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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 am excited that you are here. Because today I have a very special episode planned for you. I am going to be sharing the audio from one of our quick win videos from the Special Educator Academy. It will focus on behavior management in the classroom. And it's all about helping your students accept, "no," when they've learned to communicate already. And I'll talk about some of the do's and don'ts.

This is one of our 81 quick win videos and are all 15 minutes or less. And they usually focus specifically on some kind of tool or resource. I think that you will really like it. I also have a special free download for you that you can download, I'll tell you about it at the end of the episode. And if you want to join the Special Educator Academy and get more content like this, I'll have more information at the end as well. So let's get started.

Hi, today, I have a quick win on helping your students accept "no" when they communicate a request for something. Now, a lot of these strategies will work whether they are working on communication or not. Many of them will work per student who is very attached to an item or really, really wants something and can't have it at a specific time.

This is all about how we teach them to accept "no." And I often do that as part of their learning to make a request. Because once I've learned to make a request, where were you enforcing every time, the next step has to be that there are times I can't get it. So that is a piece of that instruction. But again, you can use these strategies in a lot of different ways.

Who is this for? Well, it's for students who are learning to request. So students who are learning to choose on a picture board or who are making requests with a voice output device or speech generating device or anything like that. So it can be used in a lot of different ways. It's for challenging behavior, students who exhibit challenging behavior when you tell them "no". So when our students are having a hard time with that it's a good thing to try.

And students who get confused when they're told "no." So they've gone from a situation in which they have been given what they wanted every time they asked, and now they're not. So now they're being asked to wait or told that it's not time or you simply don't have any more of something. And obviously, that's an important component in their communication program.

So why would we want to do this? Well, because this is probably one of the most frustrating situations that I hear about for a lot of students and a lot of teachers, that you are struggling with how to get a student to understand that something just isn't available at a specific time. Obviously, it leads some our students to exhibit some challenging behavior. And so we want to address it for that reason.

And the final reason is also because it can really inhibit their use of communication. If we change the rules to suddenly on them and they're used to being able to always ask to have, say, the trampoline. And now we're saying, "no, you can't," we run the risk of extinguishing essentially that communication response. So we always want to do this gradually and only when we really need to. But there are times when maybe the just is not an option. And so we have to teach this as a component for that reason.

So I want to talk about five ways today that you can do this and five tools you can use that can help. Some of them will require some proactive planning, but some can be done on the fly. So some of them we're going to set a student up to be successful. Other ones, there are things you can pull out in a pinch when you weren't expecting it.

Regardless of what strategy we're using, you know me well enough, if you've watched any of our videos, that you have to interpret the function of their behavior. There has to be an understanding that they're not just being non compliant. They are frequently objecting and frustrated by the fact that they have asked for something in the past and gotten it and now they can't have it. And also that sometimes they're just frustrated because they really, really want the item, or the activity, or the attention, or whatever it is.

And it's important that as part of this, we make our communication clear to them. So we need to amp up how interpretable our own communication is, so that we make sure we're sending the right message not, no, you can never have that. But no, it's not available right now. And so that's a piece

of this. And you can also use this in combination with our teaching waiting program. And I'll make sure that link is included under this video.

So one of the easiest ways if you have students that are using a communication system, is to show them when something is not available. And that can be something as very simple as just crossing something off. And I say this, with a note of caution, I would never remove a communication symbol, or opportunity for a student. Hiding their communication boards is not the solution, hiding their device or putting it out of their reach is not the solution for them to not have a way to communicate what they want. That is sending the exact opposite message of what we want to send.

But we can use their devices and their boards as a way to help them understand what we are communicating. I talked in the communication course about the importance of our modeling, using a communication device. Oh, I'm gonna play with putty. So I talked about how we need to be modeling that communication. But we can use the same strategies with their devices to help them understand our communication as well.

One of the easiest on fly types of situations is to put an X over so you may have Velcro X, one of the easiest things is if you happen to have a laminated board, and maybe you have your own board and the student has their so maybe they don't like you messing with their boards, I've had students like that. So I might just come along if it's laminated with a dry erase marker, and this is not an option today. And when it becomes an option again, I can wipe it off. And now it's an option again.

So this is an easy removable way, I'm not removing the opportunity for them to ask. If they're asking using pointing, they can still point, even if I've crossed it out. We're just giving them an indication that this is not available right now. So that's a really easy on the fly. Don't take that visual way. If you're using an exchange system, you know, don't just take that picture off and say it's not available. You want them to see that they can still ask for it. But that it's not an option right now. So we want to put that visual there to help them. So that's one quick and easy way to do it. But again, never ever take away their voice, as tempting as it can be.

Another is to give them visuals that not just show them what is available, but show them why. So in this case, this is a door leading to the classroom's recess area. And obviously if it's raining, they can't go outside. And so the teacher didn't just put "no outside" on the door, she put "raining, no outside." So and you might even add "sunny, go outside" if you want to add a positive spin to it as well. So this is just a way of trying to explain to the student why something isn't available.

Another is and this is one of my favorites, and I got this from the Pyramid People who do the PECS system for communication, is to use empty bags and boxes. So if I have a student who's always asking for popcorn, then sometimes I'm out of popcorn and it's just not an option. So at that point, I would take the popcorn and I always open my popcorn upside down which is why it's open on the bottom because there's more salt on that part. That's why it's upside down. I didn't realize it now.

So make sure it's empty because a lot of popcorn stays in the bag so that you can go you know with that exaggerated aspect that we like to use so much. "Sorry, guys. No more popcorn. It's empty." You can even give it to them and they can inspect it and see it and it helps them to understand that something is just not there.

Now I may have 50 million bags of popcorn back in my closet. But I'm not going to tell him that. This is a way of helping him see, you ate it all now, we have to do something else. And often I will do "Empty, no more popcorn. Make another choice." So I might cue them to use a device to make a different choice.

So it can be boxes, it can be bags, it can be food items, it could be a container where you keep the Legos if that's what they want to play with. "Sorry Legos are gone." So that's another strategy that is often very helpful at helping them understand why they can't have something.

For a lot of our students, we can use social stories. So sometimes it's a social story about what no means. Like, I doesn't mean that I'm never giving you this again. Sometimes when I ask for something, I can have something. Sometimes when I ask for something, it's not available, I can't have it right now. Maybe I can have it later. That you might be told that you can't have something when they are out or something. You might be told that you can't have something because someone else is playing with it.

In those situations, no does not mean forever. And then coping strategies, when I asked for something that I can't have, I could make a different request, I could ask when I can have it, I can check my schedule to see when I'm going to see it next time. So I will make sure that next week, I'm actually going to make a social story about this. And I will have that for you sometime in the next week. And I will make sure it is linked here and it goes out in the newsletter, so you'll have it as well.

Another way to help students understand "no" is to show them that something is not available. So one of the things that a lot of kids are obsessed with that I've worked with has always been the computer, you can see how long back it goes. Because it's been a long time since you saw such an old monitor, I'm sure. And this is one of our prettier signs, which is why I keep the picture around. Because we just put a finished sign.

Now yes, I've had students who come up and rip it off, and sit down and try to play in the computer. But for most of our students, this helps them understand it's not time for that. So it's just a visual that says this is off limits right now. And I often want to add into that when it is available. So I might put the computer visual on a specific part of their schedule. And when they go there and see the finished sign, I might say go check your schedule. And that's going to tell him when he's gonna get to see it. Or I might use a first then at that point as well.

I might use a timer. So I would set a timer that says two more minutes, and it'll be time for your turn. Two more minutes and you can have a turn at the computer. I might use a calendar, if it's something that only happens, say once a day, I want to go outside. So I might say, you know, we'll go on the field trip, I had a student who used to really love to go and community based outings, so he always wanted to go. And so we would give him a calendar that showed him what day he was going to get to do that.

We can also use a parking lot. And we have a quick win about a parking lot. But to give you a quick overview, essentially, when you take the item that they want, and you put it in a box with the idea that it's not there forever. Now, for some students, I have to have the boxes as my windup toys, I really love of salmon sushi. For those of you who have heard me talk aboout reinforcement, you know I use sushi as a reinforcement. And this is nice, because it's got this easy to close top. I put it on the table where he can still see it, I like it to be clear. And it just tells him you can't have that right now. And again, I'll show my schedule when he can have it.

Some students are going to need it to have a top. So it slows them down from getting to it. If they grab it, some students won't, and you can just use a bin. But essentially, we come say to the work area and we park something. And then first they park it for a very short time, and then we increase how long they're parking it. So we can teach them to use a parking lot. So that we can use it in this way as well.

And finally, I want you to remember, and it's hard to remember sometimes, that this is something that they're learning. And for most of our students, many of their challenging behaviors in particular, have been in place for quite a while. And that means that they are likely to immediately go to that challenging behavior that sometimes results in them getting what they want.

And because of that, we want to make sure that we are teaching it. So we're teaching it in small spaces. That's why the parking lot starts with a very small time. "Oh, now your turn," and then gradually we increase that time. The same is true when we teach waiting. The same is true when we teach them they can't have something.

So you know if I if I hold the bag out and I do have some popcorn, I might say "Sorry, can't have it now, do this, and then we'll go see if we have some more" or I'll go check the closet or something like that. If I'm taking it off off their communication board, then I would say "Oh, no trampoline right now, because someone else is on it, he has two more minutes. When the timer goes off, then you can get on the trampoline."

So and then later, it's going to be, "It's not time for the trampoline. We're doing this." But you've got to start small. And it's important to remember that the challenging behavior is a habit. It's something that they do automatically.

Like I had a student that we got rid of so many of those challenging behaviors by improving communication, by knowing better, by things we put in place. But the one thing that he just continued to have, it lessened in severity over time, but his automatic reaction when told no, was just reach out and hit whoever was closest to him with his fist. And it went from being like a huge chest fist, like it could hurt you to being like more like a fist bump. But it was on automatic. You said no, I did this.

So it's going to take a lot of our students some time to let go of the behaviors that have worked for them in the past, and move on to the new strategies that we're trying to teach. But hopefully, these strategies can help you figure out how to get started with that. And I would love to hear any comments, you have, experiences you have, or questions you have. So hop over to our community, or hop over to the Facebook group, and drop me a line and let me know what you have done that has either worked or not worked and what your questions are there so we can chat some more.

I hope that gave you some good tips and ideas about things to try in your classroom. If you struggle with students who have a hard time accepting no when they want something, I have a free tool for you that I'll tell you about in just a minute.

But first, I just want to share this piece of Special Educator Academy feedback that really warms my heart because it's exactly what I want it to be. This member says, "SEA is a place of support from special educators who have a passion for their work, and want to continue to improve, has given me the confidence I need to push on during the rough times of the day. SEA gives me a goal for the future of my teaching, and the hope that I can continue to offer my services to students with autism because, let's just face it, we have a difficult job and we have to watch for the little successes to keep our motivation going."

I just really really like that because we serve students of all types, autism and other special ed need. But I love the fact that she is looking at the future of her teaching and seeing how the support and the strategies that she gets from SEA can help her with that.

I promised you a sneak peek at what is coming for the Special Educator Academy as well as a free download. So I want to make sure I get those to you.

I want to invite you to join our one week setting up classrooms boot camp starting July 24 and experience the benefits of getting your classroom plan together in a week. Each day, I will cover one module of the setting up classrooms course and provide time to work together and plan your classroom based on information you have available at that time. I recognize not everybody will have the same amount of information available at the same time so the community is always there to do this later. And the recordings from the live sessions will be there as well. And there's also our whole Setting Up Classrooms course that you can access.

You'll have access to the live workshops, to feedback on your classroom plans from me and from the group, and valuable resources like my manual for the teaching implementation plan and planning your schedule and my manual for building your classroom team. Plus, if you've joined and you're a full member by the time we get to setting up classrooms, meaning you are past the seven day free trial, you will receive a set of visual schedules and tools from my store, and a simplified independent work system set of visuals and tools. So it's a great way to get the materials to get your classroom up and running quickly this year without having to sacrifice too much of your summer.

And in the coming year, we are going to have some changes coming to the Academy where we will be offering a thematic set of training along with printable tools and things that you can use to implement that theme and the strategy. So every month there'll be a new set of principles, a new set of videos, and then it will go out at the end of the month and we'll start a new month, the next month. So we've got themes like lesson planning and assessing and using reinforcement for classroom management systems and all sorts of other things that I know are needs for everyone in their classroom.

And you will still have access to all of the courses in the workshops and the quick wins like the one you heard today in the Academy throughout all times as long as you are a member. So all of this will continue to be available for $25 a month, or $250 for the year, the price is not changing, we're just changing up the way we are doing things to make it a little bit more interesting. So I hope that you'll join us.

And if you want to join with the seven day free trial just to see what it's like, you can join at autismclassroomresources.com/SEA-bootcamp. Or if you're closer to the boot camp, or closer to the beginning of a month that you want to participate in, and you want to get the free printable tools that you can join without the trial at autismclassroomresources.com/SEA-monthly. I also have an annual link that I will put in the show notes as well.

And to show you some of the tools that Special Educator Academy members get, I want to share with you a free social story that is about accepting No, you may have heard me refer to it in the video that you just heard. And I want to make sure that you got the tools to be able to implement that strategy. So you can find that at autismclassroomresources.com/SayNo. And I will make sure that the link is in the show notes as well.

And obviously if you have any questions at all, feel free to send me a message on Instagram with a question or you can email me at Chris@specialeducatoracademy.com.

I will be back next week when I'll be talking about some more elements of the academy and some things that you can get. And I hope you have an amazing week. Talk to you later.

Thanks so much for listening to today's episode of the Autism Classroom Resources podcast. For even

more support, you can access free materials, webinars and Video Tips inside my free resource library. Sign up at autismclassroomresources.com/free. That's F-R-E-E or click the link in the show notes to join the free library today. I'll catch you again next week.