host, dr. Christine Reeve for more than 20 years, I've worn lots of hats in special education, but my real love is helping special educators. Like you. This podcast will give you tips and ways to implement research-based practices in a practical way in your classroom to make your job easier and more effective.

Welcome back to the Autism Classroom Resources Podcast. I'm very glad that you're joining us today. I am Chris Reeve. I'm your host. And I am super excited about this episode because I get to continue talking about one of the things I really love, which is fostering communication in the classroom. Now, if you listened to the previous episode, [autismclassroomresources.com/episode 56](http://autismclassroomresources.com/episode56), I talked about the importance of using language in a meaningful and purposeful way in the classroom, and really thinking about how we can keep our language focused on how we foster communication for our students.

And so today I have a freebie for you that will help, and we are going to be talking about three ways to help get your staff on board, where everybody is being consistent with their language.

In the last episode, I talked about the fact that we all tend to talk a little bit too much, and this is a freebie with some training tips, as well as some visuals to help you help others keep all the language in your classroom from the adult focused on what the students need to hear. So you can go and download the freebie at the blog post at autismclassroomresources.com/episode57. And I'll make sure that that is in the show notes as well. So let's get started.

Now again, if you didn't hear last week's podcast in that podcast, I talked about the importance of being quiet in the classroom for the adults. And it, isn't easy to be quiet to refrain from repeating instructions, to be careful about what we're saying in the classroom.



And I realize that that is a task that we have piled on top of everything else you have to do in running a classroom. But amazingly, one of the other benefits of having everybody quieter in the classroom is it actually reduces the stress of the staff and the students because adult noise or just noise in the classroom actually promotes stress. So one of the ways we can bring stress down is to try to get everybody's language back on track.

Let's talk for a minute about how our adult language gets off track. It's really hard to know how much you're talking in a classroom with everything going on. I know that sounds weird, but it really is true. There's a lot that goes into running a classroom.

I can't tell you how many times I've been in a classroom and asked someone to stop talking for a moment for a student to respond. And the adult told me I'm not talking the person wasn't being difficult. She actually didn't realize that she was talking.


We talk so normally that we just miss that we're talking sometimes and that's happened to all of us. We are so programmed to talk to the students to give directions. And we have so much to get done that we tend to talk and talk and talk, giving directions over and over without even realizing it.

And no one is immune to this problem, including me. I promise. So how do we fix it? I've got three simple ways I'm going to share with you today that we can address this.

So the first tip is to make a pact about adult language in the classroom. So have a team meeting and discuss why it's important to take care about talking in the classroom and how to talk purposefully.

Now you can do this in a couple of different ways, because I recognize there's not a lot of time for team meetings in our world. You can share this information in a Google Form. You can make a short video. You could just make an announcement. In this week's freebie, there is a set of tips for training. So it's kind of a handout that you can give to paras so that you're giving them that information, even though you didn't have time to really discuss it.

In addition, this is something that you can put into your classroom vision, and you can establish as part of your classroom culture. And if you want to know more about ways to do that and build your classroom team, go to autismclassroomresources.com/episode3 for create the classroom vision and [episode 2](http://autismclassroomresources.com/episode2) for establish the classroom culture.



So when you're putting together something for your staff or you're sharing information, you want to remind them of the importance of specifically giving clear directions and modeling well for the students. So those are the two really primary issues at hand with this. Then, as a team, make an agreement that you will call each other on it with a subtle sign. When you see a staff member talking too much, you could designate a sign (e.g., a Quiet sign, a tug on your ear) ahead of time. That means stop talking for a minute.


And in order for this to work, I want you to keep in mind that it's gotta be universal. It means that paraprofessionals can give you the teacher, the sign when they hear you talking too much and you can do the same for them. And I think that's really important in building the team.

It's a way of helping people self-monitor and making them aware of when they're talking too much. And it's not a direction it's just a friendly reminder. So it's not as directive as telling someone what to do and to keep it friendly. I think it needs to be something that everyone on the team agrees is a priority, and it also needs to be accepted by everyone. So as a teacher, the more that you encourage staff to give you feedback on your behavior, the more they will be willing to accept feedback from you on their behavior.

And I talk a lot about that in episode 2, when I talk about building the classroom culture, and this is also an element that you could add into your written classroom vision, and use that as a reasoning behind what you're doing the second way to try to get adult language back on track. Particularly if you're having a hard time with your staff, understanding why it's important, recognize that you are observing it and giving them feedback.

If working as a team doesn't work is to get an outsider's opinion. One of the advantages I have of consulting in the classroom is that I'm an outsider. In other words, I don't live in the classroom every day. And that gives me a different perspective than when I'm the teacher or a paraprofessional running the classroom. When I'm running the classroom, my brain is immersed in what I'm doing. When I'm a consultant, I get to stand back and watch. It's hard to do that when you're actually in charge of the classroom. And sometimes it's really helpful to have an outsider's perspective. If your team isn't agreeing, think about asking a colleague, maybe your speech pathologist, or your administrator to come in and do an observation.

And I know that that can be uncomfortable. And often, you know, we get observed enough. We don't really want to ask for more, but sometimes an outsider can make the point more clearly to everyone on the team that we have to address adult language in the classroom.



Speech pathologists could also come in and model and demonstrate how to effectively model communication and language. That's a piece of what they do, particularly if they're providing consultative services.

Now, this is really important, not just because it's somebody from the outside, uh, who is observing and maybe seeing things that you're not able to see. It's also important because sometimes there is a natural human tendency that we listen to people who aren't the people saying the same thing over and over. And I have had that happen.


When I ran a program, I, we had a consultant come in and I was mortified because my staff was asking him all of the questions that I had been telling them all this time. And he was telling them the same thing I was saying, but they were listening to him. And they weren't listening to me because they hadn't done any of it. And I remember when we had lunch with, with him. And I was mortified. And I said, I have been telling them all the things you told them today. And he looked at me and he said, "Chris, I know it's not you. The difference is I flew in on an airplane. And that made me special." And I have to tell you that was early in my career. And I thought it was kind of funny. I have to tell you, I've used it many times since then in my career, because there is some value of having people from the outside, give some feedback.

So whether that's an administrator or a speech pathologist, or even the training handout that you can download for free, sometimes it's just useful for them to hear the same thing from other people.

And the third way that you can help to get communication from adults back on track in your classroom is to use visuals. And if you've listened to the podcast or read the blog for any amount of time, you know, that I love visuals for students and for adults. So put up reminders in the room about what to say and what to wait for. So you can put up posters with examples of scripted language for the adults. We used to do this in the preschool where I worked, I'm terrible at pretend play. I get caught up in trying to figure out what I'm teaching. And I don't always feel like the language that I'm trying to model during play sounds right.

You can use scripts for the adults for pretend play, to help them model during that time. So for instance, narrating the child's play. It might expand language that you might not think about when you're in the middle of this activity and trying to decide what to do next. Similarly, you might want to put up reminders for a student to, to wait for a student to respond or about not repeating directions.

And in the free download. I've got a poster that you can put up in your classroom. That's got some basic reminders just as a reminder for everybody. And I think I



would emphasize that it's a reminder for you as well. So there is a brief handout for training the staff. There's also a poster with some reminders to help them. And they are fitting in the same color scheme as my visual reminders for staff that I use for other things.

So they fit right in. And if you hop over to autismclassroomresources.com/episode57, you will find a link. Or if you're already a member of the free resource library, head over there and there in the library. Now thank you so much for joining us today. Make sure you get over and get your free download. I would love to hear from you about what challenges and solutions you found for getting adult language back on track in your classroom. So if you're an educator hop over to our free Facebook group at specialeducatorsconnection.com and I'll make sure that that link is in the show notes as well. Thank you so much for joining me. Thank you for everything that you do. And I hope that you'll be back again next week.