



SCHOOL COMMUNICATION	STRATEGIES FOR “SOMETIMES/NO” RESPONSES	SUPPORTING RESOURCES
<p>1. I prefer to share my thoughts and ideas in writing.</p> 	<p>Offer Multiple Modes of Expression: Provide students with options to demonstrate their understanding in ways that best suit their strengths—such as writing, drawing, using speech-to-text, or making audio or video recordings. This flexibility reduces frustration and supports students' cognitive and executive functioning, leading to more accurate and engaged learning.</p> <p>Use Structured Writing Supports: Use tools like graphic organizers, sentence starters, and key vocabulary lists to scaffold the writing process. These supports make tasks more accessible, which can enhance student motivation and engagement by aligning with diverse learning preferences and needs.</p>	<p>Article: Multiple Modes of Representation</p> <p>Learn Alberta: Graphic Organizers and Story Mapping</p>
<p>2. I ask for help in class when I need it.</p> 	<p>Teach and Practice Help-Seeking Skills: Role-play and model how and when to ask for help, using scripts or social stories.</p> <p>Create a Non-Verbal Help System: Implement systems like "help cards" (students place a card on their desk) or visual signals so students can request assistance discreetly without speaking.</p>	<p>Video: Asking for Help</p> <p>Handout: PECS Help Card and Teaching Procedure</p>
<p>3. It helps when instructions are given in written form.</p>	<p>Pair Verbal Instructions with Written/Visual Instructions: Post steps visually on the board, in a checklist, or provide printed copies, so students have a reference point.</p> <p>Use Clear, Step-by-Step Task Breakdown Systems: Break down instructions into small, sequential steps using simple, concrete language; check for understanding by having students restate instructions.</p>	<p>Video: Instruction with Visual Supports</p> <p>Video: Chunking to Improve Memory</p>



4. My teacher explains things clearly.



Use Visual Supports to Reinforce Verbal

Explanations: Incorporate charts, diagrams, flowcharts, or live modeling of tasks alongside explanations to reduce student demand to process and remember oral information.

Frequently Check for Understanding: Pause during lessons to ask students to explain the instruction in their own words or use quick checks (e.g., thumbs up/thumbs sideways) to see who needs clarification.

Video: [Using Visuals Supports](#)

Strategy Guide: [Checking for Understanding Strategy Guide-Five Finger Retell Strategy \(p.33\)](#)

Classroom Environments

5. My sensory needs are met in the classrooms.









Create Sensory Zones or Quiet Areas: Set up calm spaces with sensory tools such as fidget bins, rocker chairs, dim lighting where the student can have self-directed access to.

Proactively Offer Sensory Tools: Provide standing desks, rocker chairs, noise cancelling headphones, fidgets, chewable jewelry, textured materials, etc. to promote students' active engagement in learning.

Video: [Sensory Rooms Helping Students with Autism Focus and Learn](#)




Guide: [Sensory Activities](#)

<p>6. There are things in the classroom that I find distracting (lights, noise, temperature, smell, etc.).</p> 	<p>Modify the Environment Based on Sensory Feedback: Adjust lighting, temperature, and noise using dimmer lights, fans for circulation and fabric panels or dividers to absorb noise.</p> <p>Offer Sensory Breaks and Flexible Workspaces: As a universal classroom design strategy organize classroom to include quiet corners, sensory friendly art tables, and standing desks.</p>	<p>Article: How to Create a Sensory Friendly Classroom with student input.</p> <p>Video: Flexible Learning Spaces and UDL: Angela's Story (Highschool Teacher)</p>
<p>7. I can sit where I need to focus and do my work.</p> 	<p>Choose Seating with Student Input: Provide flexible choice for students to choose preferred seating which may include near a wall, near a window, near the door, close to teacher, quiet corner, single or in pairs.</p>	<p>Article: Flexible Seating Ideas with Student Quotes</p>
<p>8. I feel safe at school.</p> 	<p>Affirm Students' Safety Needs: Help students recognize that their feelings are valid and that their need for psychological safety is both important and achievable within the school environment.</p>	<p>Video: Being Angry and Safe at School</p> <p>Video: Bonding with Autistic Kids</p>

Curriculum		
<p>9. I understand the learning materials used in the classroom.</p> 	<p>Break Down Concepts and Skills: Teach new concepts and skills by breaking them down into smaller achievable parts.</p> <p>Provide Pre-Teaching and Review Opportunities: Use tools like Learning Anchor Charts to preview key concepts with students before lessons and to summarize key concepts using key words or visual aids after the lesson.</p>	<p>Disability Programs Online Resources: Task Analysis examples and templates</p> <p>Article: 10 Anchor Chart Ideas</p>
<p>10. I enjoy activities that allow me to be creative.</p> 	<p>Offer Creative Choices for Assignments: Provide options like dioramas, art projects, digital storytelling, photojournalism, and model building for students to demonstrate their understanding of key concepts outside of written form.</p>	<p>Article: 10 Projects for Developing Students' Creativity and Digital Storytelling Skills</p>
<p>11. There are subjects or topics that I find difficult.</p> 	<p>Provide a short survey to students to engage in collaborative problem solving.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What part of the subject or topic is difficult or hard for you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (Open-ended response options: students can draw, write, or circle areas) 2. How can the teacher help make this subject or topic easier to understand? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ () Use more pictures or videos ○ () Break the lesson into smaller steps ○ () Give more practice time ○ () Let me ask questions one-on-one 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ () Sensory overwhelm ○ () Other: _____ 	
<p>12. The pace of lessons is just right for me.</p> 	<p>Allow Flexible Timing and Pacing: Give extra time, provide extended deadlines, break work into smaller chunks, provide breaks between tasks.</p> <p>Use Self-Paced Learning Options: Offer self-paced modules, choice boards, or independent work centers.</p>	<p>Video: Breaking Down Assignments and Tasks</p> <p>Video: Independent Work System-elementary</p> <p>Video: Independent Work System-Jr./Sr.</p>
Connection		
<p>13. I feel included by my classmates.</p> 	<p>Facilitate Structured Peer Interactions: Use buddy systems, leadership roles, classroom jobs, and social scripts to guide inclusive interactions.</p> <p>Create Class Norms for Inclusion: Co-create class agreements emphasizing kindness, listening, collaboration and inclusion.</p>	<p>Video: Classroom and School-Based Jobs</p> <p>Article: Books to Promote Inclusion</p>
<p>14. I have friends at school.</p> 	<p>Teach Friendship Skills Explicitly: Model and role play social interactions such as initiating conversations, joining play, and asking questions.</p> <p>Set Up Low-Pressure Social Opportunities: Offer lunch groups, partner games, or hobby clubs.</p>	<p>Video: How to Make Friends</p> <p>Article: 10-Role Play Scenarios</p>

<p>15. I feel respected by my teachers.</p> 	<p>Use Strength-Based Feedback: Highlight students' strengths and interests when giving feedback.</p> <p>Honour Student Voice and Choice: Provide opportunities for students to make choices about their learning, school spaces, and breaks through their verbal and non-verbal modes of communication, choice menus, and surveys.</p>	<p>Handout: Neurodiversity Affirming Language</p> <p>Article: Choice Boards-A Powerful Way to Engage and Assess Students</p>
<p>16. I am happy with feedback I receive from my teachers.</p> 	<p>Offer Public Praise: Give high-fives, provide verbal feedback such as “awesome” and “well done”, highlight innovation and creativity.</p> <p>Follow 3 Keys to Effective Feedback: Ensure the feedback you provide to students is timely, specific, and solution focused.</p>	<p>Video: Student Feedback-Effective Strategies and Tips</p>
<p>Collaboration</p>		
<p>17. I feel confident when working with others.</p> 	<p>Offer Flexible Learning Spaces: Teach students that they can engage in learning from spaces that allows them to do their best thinking while reducing sensory overload.</p> <p>Teach Students Different Ways to Participate: Active and passive participation are both valuable for student learning. Offer students choice in neuro-affirming ways to participate and show what they know.</p>	<p>Video: Large Group, Small Group and Individual Instruction</p> <p>Article: Opportunities to Respond in the Classroom for Autistic Students</p>

<p>18. I am more successful in groups when there are clear roles.</p> 	<p>Assign and Rotate Clear Group Roles: Use visual cards that define each student's role in a group task (Leader, Recorder, Timekeeper, Presenter, Listener)</p> <p>Use Visual Group Work Checklists: Post a checklist for group expectations and task steps on the board or group table.</p>	<p>Handout: Group Work Role Cards</p>
<p>19. I feel accepted by my peers.</p> 	<p>Build Peer Understanding Through Structured Peer Education: Misunderstanding often drives exclusion. Teaching all students about autism in a respectful, age-appropriate, and strengths-based way can shift peer attitudes.</p>	<p>Video: Neurodiversity, Neurodivergent and Neurotypical</p>
<p>20. I feel understood by my peers.</p> 	<p>Use Mind Mapping to Teach Perspective Taking: Pair the use of a visual mind map to record students' contribution of ideas where each person's perspectives are valid and lead to a positive solution.</p>	<p>Video: Problem Solving Annoying Classmate Situation- Perspective Taking Both Sides</p>

General AB ED Resources: <https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/ieptlibrary/lib08.html>

Teacher Feedback: Student Survey Tool

1. How useful was the student survey in helping you understand the needs of your autistic student?
 - () Very useful
 - () Somewhat useful
 - () Not very useful
 - () Not useful at all

2. How clear was the survey for your student to understand and complete?
 - () Very clear and accessible
 - () Mostly clear with some support
 - () Somewhat confusing
 - () Not clear or accessible

3. How effective was the information from the survey in guiding your teaching strategies?
 - () Very effective – I made changes based on the results
 - () Somewhat effective – I used a few strategies
 - () Not effective – I wasn't sure how to use the results
 - () I have not used the information yet

4. Is there any other feedback you believe would help strengthen the accessibility and usefulness of the survey?